

T R A N S C R I P T

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria

Melbourne – Friday 29 August 2025

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Michael Galea – Deputy Chair

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Anasina Gray-Barberio

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WITNESS

Jordan Emery, Chief Executive Officer, Ambulance Victoria.

The CHAIR: Welcome back to the next session of the Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into Ambulance Victoria. I am Joe McCracken, Chair of the inquiry. We are going to go through and introduce the rest of the members of the committee.

Michael GALEA: Good morning. Michael Galea, Member for South-East Metro.

Jordan EMERY: Hi, Mr Galea.

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

Jordan EMERY: Hi, Mr Batchelor.

Georgie CROZIER: Georgie Crozier. Good morning. Nice to meet you. Member for Southern Metropolitan, Shadow Minister for Health and ambulance services.

Jordan EMERY: Hello, Ms Crozier. Lovely to meet you too.

Rachel PAYNE: Hi, I am Rachel Payne from South-East Metropolitan.

Jordan EMERY: Hi, Ms Payne.

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

Jordan EMERY: Hi, Ms Gray-Barberio.

The CHAIR: And we also have two members online as well, as you can see on the screen. We have got Dr Mansfield on the left-hand side there and Dr Heath on the right-hand side.

Jordan EMERY: Hello, Dr Mansfield. Hello, Dr Heath. How are you?

The CHAIR: 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 those same things, the 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 the transcripts will ultimately be made public and put on the committee's website.

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

Jordan EMERY: Thanks, Mr McCracken. My name is Jordan Emery. I am the Chief Executive Officer of Ambulance Victoria.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Emery. Now we are going to go through questions, and we will have six minutes per block. But we have got a 2-minute slot if you want to give a short opening statement. I will be pretty sharp with the time.

Jordan EMERY: Of course.

The CHAIR: Welcome, and I will hand it over to you.

Jordan EMERY: Thanks, Mr McCracken. Thank you, committee members. I will just start with a short acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the lands we gather on today, the Wurundjeri people of the

Kulin nation. I pay my respects to their elders past and present and acknowledge any First Nations people here with us today or joining online.

I would also like to acknowledge the members of the Legal and Social Issues Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to join you today. I also acknowledge that this inquiry has provided an important opportunity for the community, our key stakeholders and members of Ambulance Victoria past and present to discuss their experiences with our organisation.

I commenced as the Chief Executive Officer just under two months ago, and it has been a wonderful start to a great organisation. I have spent the time out and about with colleagues right across various parts of the state and have been taking that time to listen to and learn from our people so I can create an organisation that better cares and supports them and the Victorian community. Of course, given such a short passage of time, I have a lot more listening and learning to do. Nonetheless I will do my best to answer your questions today fully and completely.

I recognise as an organisation that we have a significant amount of work to do to improve our culture, governance and, perhaps most importantly, restore the trust in our organisation of the Victorian community, noting that paramedics and indeed many other healthcare professionals enjoy enormous trust, and I think that is rightly held. It is why I am so committed to honesty and transparency. It underscored my decision to make the correction to this inquiry on 13 August, and of course I am very happy to take any questions you might have.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. I will hand over to Ms Crozier first.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you very much, Mr Emery, and thank you for the work that you do. You are used to misleading evidence in parliamentary inquiries, aren't you, given your previous role in Tasmania? You have just stated that you are in the interest of transparency.

Jordan EMERY: Of course.

Georgie CROZIER: Have you seen the reports into the investigations conducted about the illegal gatherings that occurred through COVID, the guards of honour, including the legal advice provided by Clayton Utz and the report conducted by Work Smart Legal Solutions?

Jordan EMERY: I have read that report, yes, Ms Crozier.

Georgie CROZIER: In relation to that, were you concerned about what was in those reports?

Jordan EMERY: I am concerned that there may have been a breach of the public health orders and a breach of the Victorian trust of course.

Georgie CROZIER: In the interest of transparency, can the committee have those reports, please?

Jordan EMERY: Ms Crozier, I know you have asked for those reports, and those reports are the subject of legal and professional privilege. I am happy to talk to that in a more principled sense about why I feel it is not possible for us to waive that privilege and release those reports.

Georgie CROZIER: But this is a really serious issue.

Jordan EMERY: Of course.

Georgie CROZIER: This was a breach of the COVID protocols. Is that what is in those reports, that was found in those reports?

Jordan EMERY: Those reports are subject to privilege, but the actions taken on that day were wrong, yes.

Georgie CROZIER: Who authorised the guards of honour?

Jordan EMERY: Given that I was not here at that time, I do not –

Georgie CROZIER: But it is in the report.

