



56 CHANTER STREET, BERRIGAN, NSW 2712  
 TELEPHONE: (03) 5888 5100 FACSIMILE: (03) 5885 2092  
 Email: mail@berriganshire.nsw.gov.au  
 www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au

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23 January 2020

The Hon. Brad Hazzard (MP)  
 Minister for Health and Medical Research  
 GPO Box 5341  
 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

#### **TOCUMWAL LIONS CLUB AMBULANCE FOR TOCUMWAL COMMITTEE**

On behalf of the Berrigan Shire Council I thank you for meeting with the delegation from the Tocumwal Lions Club Ambulance for Tocumwal Committee. The Berrigan Shire Council fully endorses and supports the representations made by the current committee. Representations that the first-responder model, the cornerstone of NSW Ambulances' delivery of emergency medical services to residents and visitors to the township of Tocumwal, is not sustainable. Requiring urgent consideration by your office of what is and has been a two-decade-long campaign by the Tocumwal Lions Club and the broader Tocumwal community. Namely,

- The construction of an ambulance station, at Tocumwal, and the staffing of this station by NSW Ambulance Service Paramedics

The Council does not support, nor does the Tocumwal Lions Club Ambulance for Tocumwal Committee, the re-allocation of existing NSW Ambulance Service resources from elsewhere within the region to accommodate this request

The Council has made representations on behalf of the Committee to NSW Ambulance requesting information on the following:

1. Whether an evaluation of the First Responder Program in rural NSW is planned or has been conducted
2. De-identified information about the health outcomes for patients treated by First Responders (assessed at the time of dispatch as urgent)
3. The cost savings associated with the program or not as the case may be – given the double handling of responders and ambulance, and

4. The impact on Fatigue Management for First Responders who are volunteers. Is there a threshold for their fatigue management – how many callouts over and what period is too many? As this information is particularly, important in rural areas as volunteer first responders (may stand down from First Responding) but generally do not stand down from their paid employment / or a harvest if called out the day or night before. What are the implications of this in terms of the First Response Model?

The Council is pleased to report that NSW Ambulance, in correspondence received 4 March 2019, recognised importance of these issues for the Tocumwal community. In particular, its NSW Ambulance volunteers who as part of a joint initiative between NSW Ambulance and NSW Fire and Rescue Services Community First-Responders program are retained firefighters; members of the NSW Fire and Rescue Services based in Tocumwal.

The Council is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all residents and visitors to the Berrigan Shire. It is very concerned having reviewed the frequency of call out data sought and supplied by the following NSW agencies Rural Fire Services, NSW Ambulance and NSW Fire and Rescue Services – about the sustainability of the critical services provided to its community by what are essentially volunteer Fire Fighters and Emergency Services personnel.

It looks forward to future discussions over the service models that operate within the Shire.

Yours faithfully



CR MATTHEW HANNAN

MAYOR