

Department of Health

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Ms Fiona Murphy
Secretary
Select Committee on Transfer of Care Delays (Ambulance Ramping)
transferofcare@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Murphy

Subject: Corrections of statements made at the hearings of 12 and 14 December 2023

On 12 and 14 December a number of witnesses attended hearings of the Select Committee on Transfer of Care Delays to provide their testimony, additional information regarding their statements and to respond to questions from the Committee.

The purpose of this letter is to directly address that a number of those statements were factually inaccurate, and I write to you today in my capacity as Chief Executive of Ambulance Tasmania to address these inaccuracies and to correct the public record.

Issue 1: The claim by Mr Ryan Posselt that paramedics are advised to complete mandatory training while awaiting transfer of care.

In his initial written submission to the Select Committee, an Ambulance Tasmania paramedic, Mr Ryan Posselt claimed that it is an organisational expectation of Ambulance Tasmania that paramedics will complete mandatory online training while they are awaiting transfer of care.

On 12 November he repeated this claim in person to the Select Committee. This statement is inaccurate.

Ambulance Tasmania can confirm it *recommends* paramedics utilise their down time whilst on shift to complete mandatory training, should it be appropriate to do so and does not interfere with the undertaking of their rostered duties. Ambulance Tasmania places has not directed paramedics/volunteers to complete training while they are on a meal break or when providing patient care. This includes at any time when involved in transfer of care delays.

When paramedics are not actively involved on an incident it is encouraged, but not mandated, that they will utilise this time while on station to complete training packages.

Ambulance Tasmania acknowledges there have been instances where paramedics have not completed mandatory training by required due dates. In those exceptional circumstances special arrangements have been put in place.

For example, at the beginning of the next rostered shift, those paramedics required to complete or renew mandatory training are released from operational duties to allow them to complete it at work whilst being paid. Once that training is completed the individual then returns to operational duties.

Essential Skills Maintenance (ESM), referred to as the: “*two days training*” by Mr Posselt, is currently being rolled out for all operational staff across the state, as per the Award. This is being conducted in South, North, North West and the Communications Centre by a combination of Clinical Support Officers and trained ESM instructors within each area.

It is projected that all staff will have completed the initial mandatory ESM training prior to 19 February 2024.

As of 17 December 2023, a total of 185 staff (37%) statewide have been provided the required ESM training. At times, ESM training has been rescheduled to meet operational resourcing requirements due to short notice roster changes. This training is provided at a later date, with no impact to the paramedic’s rostered work hours.

Issue 2: The claim by Mr Ryan Posselt that every hour there is a lights and sirens job the Communication Centre reads out that gets no response.

In his initial written submission to the Select Committee Ambulance Tasmania paramedic, Mr Ryan Posselt claimed that multiple times a day, dispatchers are forced to read a priority response pending with no available response.

On 12 November he repeated this claim in person to the Select Committee. Ambulance Tasmania believes the statement by Mr Posselt that: “every hour there is a P1/P0 case that gets no response” is incorrect.

Ambulance Tasmania has procedures that are followed, with collaboration between the Ambulance Tasmania Deployment Supervisor, Ambulance Tasmania Operations Supervisors and staff at the Emergency Departments to release crews that are at hospital when there are un-resourced P1/P0 cases in the community. The broadcasting of all P1/P0 cases by the Emergency Medical Dispatcher is standard practice.

Issue 3: The claim by Mr Ryan Posselt that it is normal practice for paramedics to work an additional 1-2 hours after completing a 12-hour shift.

In his submission to the Select Committee Mr Ryan Posselt stated that paramedics anecdotally report 1-2 hours overtime after completing a 12-hour shift and that this practice is a completely normal and expected part of the day.

This statement is not accurate.

The nature of emergency services work does result in some extension of shift overtime when incidents require immediate resourcing towards the end of a paramedic’s rostered shift. Ambulance Tasmania is currently working with the Health & Community Services Union (HACSU) to draft an End of Shift Dispatch procedure which will restrict the dispatching of paramedics to only life-threatening cases in the final hour of their shift.

Issue 4: The claim made by Mr Lucas Digney, Industrial Manager of the Health & Community Services Union (HACSU), that on Saturday 9 December 2023 only forty percent of the night shift was covered.

On 14 November 2023 Mr Lucas Digney claimed, in response to questions from Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP, Chair of the Select Committee, that Ambulance Tasmania was only able to fill forty percent (40%) of the staff roster for the Northern region.

This statement is not correct.

Ambulance Tasmania agrees that staffing was impacted by COVID-19 absences and other sick leave absences within the service during the dates provided. However, regionally the North of the state had 77 percent (77%) coverage despite additional late-notice unplanned absences occurring.

Business continuity plans are applied in such circumstances and operational leaders work collaboratively with all regions statewide to resource anticipated community demands.

Should you have any queries, I would be happy to respond to those directly either by written submission or at the upcoming hearing for the Department of Health.

Sincerely



Jordan Emery
Chief Executive

10 January 2024