

Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

Statement of Dominic Morgan

Name: Dominic Morgan
Professional address: 1-23 Balmain Road, Lilyfield, NSW, 2040
Occupation: Chief Executive, NSW Ambulance

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

A. INTRODUCTION

2. My name is Dominic Morgan. I am the Chief Executive of NSW Ambulance (NSWA), a role I have held since 1 February 2016.
3. In my role as Chief Executive, I am responsible for delivering emergency healthcare and transport across NSW. A copy of my curriculum vitae is exhibited to this statement and marked 'A'.

B. SERVICE DELIVERY PLANNING

4. NSWA provides a range of service models according to community needs as described in the NSWA Role Delineation of Services (Exhibit B). These include:
 - a. Community First Responders (CFR) – made up of either community-based volunteers, emergency service partners (Fire and Rescue NSW, State Emergency Service, and the Rural Fire Service) or local health district models. Members of these units are trained, credentialed, and provided with clinical equipment by NSWA to deliver immediate care in advance of paramedics arriving on scene. For example, NSWA will send a request to Fire and Rescue NSW for a CFR response, as well as concurrent dispatch of an ambulance. CFR members assemble at the fire station and then proceed to the incident in a Fire and Rescue NSW vehicle and provide emergency assistance until our ambulance arrives. CFR are paid by Fire and Rescue through a retainer.
 - b. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) – is a model of community clinical volunteers. NSWA provide CERT members with an emergency response vehicle (that is, a vehicle without patient transport capabilities), and clinical equipment. CERT members are required to attend monthly training delivered by NSWA. When an emergency incident occurs, NSWA will concurrently task paramedics and CERT. CERT members respond directly in the NSWA CERT vehicle and provide immediate clinical care until paramedics arrive. This model requires a minimum of eight community clinical volunteers to be sustainable.
 - c. Volunteer Ambulance Officers (VAO) – recruited, accredited, trained, and dispatched under NSWA response guidelines. They provide first response

and transport in remote areas. VAOs are rostered on-call and dispatched by NSW to provide both treatment and transport to hospital. A NSW transport vehicle is provided and shared between members of the VAO unit. VAOs respond as a double clinical volunteer crew wearing NSW uniform. Depending on patient requirements, paramedics may be dispatched simultaneously.

- d. An ambulance station – the preferred staffing profile for a new service is a minimum of 12 full-time paramedics. An alternate but less optimal option involves less paramedics but relies on an on-call arrangement to provide 24-hour coverage.
 5. CERT is the preferred option for expansion of the Clinical Volunteer program for communities identified as appropriate for a Level 1 Clinical Volunteer service. This is primarily on the basis of improved response times compared to CFR, and reduced overall tasks times because of the emergency response vehicle provided. The latter minimises the impact to volunteers on their primary employment, businesses, and families, as the volunteer has the response vehicle with them at all times.
 6. NSW has strong clinical governance and patient safety systems that cover the clinical care provided by its clinical volunteers.
 7. It is noted in the November 2023 Assessment of Need that a Blended model is referred to. This report was developed by NSW Service Planning as part of core responsibilities in undertaking objective and evidence-based analysis to assess and prioritise community need on a statewide basis. The inclusion of the Blended model in this assessment is as an indicative service model with a potential to be within the NSW service continuum, which operates in other states however is not currently used in NSW. Similarly, Table 1 within the report is a demand threshold guideline used for internal planning purposes which does not incorporate multiple other factors considered in planning for new services. CERT is the preferred option for expansion of Clinical Volunteer services. The Blended model that involves a VAO working alongside a paramedic is no longer an option considered for new Clinical Volunteer services. The Blended model has not been expanded since 2017, and the three existing Blended Model services are historical arrangements.
 8. NSW has a Service Planning methodology to identify gaps in coverage. This process is refreshed approximately every twelve months, and analyses NSW data including historical number and distribution of emergency incidents, travel times, distance from closest ambulance station, and population forecasts. The data is weighted and combined to provide a prioritised list of communities that would provide the greatest improvement to response times and ambulance coverage.
 9. The establishment of stations in locations with sufficient demand is a significant factor in the assurance of the quality and safety of paramedic services, as the level of demand ensures that staff have sufficient patients with whom they can maintain their clinical skills.
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10. NSW Service Planning incorporates multiple factors for identifying locations suitable for a CERT service model as opposed to an ambulance station. These include, number of average weekly Priority 1 incidents, population growth projections, distance from nearest ambulance station, presence of other health services in the community and Priority 1 response times. The table – ‘Guidelines for appropriate service type’ in Exhibit “Z” represents one of many guiding metrics used by NSW Service Planning for identification of appropriate service types.

C. TOCUMWAL – CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

11. The Tocumwal community currently has a NSW CFR model with Fire and Rescue NSW, which was established in 2010. Tocumwal is also serviced by paramedics from Finley and Berrigan ambulance stations.
12. An ambulance is present in Tocumwal during the annual Strawberry Fields festival.
13. Based on the Service Planning methodology outlined above, Tocumwal meets the criteria for a CERT location however the most recent analysis undertaken identified that Tocumwal is not the highest priority location for the establishment of a new service, relative to other locations. NSW will continue to monitor demand on a regular basis for changes in community needs

