



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SESSION OF 2022 - 2023

(THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 56

TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

1 COUNCIL MEETS.— The Council met at 11.00 o'clock in the forenoon.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLE.— The President said: “We meet today on Tasmanian Aboriginal land. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and elders, past and present. We recognise them as the traditional and original owners and the continuing custodians of this land.”

3 PRAYERS.— The President read Prayers.

4 PARAMEDIC GRADUATES.— Ms *Lovell* asked the Honourable the Leader of the Government — In relation to employment of the paramedic workforce in Tasmania, can the Government advise:—

- (1) (a) In each of the last 3 years, how many graduate paramedic program placements (12 month course) were offered; and
(b) how many suitable applicants applied for these roles?
- (2) (a) In each of the last 3 years, how many offers of employment were made to graduates on completion of their practical placement; and
(b) of those offers how many were:
 - i. permanent;
 - ii. fixed term; and
 - iii. casual?
- (3) Of the total paramedic workforce, how many paramedics are currently employed on fixed term or casual contracts compared to permanent employment?
- (4) Of the total paramedic workforce, how many paramedics are currently not working due to:
 - (a) workers compensation claims; and
 - (b) leave (for a continuous period of more than 4 weeks)?
- (5) In the last 12 months, how many shifts each week has the Sorell station been called to the Mornington station to be on standby?
- (6) (a) In the last 12 months, how many calls for backup response have been fulfilled by each station; and
(b) of those not fulfilled, what is the reason for not fulfilling?
- (7) In the last 12 months:
 - (a) how many shifts had ambulances staffed by a singular paramedic; and

- (b) how many shifts had ambulances staffed with a singular paramedic and patient transport worker?
- (8) In the last 12 months, for each ambulance station, how many day and night shifts have they been closed?
- (9) In the last 12 months, how many shifts have been uncovered at each ambulance station?
- (10) (a) In the last 12 months, how many deaths have occurred in an ambulance that has been ramped; and
(b) what is the category of the patient on the ramp and the amount of time they were ramped for?
- (11) (a) In the last 12 months, how many Transfer of Care (TOC) shifts have been offered each day; and
(b) in which locations and how many of the shifts were filled/unfilled?
- (12) In the last 12 months, how many shifts of 12 hours or more in duration were completed by paramedics at each station?
- (13) (a) How many paramedics (including graduate placements) were employed by Ambulance Tasmania as at 27 February 2023; and
(b) how many were employed as at 1 March 2023?

The Leader answered as follows:

- (1) In the 2020 graduate recruitment campaign 56 applicants were deemed suitable for appointment with 25 graduates appointed over two intakes: 13 graduates commenced in March 2021 (Course 2021A), and 12 commenced in August 2021 (Course 2021B).

In the 2021 graduate recruitment campaign 41 applicants were deemed suitable for appointment with 37 graduates appointed over three intakes: 18 in November 2021 (Course 2021C), 16 in February 2022 (Course 2022A), and three in May 2022 (Course 2022B).

As outlined above, the total graduates that commenced with Ambulance Tasmania between March 2021 and May 2022 was 62.

A graduate recruitment process has recently been finalised with the induction course commencing on 5 June 2023 (Course 2023A). The course comprises 23 graduates.

- (2) As at 22 May 2023 the status of graduates is summarised below.

Of the 25 graduates that commenced with Ambulance Tasmania in Courses 2021A and 2021B, seven are employed in permanent positions, 11 in fixed-term positions, and four in casual positions. Three individuals separated from the organisation.

Of the 37 graduates that commenced with Ambulance Tasmania in Courses 2021C, 2022A and 2022B, three are employed in permanent positions, 30 are employed in fixed-term contracts, and four individuals separated from the organisation.

A process of offering permanent positions to those individuals in fixed-term positions is taking place as part of the conversion of COVID positions to permanent.

- (3) On 24 March 2023, the number of paramedics employed on a fixed term/casual basis was 94, with 366 employed on a permanent basis. This does not include paramedics employed in supervisor, management, and educational positions.

