

Submission
No 200

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

Name: Mr Craig Stevens

Date received: 21/07/2008

Craig Stevens

To the people we pay to make a difference.

My name is Craig Stevens I am an Intensive Care Rescue Paramedic with the Ambulance service of NSW. I started with the service on the 3rd of November 1997 and have worked on the central coast most of my career I am extremely proud of the service I provide the public and would choose to do no other job.

I am writing to you to air my concerns about the recommendation to disband Ambulance Rescue in NSW, I believe that disbanding ambulance rescue would be unnecessarily putting the people of NSW at risk.

Ambulance rescue supply a valuable and unmatched service to the members of the public by providing the only medically trained rescue officers in the country. I have family on the central coast and I do not want them being rescued by someone who has little or no knowledge of the injuries they have sustained or how to treat them properly. And don't let the fire brigade fool you, there are situations out there where the only person who can get to you is the rescue operator. Ask yourself what is best for your family.

Ambulance rescue offers the people of NSW with 194 trained rescue operators whom are trained in many different aspects of rescue including,

Vertical Rescue – accessing patients down cliffs, in wells, trapped on side of high rise buildings.

Road Rescue – removing patients trapped in motor vehicles

Confined Space Rescue – accessing patients trapped in silos, oil tanks

Trench Rescue – accessing and rescuing patients trapped in trench collapses

Swift Water Rescue – rescuing patients from fast moving water.

CBR Training – can respond to any CBR incident and work in the hot zone (only medically trained people who can)

Ambulance Rescue has the only VETAB accredited rescue course as well as being the best, most in depth rescue course available in the country. This is evident by outside agencies lining up to get people on the course. For example NSW mines and the Australian Defence Force including members of the SAS.

Ambulance Rescue gives the NSW government the ability to send highly trained officers to any major incident or natural disaster that occurs within the country or world, knowing that the teams can be self sufficient with the ability to find, rescue, treat, package and transport patients without requiring other agencies. Ambulance rescue is the only agency with this ability.

The main reasons given for disbanding rescue is cost and staffing. Cost is something I hear a lot in the ambulance service now, when is the ambulance service going to stop trying to run a business and start running the service as a service. The Ambulance service requires a Commissioner not a CEO. To disband rescue you would have to purchase new vehicles for 9 stations, develop a new CBR, major incident policy and training to fill the void of losing 194 trained officers. Not to mention you would lose 3.2 million dollars of equipment and 3.5 million in vehicles.

To say that disbanding rescue would elevate staffing problems by putting another vehicle on the road is a ludicrous statement, on the central coast it would be just another vehicle in bed block. If staffing is that desperate that you have to shut down specialist units to cope someone should ask the management of the Ambulance service why they have spent at least 300,000 dollars of tax payers money into external reviews of staffing levels and station placement on the central coast. Only to either ignore recommendations or keep secret and not table the results or cancel the review just prior to it being completed. Not the way I like my tax dollars being spent.

To disband Ambulance Rescue would be just another way of chipping away at moral at the frontline of the service, by removing another career path for officers. The management love to advertise that we are the most trusted profession but seem to fall short when asked to support the officers this is built on.

With what Ambulance Rescue has to offer the state of NSW the government should not be trying to disband this service but should be trying to expand what is easily evident the best rescue service available to people of NSW. Regardless of whom supplies rescue services it still costs the government the same money it just gets put in a different account.

In short by the government disbanding itself of Ambulance Rescue would just show to me that it doesn't have the ability to look at the big picture and provide the best for the people that entrusted the running of the state to you.

Maybe you should stop listening to managers who are interested in what looks good on a resume and listen to the people who truly provide the service and know what is best for the patient.

Yours Faithfully

Craig Stevens

Intensive Care Rescue Paramedic

Ambulance Service of NSW (for now)