

15<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

**Attention: Mr. Russell Bowles**

Commissioner

Queensland Ambulance Service

By email: [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au

Dear Commissioner,

**Re: ACP1 and the Queensland Ambulance Service Certified Agreement 2017**

We write to you on behalf of a group of Advanced Care Paramedic 1s (ACP1s) who are members of the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APA Qld).

The purpose of this correspondence is to highlight the relative disadvantage to ACP1s as a result of the implementation of the Queensland Ambulance Service Certified Agreement 2017 (**the Certified Agreement**) and seek clarification about the future of ACP1s on behalf of those QAS employees affected.

The implementation of the classifications and associated pay rates as a result of the Certified Agreement was applauded by the majority of QAS employees. There has been a distinct sense of recognition and reward within the QAS workplace as a result. Unfortunately, in relation to a small group of QAS employees, ACP1s, they do not feel as though they have received the same relative recognition or reward.

APA Qld members have reported that ACP1s have been transitioned to Level 1, Increment 7, which is the same pay rate as the 'Charlie' Paramedic Advanced Skills Pay Point 2. The pay increases for ACP1s is below the pay increases of all other QAS employees covered by the Certified Agreement. ACP1s have been classified on par with the previous P2 level, when the skillset of ACP1s is far superior to the P2 level. To put the disparity into context, ACP1s, practitioners with a wealth of career experience and a significant greater scope of practice than Graduate Paramedics are paid only \$0.66 per hour more than Graduate Paramedics (Level 2, Band 1, Increment 1). The transition classification and pay rate for ACP1s came as a shock to those QAS

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employees affected and they were not advised of the transition classification prior to voting on the Certified Agreement.

In the past, QAS has had the ACP1 classification as an option for employees and the option was often utilised by parents and carers balancing job demands with family responsibilities, mature-age employees approaching retirement or employees returning to work after an illness or long absence. While we acknowledge that the Certified Agreement states on page 38 that ACP1 is a role or classification level requiring further review, there has been little to no communication and consultation with ACP1s (who are APA Qld members) regarding their transition. The uncertainty in this regard is causing a level of confusion and anxiety to those employees affected.

We request the following information on behalf of our ACP1 members.

1. As part of the further review to take place in relation to ACP1s, will there be a further opportunity to decide the level and classification of ACP1s, or is the classification of ACP1s to Level 1, Pay Point 7 final?
2. The ACP1s who will be affected by the further review request an opportunity to meet with QAS to consult in relation to their employment, please inform by return correspondence who those employees should arrange a meeting with?
3. Does QAS still currently offer the ACP1 level as an employment option for Paramedics who would like to drop down to an ACP1 from an ACP2?
4. Does QAS envision the ACP1 level being an option into the future?
5. Will ACP1s be provided with an opportunity to upgrade their skills should they wish to transition back up to ACP2 level?

We would be grateful to receive a response to this correspondence within 14 days of the date of this letter so that we are able to communicate back to the group of QAS employees who are entitled to receive information that they have not received and is of particular significance to them.

Regards,

Adam Gett – President, on behalf of the APA QLD Management Committee.

*“Supporting Ambulance Professionals”*

**From:** [EXECSUPPORT](#)  
**To:** [QAS Correspondence](#)  
**Subject:** C-ECTF-18/4618 : 2519  
**Date:** Monday, 4 June 2018 10:00:30 AM  
**Attachments:** [2519 - Efthimia Voulcaris - Australian Paramedics Assn - QAS and the welfare of paramedics.PDF](#)

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Good morning

Please find attached C-ECTF-18/4618 for 'Action Direct'.

Please note Minister's Office comments:  
 QAS Commissioner to respond

Please provide copy of response once signed or details of action to Executive Support for the Minister's information.

Thank you  
 Linda

---

Ministerial and Executive Services Unit  
 Office of the Director-General  
 Department of Health  
 GPO Box 48, Brisbane, QLD, 4001  
[execsupport@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:execsupport@health.qld.gov.au)

Mary Delahenty – [REDACTED] / Julianne Hanfling – [REDACTED] Amanda Dagger – [REDACTED]  
 Arnou Pruden – [REDACTED] / Felicia McAuliffe – [REDACTED] / Linda Lombard – [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

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RTI Released

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SharePoint Ref No: 2519

Registration No.: C-ECTF- DOH RTI 3355

**RESPONSE:**

☐ URGENT

☐ Minister

☐ Chief of Staff

☒ Action Direct

- Provide to ESU copy of signed response  
or details of action taken

☐ DLO to action

☐ No Response Required (Note and File)

☐ CORRO BRIEFING NOTE REQUIRED

Name: Efthymia Voulcaris

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue: QAS and The welfare  
of Paramedics

