

Mr David Horseman
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Dear David

Change Proposals – CERT Trial at Huonville and Sorell

HACSU has consulted with members and our sub-branch executive recently over changes to volunteer arrangements. We do not agree that volunteers (including CERT) should be co-located with career or urban paramedics as such we advise we are in dispute.

As the we are in dispute about this change the status quo provisions of the Award apply, the status quo is the condition that exists, which is, that career paramedics are not co-located at stations with volunteers.

Further comments

We appreciate there is a link to have Sorell VAOs at Dodges Ferry in the first instance, but otherwise they will fill the CERT function at Sorell station. This is contrary to normal arrangements and agreed patterns of work in career environments because usually, career paramedics do not work hand-in-glove with volunteers. As such we do not support the introduction of the CERT function at Sorell or Huonville as those locations will become career stations.

HACSU believes that a CERT at Richmond and Cygnet makes more sense than co-locating with career paramedics. Richmond's population has grown, and Cygnet has better access to the Channel region south of Woodbridge; other locations such as Geeveston or Dover should be considered too. We understand that Ambulance Tasmania got clear guidance from the 2014 ORH report about where to put additional resources and we seek to be consulted about that, especially given a new ORH report is due this month.

We have significant concerns about the training that has been provided to upskill the affected individuals to the CERT role. The potential for this group of volunteers to access a type 1 ambulance to transport patients when paramedic resources are low is alarming. Currently, sector wide issues like high workload and ramping at hospitals make this more likely.

We strongly caution that volunteers shouldn't do this kind of work, but we do know of recent examples where VAOs transported patients without paramedic support.

Given the parameters of the trial, and based on KPIs, it appears this trial has little chance of success. We are advised that both locations currently run well below the 66% coverage criteria and this model will require 2 volunteers to be present as per the traditional CERT model.

We have significant concern that the volunteers will be required (for operational reasons) to be sent to back up paramedics or first responding out of the stated catchment area, as the nearest available resource, we have seen this at already at existing CERT locations. We are also concerned that Volunteers will not be 'on call' as is traditional for the CERT role but will be required to be at Station for their shift and this will likely lead to an unsuccessful trial.

We formally raise concerns about the time career paramedics from these stations will spend in the Greater Hobart urban area to the detriment of their nominal catchment area, particularly for areas south of Huonville where alternate resources are very limited.

Yours sincerely



Chris Kennedy
Industrial Officer

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