D. TOCUMWAL – COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

14. Local advocacy for an ambulance station commenced in Tocumwal through a constituent’s request for an ambulance station in June 2018.
 15. Since that time, I am aware of the following consultations and/or correspondence (excluding email correspondence):
 - a. 6 June 2018 – letter from the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, to Ms Faith McCallum (**Exhibit C**);
 - b. 3 September 2018 – letter from the President of the Lions Club of Tocumwal and District (**Exhibit D**);
 - c. 6 September 2018 – letter from Ms McCallum (**Exhibit E**);
 - d. 20 September 2018 – letter from the Member for Murray to the then Minister for Health (**Exhibit F**);
 - e. 15 November 2018 – response from the then Minister for Health to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (**Exhibit G**);
 - f. On 8 November 2019 – letter from Helen Dalton MP dated 8 November 2019 to the then Minister for Health (**Exhibit H**);
 - g. 23 January 2020 – letter from Mayor of Berrigan Shire Council (**the Council**), Mr Matthew Hannan, to the then Minister for Health (**Exhibit I**);
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- h. 26 February 2020 – the former Minister for Health and Medical Research attended a meeting to discuss the request for an ambulance station at Tocumwal. In attendance was Helen Dalton, the Member for Murray, Tocumwal Ambulance Steering Committee (TASC) members, and two NSWA executives (Executive Director of Clinical Operations, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services). The Minister requested that NSWA conduct an assessment of Tocumwal’s service needs against other priority locations and other towns on the Newell Highway. The assessment found that Tocumwal is appropriately serviced by the current model of service delivery, and was not identified as a NSWA priority site of redevelopment when considering priorities around the state;
 - i. 8 March 2020 – the NSWA Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services travelled to Tocumwal to meet with community members;
 - j. March 2020 report – *“Tocumwal – Emergency Response Assessment”* (Exhibit J);
 - k. 8 May 2020 – letter from Brad Hazzard MP to Matthew Hannan, providing the assessment that was submitted by NSWA (A copy of the letter is at Exhibit K, a copy of the report dated March 2020 is at Exhibit J);
 - l. June 2020 report – *“Tocumwal – Emergency Response Assessment”* (Exhibit L);
 - m. 12 July 2020, letter from Tocumwal Lions Club Ambulance for Tocumwal Steering Committee to the then Minister for Health (Exhibit M);
 - n. 31 July 2020 – letter from Brad Hazzard MP to Helen Dalton MP advising that the assessment undertaken by NSWA identified that the demand levels in Tocumwal would not result in the area being further prioritised relative to other areas of greater ambulance demand, given the close support provided by Finley and Berrigan stations and the presence of a NSWA Clinical Volunteer service being located within the town (Exhibit N);
 - o. 15 September 2020, letter from Brad Hazzard MP to Ms Faith McCallum, Secretary, Tocumwal Lions Club Ambulance for Tocumwal Steering Committee (Exhibit O);
 - p. 3 June 2021 – letter from the then Minister for Health to the Member for Murray (Exhibit P);
 - q. 9 June 2022 – letter from Ms Helen Dalton MP to the Minister for Women, Regional Health, and Mental Health (Exhibit Q);
 - r. 21 February 2023 – correspondence from Parliamentary Secretary for Health to Ms Dalton MP (Exhibit R);
 - s. 27 April 2023 – letter from the Mayor of the Council, Mr Hannan, to the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health (Exhibit S);
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- t. 24 May 2023 - the Minister for Health and Regional Health responded to the Mayor of the Council (Mr Hannan) about ambulance resources in Tocumwal, outlined the NSW Service Planning methodology, and advised that relative to other locations, Tocumwal is not a priority location for enhancements (Exhibit T);
 - u. 3 August 2023 – I responded to a representative from the Murray Hut Country Women’s Association about ambulance resources in Tocumwal (Exhibit U);
 - v. 17 August 2023 – the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health attended a meeting to discuss ambulance resources in Tocumwal. In attendance were Mayor of the Council (Mr Hannan), Councillor Julie Cornwell-McKean, and Karena Ewer, CEO of the Council. The meeting included two NSW representatives, the Executive Director of Clinical Operations and the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services;
 - w. 26 September 2023 – letter from the Mayor of the Council (Ms Cornwell-McKean) to the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health (Exhibit V);
 - x. November 2023 – NSW Service Planning for Tocumwal (see paragraph 15(z)(iii)below);
 - y. 29 November 2023 – the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health responded to the Mayor of the Council (Ms Cornwell-McKean) about ambulance resources in Tocumwal, NSW Service Planning methodology, and advising that relative to other locations, it is not a priority location for enhancements (Exhibit W);
 - z. 29 February 2024 – NSW provided reports and briefs to TASC pursuant to a *Government Information (Public Access) Act* request. Some information was redacted pursuant to the Act to remove information relevant to other communities. The documents were:
 - i. NSW Service Planning Methodology dated September 2023 (Exhibit X);
 - ii. NSW Clinical Services Plan 2024 – 2029 (Exhibit Y);
 - iii. NSW Service Planning for Tocumwal dated November 2023 (Exhibit Z);
 - iv. Ministerial Briefing Note M23/5182 (Exhibit AA);
 - v. Briefing Note M23/2098 (Exhibit BB).
 - aa. 15 March 2024 – NSW executives travelled to and met the new Mayor of the Council. NSW representatives were the Executive Director Clinical Capability, Safety and Quality, Senior Manager Clinical Volunteers, and the
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Associate Director Service Planning. At that time, a CERT vehicle was demonstrated and the model of care was discussed.

E. CONCLUSION

- 16. I feel confident that NSWA has provided the Tocumwal community representatives adequate engagement and information regarding Service Planning principles, and the decision-making regarding Tocumwal.
- 17. More broadly, NSWA is committed to considering the needs and demands of all NSW communities.
- 18. I am also confident that the information provided to the Tocumwal community is consistent with that provided to other communities that request to be considered a high priority location for an ambulance station.
- 19. I am optimistic that the Tocumwal community will embrace the CERT model as it is currently the most appropriate service model according to its community profile.



 Dominic Morgan



 Witness: [insert name of witness]
 Natalie Brown

24/4/24

 Date

24/4/24

 Date