Jordan EMERY: The report is subject to legal and professional privilege. There is some contention. All I would say is there are materials in the correspondence that suggest – sorry, I should be very clear. In the email correspondence as it relates to 2021 that underscored my correction, there is a letter of thanks from the family.

Georgie CROZIER: Could we have a copy of those emails that you have received?

Jordan EMERY: I will take that on notice, but I would suggest we would release those to this committee, yes.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you. And any other documents that are relating to that issue. I think the committee and the Victorian public deserve to see what had happened given the serious nature of the breaches that occurred.

Jordan EMERY: Of course.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you.

Jordan EMERY: I understand your concern, Ms Crozier.

Georgie CROZIER: It is to restore that trust.

Jordan EMERY: Of course.

Georgie CROZIER: You have said that you want to do that in the interests of transparency.

Jordan EMERY: I do.

Georgie CROZIER: You have proven that in Tasmania in relation to what occurred in that inquiry, so I think that we would be very appreciative of that.

Jordan EMERY: Yes.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you. Have you spoken to the minister or anyone in the minister's office around this issue since you have –

Jordan EMERY: Yes, I have. I briefed the minister's office on Monday 11 August as to the facts surrounding this circumstance.

Georgie CROZIER: And in relation –

Jordan EMERY: And the department. Sorry, Ms Crozier.

Georgie CROZIER: And the department. Have you read the submissions that have been provided to this committee?

Jordan EMERY: All of them? I think there are 190, if I am correct.

Georgie CROZIER: Have you have you read submission 129, which highlights exactly what has gone on?

Jordan EMERY: In relation to the guards of honour, yes, I have.

Georgie CROZIER: In terms of that legal advice, I have been trying to question the previous witnesses about the legal advice that they were provided. It is clear that somebody had to authorise these illegal guards of honour that occurred. It is clear that at the very highest level of Ambulance Victoria the board chair, the board and the executive were aware of what went on at the time, correct?

Jordan EMERY: I think there is some information that suggests the executive were aware, that I have, yes.

Georgie CROZIER: I have been questioning Ms North about the employment matter. There is an issue around who was given direction to set up this guard of honour, and therefore there was quite an issue around the employment of that individual. Can you confirm to the committee that they were cleared of any wrongdoing?

Jordan EMERY: I cannot discuss the contents of that investigation report because of that legal and professional privilege.

Georgie CROZIER: I do not want the name of anyone, but I think that if the guard of honour was authorised at the highest level and somebody else is getting the blame for it and that is provided in a report, that is a really serious issue.

Jordan EMERY: Yes. I hear your concern about that, but I cannot disclose the contents of the investigation report. If I could touch on the point I raised earlier about the principle here, it is not to be evasive, Ms Crozier. I want to create a speak-up culture at Ambulance Victoria where people can raise concerns, and I want to be assured and I want to assure them that they can do so with the confidentiality and protection.

Georgie CROZIER: Are you concerned about the cover-up that has occurred throughout this whole thing?

Jordan EMERY: I am absolutely concerned about the accuracy of the evidence given on the 20th.

Georgie CROZIER: There was a cover-up, wasn't there?

Jordan EMERY: Well, having not been here, it is hard for me to answer.

Georgie CROZIER: You have seen the reports, you have seen the emails and you have seen what has happened. There was a cover-up.

Jordan EMERY: Well, there was a self-report to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission.

Georgie CROZIER: But then there were two other reports that were conducted, and it has been a cover-up because we cannot see what is in those reports.

Jordan EMERY: Well, I think – if I can respectfully challenge that, only because I think that there is information that is subject to legal and professional privilege that we cannot share because it safeguards a reporting culture ongoing –

Georgie CROZIER: I know, but there –

Jordan EMERY: and to waive that would be a problem, I think – a significant one.

Georgie CROZIER: But there has been a cover-up. There has been a cover-up on this issue. Illegal activity occurred during COVID.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Time is up. I will hand over to Mr Batchelor and Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr Emery. Acknowledging that you have been here, as you said, just under two months and that you started since we last had Ambulance Victoria appear before us, you have spoken about the importance of transparency and accountability, and I do note that we are here today because of the proactive measures you have taken in notifying the committee of these errors. How important is accountability to you as you set about your new leadership of AV?

Jordan EMERY: Well, Mr Galea, it is a deep and abiding personal value of mine. It is why I made the correction. Across the organisation I have spoken with hundreds of paramedics and other employees who share in that deep and abiding commitment. Now, I have been a paramedic for almost two decades. One of the things you learn very early on as a paramedic is the enormous regard the community have for you, and that trust is sacred, and it is a trust that I carry forward in my leadership as the chief executive.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. We have heard throughout this committee, as I am sure you have seen. transcript evidence of, but also we hear in our communities how important it is to hear the lived experience of paramedics. As you have started in your new role what have you done to ensure that you are listening to the concerns of AV employees?