Forty-five paramedic positions, including 12 Intensive Care Paramedic positions, were created under COVID-19 funding arrangements, and these positions will now be permanently funded and filled.

- (4) (a) Fourteen paramedics are currently on workers compensation and are unable to work.
(b) As at 16 May 2023, there are 48 paramedics on leave for four weeks or more, including leave without pay. This includes extended sick leave, maternity leave, long service leave and other leave types.

- (5) Standby points are employed to provide cover over primary response areas, as part of a dynamic deployment model. This approach ensures the timeliest response to incidents.
- (6) (a) The provision of back up is dynamic, with resources dispatched to a case as indicated and redirected to other cases based on community need. Ambulance Tasmania cannot readily track 'back up' but can track resource numbers dispatched to individual cases.
- (b) If back up is required, it is provided. Back up is dispatched as clinically indicated. Back up may be cancelled upon assessment of patient needs by paramedics, and back up may be delayed if resources are not immediately available.
- (7) (a) Ambulance Tasmania cannot readily provide this information. This requires manually sorting through all daily muster sheets for the 12-month period.
- Ambulance Tasmania does employ paramedics in single responder roles, including the Critical Response Unit in the North West and North, where an Intensive Care Paramedic is deployed in a light fleet vehicle.
- In the three geographical regions Community Paramedics and Extended Care Paramedics are deployed as single responders to provide care to patients who ring Triple Zero and are assessed to be of lower acuity.
- (b) In the last 12 months (23 March 2022 to 24 March 2023) there were 27 shifts staffed with a paramedic and a Patient Transport Officer.
- (8) This information is not readily available, as it is captured on paper-based muster sheets, which indicate redeployment of crews to stations with unfilled shifts and standby arrangements.
- (9) Ambulance Tasmania seeks to fill all shifts through the use of casual staff and the offering of overtime shifts. Where shifts cannot be filled, crews may be redeployed to stations and standby arrangements may be put in place, to ensure coverage of primary response areas.

On 1 November 2022, Ambulance Tasmania introduced the daily desk, a function that manages daily staffing issues on a statewide basis. The daily desk has enabled increased focus on the capture and reporting of unfilled shifts across Ambulance Tasmania. Prior to this time, rosters and vacancy management was done within each region and was fragmented. Bringing together reliable absence data for these regions will take several weeks to achieve due to the need for manual data review.

The following table provides the number of unfilled shifts by Regions and stations for the period 1 November 2022 to 26 March 2023, from a total of 19 710 rostered shifts over that same period.

Ambulance Tasmania – Unfilled Shifts (1 November 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Southern Region	Unfilled Shifts
New Norfolk	120
Hobart	256
Mornington	123
Bridgewater	171
Kingston	46
Glenorchy	133
Sorell	86
Huonville	86
Claremont	0
Dodges Ferry	73
Bicheno	4
Bruny Island	0
Nubeena	7

Oatlands	9
Ouse	1
Swansea	4
Triabunna	14
Northern Region	Unfilled Shifts
Launceston	129
Mowbray	91
George Town	10
Beaconsfield	9
Campbell Town	4
Deloraine	8
St Helens	7
Bridport	0
Longford	18
Miena	6
Scamander	2
Scottsdale	5
Critical Response Unit	22
North West Region	Unfilled Shifts
Latrobe	220
Wattle Hill	125
Devonport	101
Ulverstone	26
Burnie	88
Wynyard	33
Sheffield	13
Smithton	21
Queenstown	13
Zeehan	3
Strahan	39
Critical Response Unit	55

- (10) There have been no deaths in ambulances where paramedic crews are at hospitals and subject to transfer of care delays. Patients do not remain in ambulances on arrival at Emergency Departments.
- (11) Transfer of care shifts commenced on 20 July 2022, at the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH), to facilitate release of paramedic crews during times of high demand, when patient care could not be transferred to hospital staff.

The shifts were introduced following consultation with the Health and Community Services Union, with a set of Guiding Principles determined.

