

Submission  
No 36

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

**Name:** Mr Brett Campbell

**Date received:** 21/06/2008

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Dear members of the above standing committee

My name is Brett Campbell and I am currently based in Wagga Wagga and I perform relief duties to the peripheral ambulance stations as required. I have been employed by the Service for approximately 14.5 years and am currently an intensive care rescue paramedic ambulance officer. Another role I have within the Service is that of peer support officer. I also work with the NSW Fire Brigades as a retained firefighter and prior to employment with the Service was a trades qualified boilermaker/first class metal fabricator and fitter and machinist in private industry.

I shall make brief points under each of the terms of reference:

a. Management structure and staff responsibilities

Crisis management is what most modern bureaucratic public sector organisations attempt to do and unfortunately the Service is no exception. We now have more support staff than previous, and probably more managers but we have less leaders or advocates of not only their staff but also the most important stakeholder, the patients. Sure, everything is dynamic in the world of change but leadership at all levels from the top down to my level as an operational officer requires all of us to demonstrate effective leadership instead of what is currently occurring as a generalisation.

b. Staff recruitment, training and retention

Today's workforce still needs respect but also clear rules. Most officers are reasonably easily pleased. Give them uniform, vehicle, equipment, consumables, patients, reasonable rostering and workloads, pay and conditions and listen to them in consultation for improvement and most, if not all will be good and loyal employees.

c. Staff occupational health and safety issues

Providing employees with a safe working environment is where we tend to fail the most. This generally is due to bullying and/or harassment. It occurs by some management which makes it difficult for officers to fight systematic and differential treatment, or when it is peers, management tends to display no leadership or adherence to policies and allow it to continue to occur generally quite unfettered resulting in decreased morale and officers becoming more reluctant to lodge or raise such cases for fear of reprisals and absolutely no protection. Then there are bungled and lengthy investigations generally resulting in no or totally erroneous and irrelevant outcomes.

d. Operational health and safety issues

Bureaucracies work slowly like a glacier melting, concerns are raised and notified as a matter of real occurrences and actually an outcomes sometimes takes years. The IIMS system is a perfect example of nothing occurring and no-one following up on incidents.

e. Any other related matter.

The Service's level of inability to operate effectively is the result of many different individual efforts (or in some cases lack of effort) at many levels who are consistently consciously or unconsciously undermining other's efforts. We need to have one strong leader, preferably uniformed who has a strong team of leaders willing to support that leader and all focussed on the same goals and that shall flow through the organisation if their ideas and direction are practical and sensible. The Service needs to effectively performance manage their

underachievers whether that be managers or operational officers as this organisation makes decisions that affect patients' and their significant others wellbeing and lives.

The Professional Standards and Conduct Unit have created much fear and unrest due their inefficiencies and at times peculiar and inappropriate investigations. This unit seems to be a tool of instilling fear and division amongst all who work for the Service, not too unlike the Police Integrity Commission who have been for the better part successful in destroying any loyalty or support for your fellow employee in that organisation thereby breaking down any ideology of teamwork.

Feel to contact me on my work email or the following if you require any clarification or specific examples:

Regards

Brett Campbell