Jordan EMERY: It is a good question. I have travelled a lot in a short time. I am having dedicated meetings with workforce right across the state – an opportunity for them to ask me any questions, to answer any

questions. I have travelled to Mildura and out the back of the Wimmera and across lots of parts of metropolitan Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo. I am very eager to listen as often as I can and learn from their experience. I fundamentally believe in a leadership culture that is designed alongside our people and key partners, and I am very committed to doing so.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. And noting that of course we are here to discuss the correction to evidence, but this is also your brief only opportunity as the new CEO to appear before this committee in engaging with the materials that you have seen in this committee, are there any particular lessons that you want to take from any of the evidence that you think are going to shape the future direction of Ambulance Victoria?

Jordan EMERY: Well, this should not have happened. These events should not have happened. They were wrong and they breached –

Georgie CROZIER: They were illegal.

Jordan EMERY: They were wrong and they breached the trust of the public, and they will never happen again.

Georgie CROZIER: They were illegal.

Michael GALEA: Hold on, Ms Crozier.

The CHAIR: Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: In terms of the broader operational culture of Ambulance Victoria, are there any areas in particular that you are looking to make changes in?

Jordan EMERY: I have had a lot of feedback about workforce planning practices, about transfers, recruitment, promotional opportunities. There are lots of opportunities to make improvements in that space. Of course continuing to support flexible work arrangements so that we can have a diverse and inclusive workforce is important to me, and a range of other pieces of feedback that I have received. But I am laser focused on that, Mr Galea. And I am laser focused on doing that in partnership with our wonderful people.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. Just on that, we have had lots of evidence around flexible work arrangements. Do you see there is room for improvement in the rostering system at an earlier stage to provide more flexibility so you do not need to rely on those formal arrangements?

Jordan EMERY: Yes, without a doubt. And there are significant rostering reforms we are already embarking on, but we have a lot more to do, and we owe it to our people to do more.

Michael GALEA: Thank you.

Ryan BATCHELOR: It has been very important for us to clarify the evidence today, and it is obviously a significant issue that we have traversed. In the 2½ minutes that I have got remaining, I might get your views on everything else we have tried to talk about over the course of this inquiry, because they are important too.

Jordan EMERY: Yes.

Ryan BATCHELOR: What do you think the important priorities are for you as someone who is leading a transformation project in a critical area of state service delivery and health delivery in the next six to 12 months? What are you focused on as the new CEO of Ambulance Victoria to improve outcomes for Victorians?

Jordan EMERY: Thanks, Mr Batchelor. Look, I think I would just say, at a high level, I am focused on our people. I am focused on creating a safe, fair, inclusive organisation, keeping them connected to the decision-making and ensuring that I listen and learn from their experiences and incorporate that into the way we do business as an organisation going forward. I am absolutely focused on performance. I want to improve code 1 response performance and reduce code 1 response times for Victoria. I want to ensure that we are directing more people to care closer to home through things like the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department and through our world-class secondary triage, and I want to use Ambulance Victoria's really outstanding research

and evaluation team to continue to drive best standards of care in Victoria, so it is not just cardiac arrest where we have the highest survival rates in the country but a whole lot of other clinical metrics as well. And it is important to me that I deliver that service within the funding envelope that the Victorian community has trusted me to deliver it in.

Ryan BATCHELOR: And in terms of the staff and organisational culture – you are a people business as much as anything else – what are the immediate steps that you are taking to improve some of the organisational culture of Ambulance Victoria?

Jordan EMERY: I think what has been very important for me is getting out and listening to and learning from people, and they have given me a whole raft of feedback. I have got another 30 or 40 I think visits – the exact number I am not quite sure – right across all parts of the state. I want to keep collating all of that information and then work in partnership with our people to design solutions, so a group of focused teams addressing some of those issues. But call taking and dispatch, as you might have heard in this committee, is a significant pain point for our people, and we are in the process of bringing about key stakeholders from the unions, from our workforce, to make sure we design solutions that support them.

Ryan BATCHELOR: My time is up, but I want to thank you on behalf of us as the committee for the evidence you have given and for clearing up these issues before us.

Jordan EMERY: Thank you, Mr Batchelor.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I will now hand over to Ms Gray-Barberio and Ms Payne.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Okay. Thank you, Chair. Congratulations, Mr Emery, on your recent appointment.

Jordan EMERY: Thank you, Ms Gray-Barberio.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And thank you for being here. I just want to start with: did you meet with Ms North and Mr Carlyon after their appearance before the committee back in June – their evidence?

Jordan EMERY: I commenced employment with AV on 30 June.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: That was after.