- (12) All paramedic night shifts at career (paramedic only) and double branch stations (paramedic rostered on day and night shifts with volunteer support) are rostered as 14-hour shifts, as per the Ambulance Tasmania Award agreed to with the Union.

Critical Response Unit (CRU) paramedics operate on a 12-hour day and night shift roster. The CRU currently operates in the North and North-West Regions, with CRUs operating out of Burnie, Devonport and Launceston.

- (13) (a) There were 462 paramedics employed, this does not include paramedics employed in supervisor, management, and educational positions.
- (b) There were 460 paramedics employed, this does not include paramedics employed in supervisor, management, and educational positions.

5 REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.— Ms *Forrest* presented a Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts on its “Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government’s Continuing Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Preparation for the Return to School in February 2022”.

Ordered, That the Report be received. (Ms *Forrest*)

Ordered, That the Report be printed. (Ms *Forrest*)

Ordered, That consideration of the Report and its noting be made an Order of the Day. (Ms *Forrest*)

6 SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS.— The President advised the Chamber of six Members who had indicated their desire to speak and of the order in which they were to speak as follows:—

- (1) Mr *Edmunds* – Young Leaders of Tasmania;
- (2) Ms *Webb* – United Nations Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights;
- (3) Ms *Ratray* – Lady Jillian Project;
- (4) Ms *Forrest* – Robert Beech-Jones appointment to the High Court;
- (5) Ms *Palmer* – School Lunch Project; and
- (6) Ms *Howlett* – Great Eastern Wine Week.

At the conclusion of Special Interest Matters the Council proceeded to Orders of the Day.

7 TASMANIAN SALMON INDUSTRY.— A Motion was made (Ms *Ratray*) and the Question was proposed, That the Legislative Council:—

- (1) Notes the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics Report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry; and
- (2) Acknowledges that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community.

A Debate arose thereupon.

8 SITTING SUSPENDED.— It being 1.00 o'clock p.m. the Sitting of the Council was suspended. The Council resumed the Sitting at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

9 QUESTION TIME.— The President called for Questions without Notice. There were five Questions asked.

10 TASMANIAN SALMON INDUSTRY.— The Order of the Day was read for resuming the Debate on the Question, That the Legislative Council:—

- (1) Notes the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics Report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry; and
- (2) Acknowledges that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community.

11 SITTING SUSPENDED.— It being 4.00 o'clock p.m. the Sitting of the Council was suspended.
The Council resumed the Sitting at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

12 TASMANIAN SALMON INDUSTRY.— The Order of the Day was read for resuming the Debate on the Question, That the Legislative Council:—

- (1) Notes the economic analysis provided by the Deloitte Access Economics Report dated 2020 regarding the Tasmanian salmon industry; and
- (2) Acknowledges that the Tasmanian salmon industry is a vital social and economic contributor to the Tasmanian community.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

13 BILL NO. 23.— A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly hath passed a Bill, intituled — ‘A Bill for An Act to provide for the transfer of certain employees of the North West Private Hospital in order to facilitate the transfer of maternity services at that hospital to the Department of Health’,

to which the House desires the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

House of Assembly, 12 September 2023

MARK SHELTON, *Speaker*

The Bill was read the First time.

Ordered, That the Second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next. (Mrs *Hiscutt*)

14 BILL NO. 57 OF 2022.— A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly doth agree to the Amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Bill, intituled — ‘A Bill for Act to amend the *Police Powers (Surveillance Devices) Act 2006*’.

House of Assembly, 12 September 2023

MARK SHELTON, *Speaker*

15 ADJOURNMENT.— *Resolved*, That the Council will, at its rising, adjourn until 11.00 o'clock a.m. on Wednesday, 13 September 2023. (Mrs *Hiscutt*)

Resolved, That the Council do now adjourn. (Mrs *Hiscutt*)

The Council adjourned at 6.34 o'clock p.m.

C.L. VICKERS, *Clerk of the Council*.