Previous Dept Ref #: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

QAS commissioner to respond

Reviewed by: Jamen

Date: 31-5-18

Sent to ESU by: Q

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ESU ONLY**

Doc Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Template: \_\_\_\_\_

Letter Template: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Officer: QAS

Due Date: 5 of 69

Opening Paragraph: \_\_\_\_\_

**Donna DeBrenni**

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**From:** Efthimia Voulcaris >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 May 2018 4:23 PM  
**To:** Health  
**Subject:** Queensland Ambulance Service and the welfare of Paramedics  
**Attachments:** APA Qld Letter to Minister 30 May 2018.pdf; enclosure QAS Staff Support Communique.pdf

Dear Minister,

Please refer to the attached correspondence from the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland.

Yours faithfully,

**Efthimia Voulcaris**

LLB, GDLP, MAHRI

Partner



DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

30 May 2018

**Attention: The Hon. Dr Steven Miles, MP**

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services  
Ministerial Office  
1 William Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

By Email: [\[redacted\]@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto: [redacted]@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

**Queensland Ambulance Service and the welfare of Paramedics**

We write to you in reference to the ABC media coverage aired on 24 May 2018 and the enclosed correspondence sent by the Commissioner of Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to all QAS staff on 25 May 2018.

In light of your recent appointment as the Minister for the Health and Ambulance Service portfolio, we provide the following background for the purpose of providing context to our correspondence.

**Background APA Qld**

In 2005, two Queensland paramedics formed an employee association called the Emergency Medical Service Protection Association (EMSPA). EMSPA is now called the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APA Qld). Since 2005, APA Qld has been providing support and representation to Paramedics and Emergency Medical Dispatchers and our membership has grown significantly. Over the past 13 years, other States including New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria have replicated the APA Qld model with success. APA Qld was involved in the formation of the Australian Paramedics Association New South Wales (APA NSW), Australian Paramedics Association Victoria (APA Vic) and the Australian Paramedics Association Tasmania (APA Tas).

On 3 January 2018, a Registered Australian Body comprising APA Qld, APA NSW, APA Vic and APA Tas was formed and registered (APA National). APA National collectively represents approximately 3,000 paramedics across Australia including more than 700 members most of whom are QAS operational employees. APA National is concerned with national issues affecting Paramedics across Australia including the management of drug and mental health issues in the Ambulance Services in each State. APA Qld and APA National are not politically driven or affiliated organisations.

**ABC Media Coverage**

APA Qld was contacted prior to the airing of the ABC media coverage last week and was asked to provide comment about drugs and mental health in the Queensland Ambulance Service. APA Qld has had deepening concerns about QAS's management of drug and mental health issues particularly

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P 1300 000 272 E [\[redacted\]@apaq.com.au](mailto: [redacted]@apaq.com.au) P PO Box 6531 Mackay MC Qld 4741



over the past 4 years. In June 2016, not only did our level of concern become critical but we also had evidence to justify our concerns. APA Qld declined to comment to the media publically last week when we were contacted. The evidence that APA Qld could have provided to the media is distressing. In our view, the information is in the public interest and goes beyond reflecting poorly upon QAS management.

#### **QAS Staff Support Communique**

The day after the ABC media coverage was aired, the Commissioner of QAS wrote to all QAS staff. We enclose a copy of the communication for ease of reference.

The approach communicated in the Commissioner's email to all staff on 25 May 2018 is entirely inconsistent with how QAS has practically dealt with drug and mental health issues experienced by QAS employees. QAS management has in the past (and continues to) pose a serious risk to the lives of Paramedics because of the way drug and mental health issues are managed. APA Qld has witnessed Paramedics being treated by QAS management in such a way that disturbingly, in the circumstances suicide would be unsurprising.

The recent death of NSW Paramedic Tony Jenkins is a reminder that the risk is real and APA Qld cannot and will not stay silent any longer.

#### **APA Qld communications with QAS**

At various times over the past 13 years (and depending on the particular QAS Executive), APA Qld has experienced difficulty communicating with QAS. It is obvious that in the past politics has played a part in APA Qld's ability to interact and communicate effectively with QAS. This has been as a result of the real or perceived closeness of the registered industrial organisation (United Voice) and QAS management as well as QAS holding a general view that they are not obliged to consider concerns expressed by APA Qld because APA Qld is not industrially registered. It is common for APA Qld to receive no response from QAS in relation to matters we raise or receive a dismissive response. Frankly, the time has come where the welfare of Paramedics should be prioritised over politics and APA Qld should be heard in relation to the treatment of QAS employees and the serious potential consequences and risks affecting our members.

