

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Ambulance Services
Witness:	Minister Mikakos/Associate Professor Walker
Committee member:	Mr Hibbins – requested the information
Page/s of transcript:	Not Applicable

Relevant text

1. In the financial year how many ambulance call-outs actually attracted a fee for service and what was the total revenue raised from that fee for service?

Answer

On 1 July 2014, the previous government introduced revised transport fees in line with the cost of delivering ambulance services.

In 2017-18 there were 145,882 incidents that attracted a fee for service. Information regarding transport fees is available in Ambulance Victoria's 2017-18 Annual Report.

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2. How many fee for services are Victorian residents versus non-Victorian residents?

Answer

Of the 145,882 incidents in 2017-18 that attracted a fee for service, 139,326 were Victorians and 6,556 were non-Victorians. Fees for ambulance services are applicable at the same rate, to Victorians and non-Victorians.

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3. What is the number of fee-for-service call-outs that have had to access a hardship program or flexible payment arrangements?

Answer

As at 7 June 2019, Ambulance Victoria has 1,635 debtors utilising flexible payment arrangements. Under Ambulance Victoria's hardship policy, in 2017-18, 386 invoices were waived.

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4. How many concession card holders and people with healthcare cards have been exempted from fee-for-service?

Answer

The Victorian Government is committed to delivering emergency ambulance services to the Victorian community. There are several options for individuals to cover the cost of these services, including:

- Membership of the Ambulance Victoria Membership Subscription Scheme.
- Private health insurance.
- Concession entitlements for pension/healthcare card holders.

Fees are also paid, when appropriate, by the Transport Accident Commission, WorkSafe Victoria and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

If patients are not covered, costs are recovered through a fee for service model.

In 2017-18, there were 493,234 services provided to concession cardholders.

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5. What is the current figure now sitting in terms of unpaid ambulance bills, and what is the figure that that has been referred on to debt collectors?

Answer

Information relating to Ambulance Victoria's bad and doubtful debts is provided in their Annual Report.

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6. What is Ambulance Victoria’s approach to heatwaves is and what strategies you have around being equipped to deal with heatwaves and the increasing number of them?

Answer

Ambulance Victoria’s Emergency Response Plan is the overarching plan for response to emergency incidents, including extreme heat. The Extreme Heat Sub-plan provides triggers based on the Bureau of Meteorology forecast and Department of Health and Human Services’ Heat Health Alert System, to prepare for an extreme heat emergency.

In the event of extreme heat, Ambulance Victoria will enact an Emergency Response Plan for the area/s affected. This plan will consider operational and resourcing requirements, including the facilitation of additional crews if required.

Whilst these crews would be rostered to areas of anticipated high demand, Ambulance Victoria utilises real time demand management capabilities to manage operational resources. This enables Ambulance Victoria to mobilise the fleet as required and ensures optimal resource coverage at any given time.

Ambulance Victoria also has a number of other sub-plans that describe preparation and deployment of staff welfare, managing demand, and other potential consequences of an extreme heat emergency.

Ambulance Victoria is well engaged with Victoria’s emergency management and health networks, and arrangements ensure any response to extreme heat is coordinated across all relevant agencies and departments.