

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria

Melbourne – Friday 29 August 2025

MEMBERS

Joe McCracken – Chair

Michael Galea – Deputy Chair

Ryan Batchelor

Anasina Gray-Barberio

Renee Heath

Ann-Marie Hermans

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Aiv Puglielli

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Richard Welch

WITNESS

Anthony Carlyon.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the public hearing of the Legal and Social Issues Committee. I declare the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria open. Please ensure that mobile phones are switched to silent and that background noise is minimised.

I would first like to acknowledge the original custodians of the land, the Aboriginal peoples, and pay respects to their elders past and present.

We will go through and introduce the members of the committee. I am Joe McCracken, Chair.

Michael GALEA: Michael Galea, Deputy Chair.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Ryan Batchelor, Member for the Southern Metropolitan Region.

Georgie CROZIER: Georgie Crozier.

Rachel PAYNE: Rachel Payne, Member for South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Good morning. Anasina Gray-Barberio, Northern Metro.

The CHAIR: We may also have some members appear online when the time comes. A couple of them might be a little bit late.

All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information that you provide during the hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during the hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things, these comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing, and transcripts will ultimately be made public and put on the website.

Just for the Hansard record, can you please say your name and the organisation you are appearing on behalf of.

Anthony CARLYON: Anthony Carlyon. I am a former executive director of specialist operations and coordination at Ambulance Victoria.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much. We have got time for a 2-minute verbal statement at the start. I am going to be pretty tight on the 2 minutes, and then we will go to questions. The questions will be 6 minutes for the coalition, 6 minutes for the Labor Party and 6 minutes for the crossbench, but I hope that responses are short, sharp and clear. I will hand it over to you for 2 minutes, and then we will go to questions.

Anthony CARLYON: Thanks, Chair. I will not need the 2 minutes, but I would also acknowledge that we are on Wurundjeri land today and pay my respects to elders past and present.

I am looking forward to clarifying any questions that the committee has today, and I shall do so to the best of my ability, as I did the last time I appeared before you. Happy to go to questions.

The CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much. We will start with the coalition. Ms Crozier, would you like to start?

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you, Mr Carlyon, for reappearing before the committee. Ms North was the acting CEO from 9 September to 29 September 2024. You were then acting CEO from 30 September to 24 October 2024. Did Ms North tell you about the legal briefing she had received during her time as acting CEO just a few weeks before, or days before, you took over?

Anthony CARLYON: Ms Crozier, I am reviewing this matter. I did not have a recollection of having actually had those briefings themselves, but I have obviously been provided with information.

Georgie CROZIER: What is that information you have been provided with?

Anthony CARLYON: You know, a collection of emails and attachments that –

Georgie CROZIER: Can we have a copy of those emails and attachments, please?

Anthony CARLYON: My understanding is the main body of those are subject to Ambulance Victoria's legal privilege. If Ambulance Victoria provides that and if I am able to provide anything that I have been provided, I would do so.

Georgie CROZIER: Okay. Were you briefed by anyone about the matter being referred to IBAC?

Anthony CARLYON: No.

Georgie CROZIER: You were not briefed by anyone?

Anthony CARLYON: IBAC, no. I am not familiar with mention of it. I think I might recall from IBAC might have been an Ambulance Victoria media announcement at the time, I think.

Georgie CROZIER: So in your role as acting CEO or in your previous role, did you engage with the board at all?

Anthony CARLYON: No. Ms Crozier, in the CEO I would have engaged with the board in relation to normal ambulance business et cetera but no engagement with the board specifically.

Georgie CROZIER: So did you engage with the board about any of these matters that have subsequently come to light?

Anthony CARLYON: Subsequently come to light – the preparation for the parliamentary inquiry itself obviously involved members –

Georgie CROZIER: No, when you were acting CEO, at the time, in terms of any of these legal briefings that were taking place?

Anthony CARLYON: No, I do not. And what I would say in particular there is one of the reflections I have had looking at this matter is I never handed this matter over to Andrew Crisp at all either, you know, so I had not had a great deal of engagement in the process.

Georgie CROZIER: Who was the decision-maker for disciplinary matters when you were in your role, prior to being acting CEO?

Anthony CARLYON: Prior to being acting CEO, it would depend on the issue at the time, Ms Crozier, so serious misconduct –

Georgie CROZIER: Yes, serious misconduct.

Anthony CARLYON: Serious misconduct would probably sit at a CEO level.

Georgie CROZIER: Okay. And who set up the scope of any investigations? Are you aware of that given your previous role and acting CEO role?

