



Appendix one – Response from agency



Health

Ms Margaret Crawford
Auditor-General
Audit Office of NSW
GPO Box 12
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Your ref PA 6594
Our ref S17/575


Dear Ms Crawford

Final Performance Audit report - Managing Demand for Ambulance Services

Thank you for your letter of 16 November 2017 providing a copy of the final report for the performance audit on *Managing Demand for Ambulance Services*.

NSW Health supports the recommendations in the final report and recognises that increasing demand for ambulance services is a key concern for our Health System. As your report states, this demand has increased at a faster rate than population growth in recent years and continued growth is expected. To manage this demand, NSW Ambulance has introduced various initiatives and the opportunity now is to draw from these insights to develop a strategic and integrated demand management model.

Within the content of the report, I note the observations made on NSW Health's offering of a Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathway for paramedics to earn their qualification in addition to the university degree pathway. The Ministry is of the view that the NSW Ambulance VET program produces fit-for-purpose paramedics and has proven important to NSW Health in strengthening our workplace diversity and in supporting NSW Government workforce commitments. As part of the ongoing strengthening of our Health System, the Ministry and NSW Ambulance will continue to review the effectiveness of current training and qualification streams.

The attached table provides NSW Health's response to the recommendations in the final audit report.

Yours sincerely


Elizabeth Koff
Secretary, NSW Health


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Audit Office Recommendation	NSW Health's Response
By December 2018, NSW Ambulance should:	
<p>1. Develop a demand management strategy that outlines its approach to managing demand. This strategy should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear objectives and key performance indicators for demand management initiatives. • Input from stakeholders in the health system and a continuing plan for collaboration with stakeholders. • Planned approaches to communication with the public about demand management initiatives. 	<p>Supported</p> <p>NSW Health supports the development of a demand management strategy for NSW Ambulance.</p> <p>NSW Ambulance will develop a demand management strategy that reflects the range of clinical demand management strategies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with internal and external stakeholders to ensure appropriate KPI's are developed; • Continuing to expand the number of LHD, PHN and NGO collaborators in developing demand management initiatives; • Developing a communication plan for the public on demand management initiatives.
<p>2. Determine the data system improvements required to provide accurate oversight of demand management initiatives. This should enable routine monitoring and reporting of the activity and performance of these initiatives.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>NSW Ambulance will further develop the clinical Qlikview reporting tool to ensure it can report on the range of clinical demand management initiatives.</p>
<p>3. Develop a strategy to guide the continued use of Extended Care Paramedics. This should include planning for how they are used and how their performance is measured.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>NSW Ambulance will convene an ECP Workgroup to clarify the role of the ECP and how this critical position is incorporated. This will include both planning and measurement perspectives.</p>
<p>4. Evaluate its approach to using telephone referrals for managing less urgent demand for services.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>NSW Ambulance will evaluate the approach to secondary triage in the first quarter of 2018.</p>
<p>5. Ensure paramedics are as well prepared as possible for their contemporary role by:</p> <p>a. Strengthening staff performance and development practices to help paramedics develop their decision-making and communication skills. This could include introducing formal mentoring programs for paramedics.</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>NSW Ambulance will develop a training package to be included into paramedic schedule training commencing January 2018. This program will focus on non-transport and patient referral clinical decision making supported by a prerequisite on line video and support materials.</p> <p>NSW Ambulance will strengthen Paramedic protocols to provide paramedics with an intuitive and realistic treatment and referral framework to support clinical decision making for managing patients with low acuity conditions</p>

Audit Office Recommendation	NSW Health's Response
b. Determining the mobile technology needs of paramedics to support their expanded decision making and assessment roles.	Supported NSW Ambulance will develop clinical Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategy. This Strategy will provide a "High Level Requirements and Design Components" to support development of an ICT solution for NSW Ambulance.