Jordan EMERY: Mr Carlyon had left the organisation. Ms North, as the Executive Director of Regional Operations – I have had I have had many meetings with her since that time.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you for clarifying that. I appreciate it. When did it come across your desk that the evidence they had presented to the committee in June may not have been entirely accurate? Can you give a date?

Jordan EMERY: Yes. I think it was 29 July, but it was the end of July.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Great. Thank you. I just want to pick up your answer to one of Ms Crozier's questions. You said that you had a briefing with the minister's office or minister's department on 11 August. This committee received this letter on 13 August, a couple of days later. Were you at any time during that briefing directed by the department that you needed to write this letter to the Legal and Social Issues Committee to clear up the inaccuracies that were in the evidence of Ms North and Mr Carlyon?

Jordan EMERY: Absolutely not, Ms Gray-Barberio. In fact I called the Department of Health on Saturday 2 August, some nine days before that, to say that I had made a preliminary discovery and that I would be making a correction to this committee.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Just for absolute clarity, because, you know –

Jordan EMERY: I understand the importance of the question.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: here again there was no coincidence and there was no discussion during this briefing or any advice given to you that it was probably the best thing to do and the right thing to do in the spirit of transparency to the committee to not write the letter – that is all you, as the CEO.

Jordan EMERY: No, I had already formed that view myself some 10 days earlier. Yes. In fact, if I can just be full and frank in my response –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Sure.

Jordan EMERY: When that matter first came to my attention on the –

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: And how did that matter come to your attention, the discovery?

Jordan EMERY: My Executive Director of People and Culture had become aware that there might have been some inaccuracy in the information, and I requested that he make further inquiries as to the nature of that. That was a short discussion. I cannot recall if it happened in person or on the phone, but I requested that further inquiries be made because I wanted to ensure that whatever information had been provided by my organisation to this committee was accurate, full and frank.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Great. Thank you. I do not have any more questions.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Payne, do you have –

Rachel PAYNE: Yes, please. Thank you, Chair. Thank you for appearing before us today, Mr Emery. Is the investigation still ongoing or is it finalised?

Jordan EMERY: The investigation?

Rachel PAYNE: Into the incident.

Jordan EMERY: Into the guards of honour incident?

Rachel PAYNE: Exactly.

Jordan EMERY: It is finalised.

Rachel PAYNE: Okay. I appreciate you in your opening comments making reference to wanting to approach this role with transparency and accountability, and that is the motivation for correcting those records. Can you talk us through if that has had any impact on processes and procedures internally around investigations in considering moving forward with transparency and accuracy?

Jordan EMERY: Yes. I mean, the undertaking of investigations is obviously a very important organisational function, and that needs to be done, as I said earlier, with an overlay of legal and professional privilege. And I appreciate that in this circumstance that might draw the impression that there is a lack of transparency, but it is my honest belief, not just in the Victorian context but having led teams and overseen investigations in my role in both Tasmania and New South Wales ambulance, that that privilege is a very important part of ensuring a safe culture for people to speak up and raise concerns.

Rachel PAYNE: Okay. Thank you. Thanks, Chair.

The CHAIR: Do you wish to cede your time to anyone else? Because you have got about a minute –

Georgie CROZIER: I have got another question.

Rachel PAYNE: I will hand my minute over to Ms Crozier.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you. Just following on again regarding that discovery, could you just provide the committee with a little bit more context about that?

Jordan EMERY: Yes. Sorry, could I trouble you to be just a bit more specific?

Georgie CROZIER: When you were answering Ms Gray-Barberio's question you said there was a discovery. Could you just give more some context about that?

Jordan EMERY: Yes – no trouble at all, Ms Crozier. Mr Maddison, our executive director of people and culture, raised with me that the information might have been incorrect.

Georgie CROZIER: How did he find out? What did he think? Why did he say that?

Jordan EMERY: I believe he had been notified by the union that they did not believe the information was correct.

Georgie CROZIER: So the union did not believe the information provided to the committee was correct and Mr Maddison then alerted you. Did that spark any other investigations that you have done?

Jordan EMERY: Yes, it did, Ms Crozier.

Georgie CROZIER: And what were they?

Jordan EMERY: I requested that Mr Maddison make further inquiries about this, because it was, as I understand, a very general remark about the information not being accurate. Mr Maddison, I believe, spoke to our legal counsel and identified two emails from 2021.

Georgie CROZIER: So if the union raised issues, that has got to have an impact on the morale of paramedics?

Jordan EMERY: Yes, of course.

Georgie CROZIER: Thank you.

The CHAIR: That is time, Mr Emery. Thank you very much for coming along today. That brings an end to this session. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript to have a look over to make any minor alterations and those sorts of things. From us, thanks very much for your time today.

Committee adjourned.