Anthony CARLYON: Absolutely no awareness of the investigation, the parameters, allegations – no awareness of the investigation specific to guards of honour and funerals.

Georgie CROZIER: Okay. In your clarification to the committee you said, in relation to the briefing on the employment matter in October 2024, during a short period that you were acting CEO, the awareness was limited to an ongoing employment matter. What was that employment matter?

Anthony CARLYON: The employment matter was in relation to an employee dispute.

Georgie CROZIER: Was it in relation to who was setting up the guard of honour?

Anthony CARLYON: The matter was in relation to an employee dispute. The detail, Ms Crozier, of that I am only aware of on the basis of the information that Ambulance Victoria provided me in the week –

Georgie CROZIER: What did they provide to you?

Anthony CARLYON: They provided me with some emails and attachments, and what I would say about that information is there is nothing in those emails that goes to ‘guard of honour’ and ‘funeral’ that I am aware of specifically. It is legal correspondence. There is one attachment that does go to detail, and that detail is –

Georgie CROZIER: What was in that attachment?

Anthony CARLYON: That detail goes to the employee dispute, but I am not at liberty to talk about the specifics of it.

Georgie CROZIER: Was it the person who was asked to set up the guard of honour?

Anthony CARLYON: I cannot go to that, Ms Crozier.

Georgie CROZIER: Why not?

Anthony CARLYON: Because I have been advised the –

Georgie CROZIER: You know, don’t you? You know who it was.

Anthony CARLYON: I have been advised that the detail in relation to that briefing –

Georgie CROZIER: Who advised you? Who advised you not to –

Anthony CARLYON: I have legal advice.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Can we let the witness answer, please, Chair?

Georgie CROZIER: We have only got 6 minutes. Who advised you?

Anthony CARLYON: Ms Crozier, I have legal advice. If I was able to speak about that –

Georgie CROZIER: Who gave you the legal advice?

Anthony CARLYON: Legal advice comes on the basis of legal representation.

Georgie CROZIER: Sorry, just in clarification, Ambulance Victoria told you that you could not provide these details. Who told you? Who gave you that instruction?

Anthony CARLYON: Ambulance Victoria have their own representation.

Georgie CROZIER: Who gave you that instruction, Mr Carlyon?

Anthony CARLYON: I have that instruction in writing, and it is within this document here. My own legal representation has spoken to Ambulance Victoria’s representation, and I have that advice personally myself, and that advice has come from Ambulance Victoria.

Georgie CROZIER: So the emails and the attachments that you referred to previously – Ambulance Victoria have those?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes.

Georgie CROZIER: And you have got no copies of those? You have kept no copies of those?

Anthony CARLYON: No. I was sent those details, but I am advised I am not able to provide those details.

Georgie CROZIER: Who advised you?

Anthony CARLYON: My legal counsel on the basis of consultation with Ambulance Victoria's legal counsel.

Georgie CROZIER: Mr Carlyon, you say that you only became aware of the full details of the guards of honour through the media reporting in March–April 2025. So what else were you aware of in terms of that issue? Surely you were aware, in your position both as acting CEO and in your previous role, that the guards of honour for two paramedics occurred.

Anthony CARLYON: Well, what I remember very vividly – there are parts in this, Ms Crozier, that are very vivid in my mind. Do I have full awareness over everything that occurred over three or four years? I do not. But there are parts within this story, for want of a better term, that are very vivid in my mind.

Georgie CROZIER: What are they? What is vivid in your mind?

Anthony CARLYON: When the matter became public and in the media, I had the same sense of shock as many others.

Georgie CROZIER: Why?

Anthony CARLYON: I was seriously, you know – I was very much taken aback about the magnitude of what had been alleged at that time. I was obviously hugely concerned for Ambulance Victoria –

Georgie CROZIER: Was it a breach of protocols?

The CHAIR: Hold on. Time has expired, but I will let you finish this response.

Anthony CARLYON: The next part that I would say is particularly vivid for me is in going to the information I was provided just on three weeks ago in relation to this matter that we are here for today. There was information that I had never previously seen. I would not describe it as shocking, but I found some of the information a little confronting in relation to the detail.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Anthony CARLYON: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I will hand over to Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Mr Carlyon. Thank you for joining us. First, just to confirm for the committee's record, you are no longer employed with Ambulance Victoria. Is that correct?

Anthony CARLYON: No. I left the workplace the week after the parliamentary inquiry sitting. I formally finished up about four weeks after that.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. Were you given the opportunity to review the transcript records of your attendance?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes, I was. I was not at work at the time, but yes, I was.

