

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE
MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE AMBULANCE
SERVICE OF NSW**

Organisation: Independent Commission Against Corruption
Name: Hon David Ipp
Position: Commissioner
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The Chair
General Purpose Standing Committee No 2
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Our Ref: Z07/0185

Dear Ms Parker

**Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Inquiry into the
Management and Operations of the NSW Ambulance Service**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to this review.

The Commission notes that in the Foreword to the Inquiry report, the Committee Chair states that the key issues brought to light during the Inquiry were the Service's management and culture, in particular the occurrence of bullying and harassment within the organisation.

It has been the Commission's experience from its interactions with the NSW Ambulance Service (Service) and our review of the complaints made against the Service since 2001, that the Service finds these issues particularly challenging.

Most of the 96 complaints received about the Service (between 2001–2007) included one or more of the following behaviours:

- a. fabricate/falsify information/forgery/tamper with information/fraud
- b. favouritism/nepotism
- c. management failure to take appropriate action/negligence
- d. bullying/harassment/victimisation/discrimination

These behaviours were reported most frequently in relation to the following work activities:

- Patient care/service provision -- behaviour that affected/could affect the quality or provision of service
- HR/management/ Internal reporting – Management actions in relation to staff
- Rostering /leave /overtime /worker's compensation / allowances
- Recruitment/selection

Many of the problem behaviours reported to the Commission had occurred across the Service. The complaints involved managers as well as colleagues and some staff felt they could not complain to the Service.

Of the 96 complaints about the Service during this period, 53 related to the behaviour of supervisors/managers. Examples of poor management appear repeatedly in complaints about the Service, including:

- inadequate middle and senior management training and skills
- senior management failure to take action in response to staffing issues, such as bullying
- poor management of internal reporting
- poor external reporting to the Commission
- bullying and harassment by managers
- favouritism.

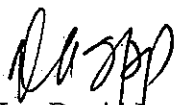
It is also noted that the Service must deal with a number of factors that influence its culture and may increase the likelihood of some of the behaviours complained about. These factors included:

- a hierarchical and disciplined structure
- independent regions which are not sufficiently accountable to head office
- a highly unionised workforce
- a history of promotion by seniority and favour
- historically a male-dominated service
- less staff movement in regional areas

The Service requires strong leadership that models the required behaviour; managers with the requisite skills and experience and an ethical culture that encourages compliance and quality work. These are essential to minimise corruption, but also for other aspects of the Service's operations, such as occupational health and safety.

Unless the Service addresses these core problems, we believe it will have difficulty successfully implementing the Inquiry's recommendations. Without substantial improvements in these areas, there is a risk that any positive change resulting from the recommendations might not survive in the long term.

Yours sincerely



The Hon David Ipp AO QC
Commissioner

15 January 2010