

Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria

Victorian Government response

OFFICIAL

Introduction

The Victorian Government (the Government) acknowledges and thanks the Legislative Council's Legal and Social Issues Committee (the Committee) for its work to deliver the Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria (the inquiry).

The Government thanks those who contributed to the Committee's inquiry, including current and former staff, who shared their perspectives and experiences to help shape Ambulance Victoria as a world-leading ambulance service.

Victoria's paramedics are among the best in the world. Supported by a highly capable and committed team across Ambulance Victoria, our paramedics deliver safe and high-quality care to Victorians in their most vulnerable moments.

The findings of the inquiry underscore the critical importance of reforms already underway to improve Ambulance Victoria's culture and operational effectiveness. The findings enable the Government to reaffirm its commitment to partnering with Ambulance Victoria to deliver meaningful and sustainable change for its employees and the wider community.

Together, we will work towards our shared goal for a respectful and inclusive ambulance service that delivers timely, safe and high-quality care to the Victorian community when they need it most.

Workplace culture, leadership and accountability

Every Victorian deserves a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace — particularly our paramedics, who play a vital role in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community.

The Government acknowledges that paramedics, together with the broader Ambulance Victoria workforce, have experienced long-term organisational and cultural challenges within Ambulance Victoria.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission made 43 recommendations to address systemic issues impacting Ambulance Victoria's organisational culture and leadership. Ambulance Victoria has accepted all recommendations.

The recommendations are being implemented through its *People Plan 2025–28* which focuses on workforce engagement, culture and safety, learning and development and leadership effectiveness.

Ambulance Victoria has already introduced a range of reforms including:

- The establishment of the Professional Standards and Behaviours Department to manage complaints and protect the safety and wellbeing of staff.

- The Upstander and Leading Together programs that support positive cultural change.
- The co-design of new organisational values that will set expectations for workplace conduct.

The Government is committed to building a workplace culture that is inclusive and safe for all employees, so that our frontline paramedics can continue to deliver high-quality emergency care for all Victorians.

The Government expects that the continued timely delivery of all existing Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission recommendations remains an organisational priority of Ambulance Victoria.

Ambulance Victoria governance

Strong and robust governance is essential to the delivery of safe and high-quality public health services. The Government is committed to ensuring that Ambulance Victoria's board reflects the experiences and diversity of the communities it serves. This has been reflected in the recent appointment of Andrew Crisp AM APM as Board Chair of Ambulance Victoria, and the appointment of Jordan Emery as the organisation's Chief Executive Officer.

In accordance with the *Ambulance Services Act 1986* the Government will continue to consider clinical expertise and community representation in Ambulance Victoria board appointments.¹

Recruitment is underway for Ambulance Victoria board appointments as part of the annual cycle of health service board appointments (with new board members typically commencing from 1 July 2026).

Operational service delivery and performance

Victorian paramedics consistently deliver high quality and safe care when people need it most. The Government acknowledges that increasing demand and patient acuity across the health system continues to place pressure on Ambulance Victoria's response times.

That is why, since 2014–15, the Government has invested over \$2 billion in ambulance services. This includes \$55.4 million in the 2025-26 budget to support implementation of the Standards for Safe and Timely Ambulance and Emergency Care (the Standards), introducing operational efficiencies in hospitals to reduce delays for paramedics and support them to get back out on the road faster.²

The 2026-27 budget invests a further \$50.7 million to improve operational performance across the ambulance and emergency care system, including by connecting people to the right care, improving call taking and dispatch, and reducing ambulance transfer delays at emergency departments.³

Triage and dispatch processes

Continued improvement across all aspects of our healthcare system is integral to providing continued, world-class health care.

The Government acknowledges that there are opportunities to improve triage and dispatch processes and is committed to working with Triple Zero Victoria and Ambulance Victoria to strengthen call taking procedures. Ambulance Victoria has already commenced work to improve triage and dispatch processes as part of its 2025-26 improvement priorities and which the 2026-27 budget continues to support.

¹ [Ambulance Services Act 1986](#), p. 16.

² For further information please see: <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/standards-for-safe-and-timely-ambulance-and-emergency-care-for-victorians>>

³ [Faster Emergency Care For Victorians | Premier](#)

A Clinical Response Working Group has been created, comprising frontline paramedics, management, technical experts and industrial body representatives. This group is tasked with identifying opportunities to refine existing triage processes, ensuring patients receive the most appropriate response.

In addition, Ambulance Victoria has increased its workforce allocation at communications centres to provide clinical oversight and assist in improving call triaging processes.

Performance reporting

The Government is committed to accurate and regular performance reporting of all health services, including Ambulance Victoria.

Ambulance Victoria's demand and response performance will continue to be publicly and transparently reported through the quarterly publication of Victorian Health Services Performance dataset.⁴

This includes publication of the percentage of ambulance transfers occurring within 40 minutes at every emergency department across Victoria.

