

Submission
No 119

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

Name: Suppressed
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Partially Confidential

I understand that the mental health of Paramedics will be a part of the inquiry. I would like to point out that in many cases, Paramedics are becoming "burned out" not because of exposure to traumatic or emotionally distressing scenes.

My experience leads me to conclude that Paramedics are being eaten up by frustration at having to deal with so many jobs that are a waste of resources. Anecdotally, about 50% of work I attend are cases of people not treating themselves and burdening the Ambulance Service, hospital Emergency Departments, and taxpayer funds. These are non-emergency cases such as headaches, inability to sleep, mild pain, stomach aches, mild flus, etc. Nearly all of these cases are for "patients" who are on social benefits as they are unemployed. Amongst Paramedics is the strong belief that if everyone had to pay a nominal fee, the workload would decrease dramatically as people would call an ambulance Service only as intended, for an emergency situation.

This work falls far short of Paramedics expectations and their training. This creates frustration that, if an isolated incident would be manageable, but consistently and over time becomes like a cancer on the mental well being of many Paramedics. It can often manifest as aggression, anger, or apathy. The Ambulance Service response to this is inappropriate. Rather than dealing with the long term cause and effect, the Service will treat individual incidents as a disciplinary issue.

I would also like to point out that in the case of Paramedic suicide, please don't overlook the potential for unreported suicide attempts. In the case of drug abuse amongst Paramedics, please consider the impact of work-related injuries as a cause of drug abuse in addition to the emotional/mental causes.

I have concerns about my own wellbeing and the wellbeing of my colleagues. I am also concerned because the Service has traditionally been very good at giving the appearance of appropriate action through documentation and procedures when the reality is something very different. We need someone to be concerned about us and not about procedures, documentation, and protecting the image of the Service.

Thank you.