

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [transferofcare](#)  
**Subject:** Ambulance Ramping  
**Date:** Monday, 25 September 2023 7:33:14 PM

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Dear Dr Woodruff,

I would like to share an experience I had in May 2020 in regards to Ambulance availability.

I had a mountain bike accident on the trails in Latrobe. I didn't lose consciousness, but immediately knew that I had injured my chest which was bulging out, and my neck, as I couldn't turn my head.

I phoned 000 and spoke to the operator who advised me that there were no ambulances available locally and suggested that I wait until the shift changeover when one might become available. Given the uncertainty of the situation, and my naivety, I decided instead to walk for approximately 30 minutes to the trailhead and carpark, and on the way, I called my wife who came to pick me up. She drove me to North West Regional Hospital (the Mersey Community Hospital was closed at the time due to COVID lockdowns the unavailability of locum doctors I believe) and the trip took approximately an hour.

Soon after arriving at the Emergency Department of the hospital, I had scans done and I was diagnosed as having two fractures in my C1 vertebrae, and some other fractures in my lower back, as well as a fractured sternum. I was immediately flown to Royal Hobart Hospital. The doctors in Burnie told me that my condition was critical and suggested that I should consider phoning family members and friends in case I didn't survive.

During my inpatient admission, and subsequent appointments, medical staff expressed their amazement that I had arrived in hospital sitting up in a car without a neck brace. Apparently due to the instability of the fracture to the C1, even a slight movement could have been enough to cause paralysis or death.

I think that ambulance ramping is a ridiculous misuse of such a valuable resource. It is clear that when emergency vehicles are parked in a hospital, they aren't available to attend to accidents and other time-critical medical events. I assume the issue is due to other parts of the health system in crisis.

I was very lucky to survive the accident I had, and although I will live with chronic pain and an unstable fracture of my C1 for the rest of my life, I feel far luckier than I would have if I had become a paraplegic, and it is infinitely better than dying.

Thank you for looking into the issue of ambulance ramping. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any enquiries in regards to my story.

By the way, if you'd like to hear a good news ambulance story, I could tell you about how 5

months later, in October 2020 I had a cardiac arrest minutes after an ambulance arrived at my house. My wife and the paramedics resuscitated me in the back of the ambulance and I was taken to the LGH for emergency heart surgery. If there had been no ambulance locally in Sheffield that day, I would undoubtedly have died. You have my consent to access the Digital Medical Records to verify this.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]