

**NSW Ambulance** excellence in care

*Michelle Shiel  
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Some facts about NSW Ambulance:  
 Over 1,183,795 responses  
 Average 3,234 responses/day  
 865,725 emergency responses  
 ~ one every 26.7 seconds

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### Drivers increasing demand for ambulance services

- ⚠ An ageing population
- ⚠ An increase in the prevalence of chronic and/or life limiting illness.
- ⚠ Population growth
- ⚠ Timely access to healthcare professionals
- ⚠ Community expectations

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### Snapshot –What we are being called to?

Top 5 case types

- ☒ Falls >7,000 per month
- ☒ Chest pain >6,400 per month
- ☒ Person sick >6,000 per month
- ☒ Breathing difficulties >5,700 per month
- ☒ Unconscious / fainting >4,500 per month
- ☒ Overall life threatening calls make up only 10% of all calls to NSW Ambulance

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### Utilisation of NSW Ambulance services by age group

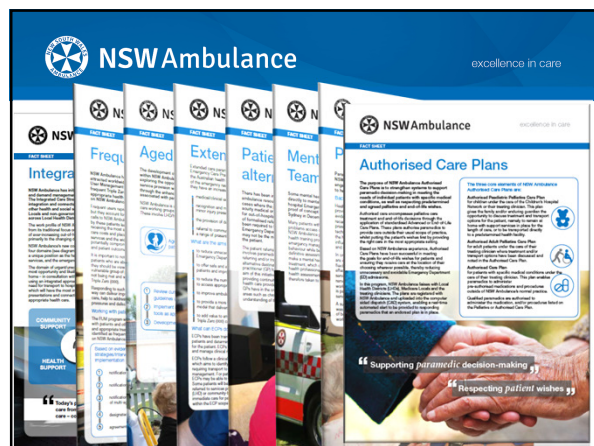
Data Source: ADNSW Patient records, 2012/13

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### Changing role of paramedics

Historically callers to Triple Zero “000” had limited choices to address unplanned health care needs irrespective of severity or type of problem.

Call Taking Dispatch      Emergency care & transport      Emergency Department



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### Supporting Patients Through Authorised Palliative Care Plans

- Provides the option for the patient, and/or enduring guardian, family members and their clinician to discuss and document the wishes of the patient. These wishes or goals of care may be related to clinical decisions, treatment, medication options as well as location of care and post death arrangements.
- An endorsed Authorised Care Plan pre-authorises and supports the paramedic to respond to the individual patient needs beyond the NSW Ambulance protocols.

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### Supported to Work Towards a Common Goal

**Palliative & End of Life Care**  
A Blueprint for Improvement

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### NSW Ambulance is situated well to provide care within four of the essential components

- Access to care providers across all settings for people who are approaching the end of life – (safety net)
- Care is based on the individual assessed needs of the patient, carer and family
- Care transitioning across all care settings
- Quality care during the last days of life

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### Paramedic Goals


The underpinning goals of the paramedic in providing care to the palliative or dying patient is to:

- Maximise comfort for the patient
- Maintain dignity
- Ensure adequate analgesia – by relieving pain and discomfort
- Controlling other symptoms such as nausea or increasing agitation with the aim to enhance the quality of life for the patient by helping to alleviate fear and anxiety for both the patient and the family as may be associated with death and dying.

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### How are We Supporting the Paramedics?

- Palliative Care Physician facilitated training for Paramedic Educators
- Palliative and End of Life care is one of the scheduled training themes for the broad group of paramedics across the state
- Introduction of verification of death
- Development of resources to support paramedics when working in the environment
- Availability of a Clinical Advice Line



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### Let's Look at Some Details About the Plans

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### Sections of the Plan



CARDIAC ARREST TREATMENT DECISION	CONTACT LIST
MEDICAL PRACTITIONER DETAILS	ENDORSEMENT SECTION
PATIENT/PERSON RESPONSIBLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	CONTACT FOR PATIENT CORRESPONDENCE FROM NSW AMBULANCE
DEATH DURING TRANSPORT	PARAMEDIC VERIFICATION OF DEATH
ALTERNATE CARE LOCATION	PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY
	TREATMENT AND MEDICATION OPTIONS

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### Accessing the Plans

Requests for Palliative and General Authorised Care Plans can be obtained through NSW Ambulance by:

- NSW Ambulance Intranet site
- Request via email [protocolp1@ambulance.nsw.gov.au](mailto:protocolp1@ambulance.nsw.gov.au)
- Telephone 9779 3808 or 9779 3821





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### Processing of the Plans


*Importantly adjust the plan if circumstances change, plan valid for 12 months*


- The Plan is clinically reviewed
- Discussed with treating clinician as required
- Forwarded for endorsement
- Once endorsed notification uploaded on computer system
- Letter of reply sent to patient and treating clinician with endorsed plan




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### How does the paramedic know there is a plan in place?




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 **Statewide Availability**

Information and plan templates have been widely distributed:


- ✓ Local Health Districts
- ✓ PHNs (Medicare Locals) – Including uploading on Health Pathways
- ✓ Age Care Provider Groups
- ✓ Individual RACFs


A GP Information Booklet has been developed and distributed

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**Current Status**


- Since inception over 2,300 plans have been registered
- Currently we have over 1,200 active plans
- The current financial year to March 2016: 146 patients assessed & treated without transportation to the ED - reduced impact on presentations to the ED as well as NSW Ambulance.



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**Number of Plans as at May 2016**

Ambulance Sector	Adult Palliative Authorised Care Plans	Paediatric Palliative Authorised Care Plans	General Authorised Care Plans	Completed/Deceased
Hunter New England Sector	35	2	3	62
Metropolitan Sector	549	46	68	477
North Coast Sector	127	2	8	68
Southern Sector	277	8	7	194
Western Sector	160	5	1	209
<b>Total</b>	<b>1148</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>1010</b>

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**Feedback from a Regional Community Palliative Care Nurse**

*"Since using the Authorised Care plans, I can't remember the last time one of my palliative patients was taken into hospital but a real positive is that communications between Patients, Drs and Palliative Care Teams had become more regular with open discussion".*




**Quote from a paramedic**


*" We just want to do right by the patient because if they have a final wish about their care it should be respected" -Paramedic "*

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