Anthony CARLYON: Was it your recollection that brought this to light, or was it others in Ambulance Victoria raising this with you?

Anthony CARLYON: No. As I said, Mr Jordan Emery, on 11 August, made contact with me via text and said he needed to speak to me relevant to the parliamentary inquiry. And yes, I had reviewed my testimony, albeit I was not at work.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. The letter from Mr Emery discusses the information that you had receipt of, and that was the one attachment to the email that you discussed with Ms Crozier. Is that correct?

Anthony CARLYON: Could you just say that again, please?

Michael GALEA: The letter from Mr Emery discusses the information that you were privy to –

Anthony CARLYON: Yes.

Michael GALEA: and that is the attachment that you referred to?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes.

Michael GALEA: And that is the single attachment?

Anthony CARLYON: I am forwarded emails in a thread, and I think there might be four attachments, but there is only one attachment that goes to any level of detail that I am aware of.

Michael GALEA: Did the email that was forwarded to you require a response from you?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes, it did.

Michael GALEA: Do you recall opening that attachment?

Anthony CARLYON: Which –

Michael GALEA: The attachment in question.

Anthony CARLYON: Yes, and that was my previous reference to it having information that I was somewhat disturbed about, in relation to the detail.

Michael GALEA: And you opened that attachment?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes, I did.

Michael GALEA: And did you respond on the basis in part of that attachment?

Anthony CARLYON: I did. As I said, I do not have a strong recollection of the briefings at the time. I mean, put it in context – we were on the back of the most difficult industrial dispute we have probably ever had. We had just had a CEO leave in pretty complex circumstances and the workload was through the roof. So I do not recall the specifics of the briefings themselves. But upon familiarising myself with that detail, I am aware that this was a matter of dispute and had some relationship in relation to a breach of COVID, but not at any point was I briefed in relation to ‘guard of honour’, ‘funeral’ in those discussions.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. Did you intentionally give misleading evidence to this committee?

Anthony CARLYON: Absolutely not.

Michael GALEA: Thank you.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Thanks, Mr Carlyon, we appreciate, on behalf of the committee, the candour with which you are providing this clarification. It seems to me that the instigating incident that we are referring to here would have, on my understanding, happened in September 2021. Is that right?

Anthony CARLYON: This is the deaths of the two paramedics and the funerals?

Ryan BATCHELOR: Yes.

Anthony CARLYON: Yes.

Ryan BATCHELOR: And you were acting CEO in –

Anthony CARLYON: September 2024.

Ryan BATCHELOR: 2024. Okay. Sorry, I am just trying to get the timeframes clear in my head here. The basis on which you sought to issue a clarification to the committee was that there was information about that incident three years prior in one of four attachments to an email that you received?

Anthony CARLYON: It goes to that point in time, but it is specific to the employee issue. But it is information.

Ryan BATCHELOR: So it is not about that incident, it is about a separate incident relating to disciplinary matters with regard to an employee, or just employment-related matters?

Anthony CARLYON: It does go to some of those matters. But the specific tenet of that letter is in relation to a solution to bring the employee back into the –

Ryan BATCHELOR: Right. So it is about the resolution of an outstanding employment matter and part of the supporting material, for example.

Anthony CARLYON: Correct.

Ryan BATCHELOR: And how many other issues would have been in that attachment? Was it just about this particular guard of honour issue, or was it about a range of other matters?

Anthony CARLYON: No. From memory, it is that in the majority. It provides background, and that is as far as I know.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Okay. You got a text from the current CEO, you had a meeting, you were given a copy of the email, the committee was advised and you came here today.

Anthony CARLYON: Correct.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Did anything else happen?

Anthony CARLYON: No. As I said, Mr Emery contacted me on the 11th. I called him back immediately. I was asked for a point of clarification. I provided that. We had maybe two conversations over the period of those three days. I had some support from People and Culture during that period of time, but not in relation to detail. I was asked to clarify, and that is largely the basis of the statement that is here, is my recollection that I –

Ryan BATCHELOR: You spoke to a legal representative as well. Is that right?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes. The pragmatic reality was that I was no longer represented by Ambulance Victoria.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Yes, that is right. This was after you had left, so you were not covered by Ambulance Victoria's lawyers anyway. Did you speak to anyone else?

Anthony CARLYON: As I said, some welfare support, family and those types of things, but not about the matter specifically. The only thing was that I got one was one text from Ms North – it was a welfare check – and that was about it.

