

Submission
No 186

**THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE NSW
AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Name: Suppressed
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Partially Confidential

I wish to make a submission to the inquiry into the management and operations of the Ambulance Service of NSW.

My name is . I'm a P1 Ambulance Officer who successfully completed Ambulance Rescue Operator Course on . As you can imagine, I was quite alarmed to hear the 27th recommendation from the recent review into Ambulance operations. I was however glad to hear that this recommendation has not yet been accepted and this is my reason for writing. I would like for you to know what every on-road Ambulance Rescue Officer already knows.

* It is worth noting that the reason for any rescue is to safely remove a person from actual or threatened danger or physical harm. Then in the media release, you are quoted as saying "The main function of our ambulance services is to provide emergency response for people in need of urgent care". Yet it is stated in the findings of the review that 'Rescue' is not part of ASNSW core work (point 11.2 pg 113). I would beg to differ as this is exactly what Paramedics and Intensive Care Paramedics are doing on a daily basis. Quite clearly this includes people who are in a situation where they need rescuing either from entrapment or through difficult access or egress. All qualified Ambulance Officers are well versed in providing pre-hospital care to patients who are in need of urgent medical attention and with further training in the rescue field we are able to access patients in all manner of situations to provide that care. This includes situations of cliff and vertical rescue, road crash, confined space, trench rescue, domestic and industrial rescues, urban search and rescue, accessing beaches and bush tracks in 4WD vehicles and Swift water rescues. In most cases, patients require stabilisation and interventions prior to them being removed from their location and transported to hospital. With this in mind it makes perfect sense for the ASNSW to have a rescue component as carers of the sick and injured so that the first person to access the patient can immediately begin treatment. No other rescue service can provide the same level of access and treatment!

*Some of the information and statistics used in the report are not accurate. For example, the statistic that states the NSWFB did over 11,000 rescue jobs in 2006/7 is not a true indication of their workload as the State Rescue Board (SRB) allocated less than 10,000 state wide rescue numbers for the same period. This raises the question: Where are the NSWFB getting their figures from? In addition to this the report tries to compare figures from two different years, by comparing 05/06 ASNSW figures to 06/07 NSWFB figures. This hardly makes the comparison fair or equitable which adds to the degree of suspicion that one should have while reading this report. If there is going to be performance comparison between the different agencies then there needs to be parity in the criteria that we are judged on.

One method which is already in place is where every rescue job is allocated through the State Rescue Board and they decide which agency to send. This is how the ASNSW is getting their statistics for responses but is quite clearly

not how the NSWFB do it. Another method is to keep a record of response and extrication times. Again the ASNSW has these statistics but the NSWFB does not.

It should also be noted that Ambulance Rescue is utilised for medical jobs where as Rescue appliances within other services lie idle until a Rescue job is received. This is entirely appropriate if it is a volunteer rescue organisation but is hardly a proper use of full time employees.

* Having just completed the 6 week rescue training course with the ASNSW I consider that I am well placed to say that it is without a doubt, the most professionally run course I have done in any industry. The amount of time and energy that Mr Keith Williams and Mr Dane Goodwin have put into the construction and implementation of this course over the past 4 years is nothing short of remarkable, and the result is a state wide rescue organisation that has a fantastic amount of knowledge and practical experience in all facets of land based rescue. In addition to the hands on skills every officer is trained in team building, leadership, logistical planning and scene safety throughout the course. All this training is aimed at providing the best possible outcomes for patients

* Underwriting all this is the fact that NSW Ambulance Rescue is widely regarded as the best rescue agency in the country and this is supported by figures that show we have the shortest response times to scene, the shortest extrication time (the time from arriving on scene to when the patient is released from entrapment) and we do this with the least number of officers. On any Ambulance Rescue truck there are 2 officers where as a NSWFB truck has a minimum of 4 officers. Again this is testament to the training we receive in teamwork and in our rescue skills. All of these positive results are brought about at a cost of just over \$800,000 per year. A negligible saving if the service was transferred.

I don't wish to come across as anti-fire brigade as I think they perform a valuable service for the community. However, I feel that the community would benefit more by rescue services being provided by the Ambulance Service.

These are just a few points that have come to my attention in the last few days and I hope they can be useful to you when making any decision about the future of Rescue Services in our state. Thankyou for your time. If you have any questions or require clarification on any of these points I would be happy to speak to you. I can be contacted on

Yours Sincerely,

Ambulance Rescue Officer