Potential changes to public reporting by the Department of Health and Ambulance Victoria are regularly considered as part of existing performance oversight and monitoring functions.

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Reform

An efficient and effective non-emergency patient transport sector is a critical part of Victoria's health system.

The Victorian Government published its response to the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Review in January 2025.⁵ The response outlines reforms underway to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve coordination, efficiency and workforce sustainability.

In response to the review, the Department of Health is progressing a series of key reforms including:

- Separation of planned and unplanned non-emergency transport services.
- Centralised booking and dispatch systems to improve statewide coordination and efficiency.
- Enhanced access to non-emergency patient transport services in regional areas.
- Improved governance and workforce planning targets to reduce workforce casualisation.

Updates detailing the progress of non-emergency patient transport reform activities will be published on the Department of Health's webpage.

Further information is available here: <<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/non-emergency-patient-transport-review>>

⁴ [Victorian Health Services Performance, Victorian Agency for Health Information.](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/non-emergency-patient-transport-review)

⁵ For further information please see: <<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/reforms-underway-non-emergency-patient-transport>>

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Government Response and Rationale
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria continue to implement the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s recommendations, particularly priority recommendations 3, 6, 7 and 42.</p> <p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria continue to implement the recommendations of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s Independent Review, in particular recommendations 2, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 23.</p> <p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria continue to implement the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s recommendations, particularly priority recommendations 25, 36, 37 and 42.</p> <p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria continue to implement the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s recommendations, particularly priority recommendations 28, 31 and 33.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>The recommendations from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Right’s Commission’s (VEOHRC) review were accepted by Ambulance Victoria, and their delivery is a priority for Ambulance Victoria. Many have been implemented already and others are being implemented.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria regularly update its employees and the Department of Health on its progress in addressing the recommendations of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s report.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria has implemented this recommendation. It provides regular updates to its workforce and the Department of Health, including through regular staff forums and online channels, where progress is reported, and through existing performance oversight processes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p>

Recommendation	Government Response and Rationale
<p>That Ambulance Victoria ensure that employees have opportunities to provide regular feedback about Ambulance Victoria’s implementation and progress of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s recommendations</p>	<p>Ambulance Victoria has implemented this recommendation. This includes the provision of regular organisational forums and online channels. Direct feedback is also sourced through the Ambulance Victoria Service Hub or anonymously via Ambulance Victoria SpeakUp. In 2026 Ambulance Victoria is also introducing an Employee Advisory Committee to enable two-way communication and collaboration.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria will continue to ensure a variety of mechanisms for workforce feedback, including the incorporation of the VEOHRC recommendations into its People Plan.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>That the Minister for Ambulance Services consider the skills and composition of the board at Ambulance Victoria, including a requirement to have representation on the board with direct paramedicine experience and expertise.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>The Victorian Government has implemented this recommendation. The Victorian Government recognises the importance of paramedicine and other clinical expertise within the Ambulance Victoria Board.</p> <p>Each board appointment involves consideration of what skills are needed and can be provided to the board, including seeking to include paramedicine experience and expertise to ensure appropriate oversight and a holistic view of the organisation in totality.</p> <p>The Board Chair works with the Department of Health and the Minister for Ambulance Services to ensure the Board has the requisite skills, competency and diversity mix to provide strong and insightful stewardship of the organisation in alignment with the Victorian Government Board Director Capability Framework.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria be more supportive of staff mental health by significantly investing in supports and programs which have a meaningful and tangible benefit.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria continues to implement this recommendation through the Mental Wellbeing Action Plan 2025 – 2028, which sets out projects and programs to support the mental wellbeing of their workforce. Ambulance Victoria firmly believes in creating a workplace that is safe and healthy for all staff.</p>

Recommendation	Government Response and Rationale
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria publicly report on the implementation of its new Human Resources and Payroll System.</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria is progressing exploration of a new Human Resources and Payroll System and will report on it in line with the Victorian Government Digital Strategy 2021-2026.⁶</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria develops a culture that achieves operational effectiveness without compromising employee wellbeing.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria strongly agrees that operational effectiveness can and must be achieved without compromising employee wellbeing. This is a core element of Ambulance Victoria’s People Plan, which is being implemented and reported on to staff.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria ensure that all adverse events, including deaths, are reported to Safer Care Victoria.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria does – and will continue to – report all relevant patient safety and quality issues to the Department of Health and Safer Care Victoria within mandated timelines via the Safer Care Victoria Sentinel Event Portal.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria introduce performance indicators around the accuracy of the call taking triage process, particularly in relation to Code 1 cases. Ambulance Victoria should then publish data in its Annual Reports on the number of Code 1 cases where it was discovered the event type assigned during the call taking process did not match the actual problem.</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government supports improvements to the accuracy of call taking triage processes including the use of performance indicators and are actively working on strengthening these processes. The 2026-27 budget provides funding to improve how calls are triaged, reviewed and classified.</p> <p>The Department of Health, Ambulance Victoria, Triple Zero Victoria and the Emergency Management Commissioner are amending performance monitoring and reporting processes to better manage risks and unintended consequences.</p>

⁶ <https://www.vic.gov.au/a-future-ready-victoria/digital-strategy-2021-2026> - this requires that all government agencies report the status of ICT projects valued at \$1 million or more.

