
Appendix one – Response from entity

Response from NSW Health

NSW Health



Ref: H24/74727

Mr Bola Oyetunji
Auditor-General of NSW

Via email to

NSW Health response to the Auditor-General's performance audit on Ambulance Services in Regional NSW

Dear Mr Oyetunji

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your performance audit report on Ambulance Services in Regional NSW.

I welcome the focus that this audit has given to the delivery of these critical services in our regional areas. I am pleased to note that the audit report has concluded that NSW Health is maintaining effective ambulance services in regional NSW and that effective arrangements are in place for performance monitoring. The areas highlighted for further enhancement will be considered as part of our ongoing management of the core system performance and governance frameworks.

All recommendations have been accepted, noting that further consideration needs to be given regarding planning for the integration of patient management systems in context of our broader Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR) project. This project will deliver greatly enhanced access to patient information and support for our clinical staff and will have a positive impact on the provision of key services to regional NSW. Further detail regarding NSW Health's response to each of the report recommendations is attached to this letter.

I appreciate the support offered by the Audit Office over the duration of this audit program and for the collaborative approach to working with representatives of NSW Health which has been shown.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Pearce".

Susan Pearce AM
Secretary, NSW Health

Recommendation	Responsibility	Agency Position	Agency Response
By June 2025, the Ministry of Health, eHealth NSW and NSW Ambulance should:			
1. Implement a new NSW Ambulance EMR that facilitates information sharing between NSW Ambulance and Local Health Districts to improve clinical decision making and improve the assessment of patient outcomes.	Ministry of Health, eHealth NSW and NSW Ambulance	Accept in principle	The NSW Ministry of Health will work with NSW Ambulance, the newly established Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR) Implementation Authority and eHealth NSW to explore options for the deployment of a fully functional eMR for NSW Ambulance with integration capability into the statewide SDPR platform. It should be noted that this will be a significant technical and clinical undertaking and a longer implementation timeframe will be required.
By June 2025, the Ministry of Health and NSW Ambulance should:			
2. Improve system oversight of ambulance response times through the development and implementation of new performance indicators aimed at the regional level.	Ministry of Health and NSW Ambulance	Accept	The NSW Ministry of Health annually considers KPIs for inclusion in Service Agreements with all health organisations including NSW Ambulance. The Ministry will work with NSW Ambulance to develop appropriate measures and benchmarks for inclusion in the 2025-26 Service Agreement, with monitoring through the NSW Health Performance Framework.

Recommendation	Responsibility	Agency Position	Agency Response
By June 2025, the Ministry of Health should:			
3. Work with relevant agencies to finalise its Transport for Health strategy, including undertaking a review of all non-emergency patient transport operators in place across New South Wales, and determining an approach to provide patient transport services across the state.	Ministry of Health	Accept	<p>The Ministry of Health is working collaboratively with NSW Ambulance, HealthShare, Transport for NSW and local health districts to enable better access to safe, high quality and timely health services, including improving local transport solutions and travel assistance schemes, and addressing their affordability, to strengthen equitable access to care, aligned to Regional Health Strategic Plan, Priority 2.</p> <p>The Regional Health Division is working with these partners to review the current approach to providing non-emergency patient transport in NSW, including identifying transport operators and initiatives in place. This review will inform recommendations for a refreshed Transport for Health Policy which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflects strategic priorities - improves community awareness of available services - increases availability to addresses identified service gaps - and where possible improves coordination between stakeholders to maximise use of existing resources.
4. Collect and monitor performance data on patient transport services in all Local Health Districts, including the number of non-emergency patient transports provided by NSW Ambulance in each Local Health District.	Ministry of Health	Accept	<p>The HealthShare NSW Patient Transport Service (PTS) has regular performance meetings with the NSW Ministry of Health, Local Health Districts and NSW Ambulance and regularly reports performance data to the HealthShare NSW Board. There are already strong foundations for data reporting on non-emergency patient transport in areas where PTS is operational, and this capacity can be extended to rural and regional LHDs as part of a broader planned roll out of PTS services.</p> <p>The NSW Ministry of Health annually considers KPIs for inclusion in Service Agreements with all health organisations including HealthShare NSW. The Ministry will work with HealthShare NSW, the Regional Health Division and Local Health Districts to develop appropriate measures and benchmarks for inclusion in the 2025-26 Service Agreement, with monitoring to occur through the NSW Health Performance Framework.</p>

Recommendation	Responsibility	Agency Position	Agency Response
5. Ensure that performance on statewide indicators is regularly considered, and publicly reported, at the regional and metropolitan level.	Ministry of Health	Accept	The Ministry of Health will review performance against agreed measures through the existing NSW Health Performance Framework and determine appropriate avenues for public reporting.
By June 2025, NSW Ambulance should:			
6. Improve strategic engagement with NSW Health entities (including Local Health Districts and HealthShare NSW) by: a) ensuring Local Health Districts and HealthShare NSW are included in local, as well as organisation-wide ambulance service planning activities b) finalising its five-year roadmap for the implementation of the NSW Ambulance Clinical Services Plan	NSW Ambulance	Accept	<p><i>Response to Recommendation 6a</i></p> <p>NSW Ambulance continues to identify opportunities to improve strategic engagement with NSW Health entities at a local and organisational level. NSW Ambulance actively participates in the NSW Health Planning Directors and Managers Network Meetings which has resulted in engagement and collaboration with NSW Health agencies on service planning activities.</p> <p>NSW Ambulance undertakes service planning centrally coordinated by Ministry of Health including growth precinct needs analyses, hospital clinical capability reviews, station infrastructure and hospital co-location projects and hospital relocation impacts.</p> <p>NSW Service Planning is committed to improved strategic engagement with LHDs and HealthShare with regular meetings and increased collaboration on health and clinical service plans.</p> <p><i>Response to Recommendation 6b</i></p> <p>NSW Ambulance is committed to the delivery of the Clinical Services Plan with implementation plan development currently in progress and identification of opportunities for NSW Ambulance, LHD and HealthShare collaboration.</p>

Recommendation	Responsibility	Agency Position	Agency Response
By June 2025, Local Health Districts should:			
7. Improve strategic engagement with NSW Ambulance by ensuring NSW Ambulance is included in service planning activities and the development of key initiatives.	Local Health Districts	Accept	<p>While the Ministry of Health will continue to guide the Local Health Districts in their engagement with NSW Ambulance in service planning activities, the Districts themselves have the responsibility to ensure there is strong collaboration with statewide health services which impact their local service planning.</p> <p>As an auditee of this audit program, Murrumbidgee Local Health District has noted that NSW Ambulance and Murrumbidgee Patient Flow stakeholders are included on all Health Services Planning steering committees.</p>