Ryan BATCHELOR: Okay. Thanks for coming and clarifying these matters. I know it is difficult, but obviously this committee needs to ensure that it is getting accurate evidence from the people who come before it. We understand that not everyone's recollections of things that occur in the past are always as crystal clear as they could be. We do appreciate it when they make amends and come back and tell us that something is different to what they told us before, so we appreciate that.

Anthony CARLYON: Thanks, Mr Batchelor.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Batchelor. I will now hand over to Ms Gray-Barberio and Ms Payne, whichever way you want to go first.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you very much, Chair. And thank you, Mr Carlyon, for being here. You were acting CEO for almost a month, from 30 September to 24 October.

Anthony CARLYON: Correct.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: How does an event like this happen without – zero knowledge – you knowing? How does that happen? As the acting CEO, you were the head of Ambulance Victoria during COVID. This is a pretty big event. How do you not have any knowledge of something like this happening?

Ryan BATCHELOR: It was not during COVID; it was three years later.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Sorry – this event that you were talking about.

Ryan BATCHELOR: It was not during an event.

The CHAIR: Can you just let her ask her question, please?

Ryan BATCHELOR: It would be helpful if it was accurate.

The CHAIR: Please continue.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you, Chair. As the acting CEO, do you accept that these things were happening under your watch without you knowing what was happening?

Anthony CARLYON: I would not accept that characterisation, in a sense. I spoke a little bit around the context of how many things were going on at Ambulance Victoria at the time. This matter had two years of history to it – three years of history, but two years of history of people doing whatever they were required. Legal representation had been obtained by Ambulance Victoria. They were taking advice. There were senior people managing the issue. There was already a plan around this. I was not required to come in and do anything. I was also managing the fallout of the EBA and the end of that, the loss of a CEO, brand new executives coming into the organisation –

Georgie CROZIER: It was a bit of a mess, wasn't it?

Anthony CARLYON: It was an intense, stressful, busy time for everybody. And I suspect if I had a history of the event in 21, maybe I would have had a different reflection. Had I had to make a decision – I certainly would not engage in making decisions around those things without knowing all the facts. The fact of the matter is this was well in train, and I did not need to do anything. So it is not that I did not know anything about it; I just was not required and there were far more important things at the time. Now, when I say that, that is in the context of – I did not know there was a parliamentary inquiry coming. I did not have that history or that recollection, because maybe I would potentially take a different approach.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Is there anything else that you want to advise the committee that is affecting our decision-making today?

Anthony CARLYON: No. My only reflection is, you know, this is a really tragic event. I hope the committee gets to the end of this matter now and Ambulance Victoria can move forward.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Okay. Thank you. That is all my questions, Chair.

The CHAIR: Ms Payne.

Rachel PAYNE: Thank you for appearing before us today. I just want to acknowledge that that time was a difficult time for a lot of people in the community, but I can only imagine what it was like for paramedics and for Ambulance Victoria during that time. I just want to understand a little bit more about how investigations happen. My colleague Ms Gray-Barberio asked more around the executive roles and would you have been privy to that investigation, but I want to understand a little bit more about just how investigations happen. Are they conducted internally? You have mentioned legal counsel and who would be involved in that. So can you just talk us through – are there numerous investigations happening, are they happening internally, is there a specific part of the agency that looks after that?

Anthony CARLYON: Yes, there is. There is a professional standards department now that essentially would look after the majority of investigations. Before that there was a professional conduct unit. And this was

a period in time – there may have been 120 investigations at a point in time, and they can be from very low-level conduct issues to quite significant matters. There would be times where the level of risk or complexity might involve bringing in an external investigator, external legal representation, to go through that process. Most would be managed internally. Some could be referred back to frontline managers to manage those things, or they could be far more formal approaches. What I would say is, without going into too much detail into VEOHRC, we learned a lot through that sort of period. The reality of a situation investigation is you know what you should know at a point in time. You are not entitled to know more. It is not about innuendo and gossip and those things. You have to follow these things through end to end to make sure it is fair and reasonable for everybody. There are various times where there are lots of investigations underway, and AV do their best to do them properly.

Rachel PAYNE: If there are multiple investigations, it is not unusual then that the executive-level roles would be briefed on each individual case?

Anthony CARLYON: It depends on the scenario. If we look at the fact of the matter and the representation around the significance of this event, this would have been managed at a higher level. This is not a matter that I would have been a decision-maker for.

Rachel PAYNE: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: No more questions. That ends time then. Mr Carlyon, thank you for your evidence today. It is much appreciated. You will get a copy of the proof transcript. Again, thanks very much for coming back. I appreciate it.

Witness withdrew.