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<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>That the Inspector General for Emergency Management in Victoria undertake and publish a review of emergency ambulance call answer performance in order to improve the call taking process and reduce cases of overtriaging.</p>	<p>Response: Under review</p> <p>The Victorian Government recognises the importance of regular review and continuous improvement of call-taking and dispatch processes to ensure they are effective and efficient.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria undertakes regular cyclic reviews of its dispatch grid and works together with Triple Zero Victoria to support changes to the Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System. It is appropriate that Ambulance Victoria and Triple Zero Victoria, as the clinical and operational subject matter experts, continue to work together to review and enhance call-taking and dispatch processes.</p> <p>IGEM's 2022 Review of Victoria's emergency ambulance call answer performance focused on broader system level factors that impacted the ability of Victoria's triple zero service to serve the community during unprecedented and sustained demand for ambulance services associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This included factors such as governance, planning, forecasting, and resourcing of Victoria's triple zero service. The review did not consider or make judgements on clinical matters or the specifics of medical triage which are beyond IGEM's remit.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria adopt clinical oversight similar to other jurisdictions that are able to override the event types prescribed by ProQA.</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria and Triple Zero Victoria will work together to ensure the use of ProQA is best suited to Victorian emergency response needs, including the right models for dispatch prioritisation. Where appropriate this will include drawing on experience and better practice from other comparable jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria increase the number of clinical staff assigned to oversee the call taking process at State Emergency Communications Centres. This may include communications clinicians or other clinical staff as Ambulance Victoria see</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria and Triple Zero Victoria will work together to determine optimal volumes – and types – of clinical staff to support all aspects of the emergency response system, including State Emergency Communications Centres. This information will be used to inform advice to Government.</p>

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fit. Ambulance Victoria should also encourage Triple Zero Victoria staff to be more confident in flagging what they believe to be incorrect event types.	
<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>That the Victorian Government work with Ambulance Victoria and the health networks to ensure accurate and public reporting of ambulance ramping data.</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government is committed to accurate and regular performance reporting of all health services, including Ambulance Victoria.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria demand and response performance will continue to be publicly and transparently reported through the quarterly publication of Victorian Health Services Performance dataset.⁷</p>
<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria investigate ways to increase the number of paramedic graduate employment pathways.</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria will continue to do workforce planning by bringing together data and analysis regarding demand for workers, innovative models of workforce utilisation and worker supply pathways, such as graduate employment. This will be used to inform advice to Government.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria conduct a review of resourcing for large regional centres to determine whether it is sufficient. Such a review should take into account current service needs and the impact of pressures such as over-triaging and ambulance ramping on resourcing.</p>	<p>Response: Support in principle</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria will continue reviewing resourcing across Victoria to ensure services meet community needs.</p> <p>Since 2014-15, the Victorian Government has invested over \$2 billion in ambulance services,⁹ reflecting its ongoing commitment to the Victorian community.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria examine the shortcomings of single response paramedic units and investigate best practice approaches.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria has implemented additional wellbeing supports for single responders, in particular for rural and isolated areas, including regular face-to-face check ins and post incident support. These supports will help reduce isolation and</p>

⁷ [Victorian Health Service Performance, Victorian Agency for Health Information.](#)

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	<p>mental health risks, with single responders able to make a request via their manager to organise a partner where this may be operationally feasible.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria will continue to review the Single Response paramedic model across the state and use outcomes to inform advice provided to Government.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20</p> <p>That Ambulance Victoria urgently complete the rollout of digital communications and information technology for ambulances in regional Victoria.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria is on track to complete investments to enhance communication across the state with iPad project being completed in May 2025 and digital radio upgrade program on track to be completed mid-2026. It will continue to steadily rollout new tools in line with project implementation planning.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21</p> <p>That the Victorian Government release its response to the non-emergency patient transport review as a matter of priority to provide certainty for the sector.</p>	<p>Response: Support in full</p> <p>The Victorian Government has implemented this recommendation. The Department of Health published its response to the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Review in January 2025.⁸ The response outlines reforms to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve coordination, efficiency and workforce sustainability.</p>

⁸ For further information please see: <<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/reforms-underway-non-emergency-patient-transport>>