#### **Request for meeting**

This correspondence to you as the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services is the first step APA Qld is taking to bring serious and systemic issues to light. This is not about politics. This is about the lives of Paramedics, dealing with serious risk and effecting change. The only way to effect change is to understand the true position. Based on the evidence and information we have, we are not confident that QAS has been candid or that you as the Minister are across the factual information about how QAS deals with serious issues highlighted in the ABC media coverage.

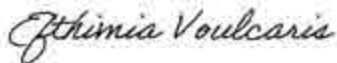
We request an urgent meeting with you so that we can provide you with evidence and information regarding QAS's management of employees in relation to drug and mental health issues.

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The last meeting APA Qld had with the Health Minister was in 2014. At that meeting the then Health Minister invited the QAS Commissioner to the meeting. The 'Staff Support Communique' by the Commissioner purports to communicate a position of support for QAS employees struggling with issues. This leads APA Qld to consider that either, the Commissioner is out of touch and unaware of the practical operation and decision-making of QAS or the Commissioner is part of the problem we seek to explain to you. Either way, APA Qld requests to meet with you without the presence of the QAS Commissioner so that full and frank disclosure of the evidence can occur.

We would be grateful for a response to this correspondence from the Ministerial Office by 15 June 2018. Please contact the writer by email on [REDACTED] to arrange a meeting time.

Yours faithfully,



Efthimia Voulcaris

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

*"Supporting Ambulance Professionals"*

P 1300 000 272 E [secretary@apaq.com.au](mailto:secretary@apaq.com.au) P PO Box 6531 Mackay MC Qld 4741

**From:** Commissioner QAS  
**Sent:** Friday, 25 May 2018 2:27 PM  
**To:** All QAS Staff [DDG] <[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Staff support communique



Dear All QAS Staff

Some of you may have seen last night's media coverage on the ABC regarding the potential tragic consequences of the use of substances by paramedics as a way of dealing with personal or work related stressors.

When we see stories like this we immediately empathise with those involved, particularly the family members who are also impacted – and our thoughts go out to them. While yesterday's media coverage focused on other Ambulance Services within Australia, it was a sobering reminder of some of the challenges we too face.

We know that in any given year, 1 in 5 people will suffer from a mental health issue. QAS personnel are not immune to this. Sadly, we also know that, like the general population, there may be times when some individuals utilise alcohol or other drugs of dependence as a coping strategy, which may lead to additional stress, addiction or further difficulty coping.

I would like to reiterate that the QAS is committed to providing support and the necessary resources to maximise recovery or enhance wellbeing for anyone in QAS who is struggling with any issue.

We know that early access to support is the key to maintaining wellbeing at work and within your personal lives outside of work. The services that are available to you and your immediate dependant family members, through Priority One, are free and confidential and can be accessed for *any reason* including non-work related issues. You can access the contact numbers for these services, available in your area, through the QAS Portal under the *Priority One* tab or at the following link [REDACTED]. Additionally, you may choose to access free confidential counselling through the Priority One telephone counselling service on [REDACTED].

I can understand that some people may not wish to access the internal support services for various reasons, however, there are a range of other support services available to you. Accessing your GP can also provide an important first step to recovery. You can also access a more comprehensive list of other external support services, including some of those listed below, on the QAS Portal:

QAS Priority One Telephone Counselling - [REDACTED]



Lifeline – 13 11 14  
Beyondblue – 1300 22 4636

The QAS is currently planning to dedicate a staff forum to further discuss staff health and wellbeing, and will include presentations from external experts.

Please reach out if we can help support anyone who is currently struggling with any of these issues. Your ongoing health and wellbeing is a key focus for QAS.

Regards

**Russell Bowles ASM**



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Ref: C-ECTF-18/4618  
Mincor: 02705-2018



**Queensland  
Ambulance Service**

Department of  
**Health**

**25 JUN 2018**

Ms Efthimia Voulcaris  
Australian Paramedics Association Queensland  
PO Box 6531  
MACKAY MC QLD 4741

Email: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@apaq.com.au

Dear Ms Voulcaris

Thank you for your letter to the Honourable Steven Miles MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, dated 30 May 2018, regarding the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) and the welfare of paramedics. The Minister has asked that I respond directly to you.

The QAS Executive is committed to providing support and resources to maximise recovery and enhance the wellbeing for anyone in the QAS who is struggling with any issue.

Our commitment is demonstrated by the ongoing, dedicated support provided to all QAS employees through our Priority One service. Priority One is a significant evidence-based, multi-layered staff support service, which offers counselling, chaplaincy and peer support services, but also provides extensive psycho-education and resilience building programs across the organisation.

This service has been in place for over 25 years, and is recognised both nationally and internationally as best practice. In 2017 the Priority One Program was the overall winner from all the eight categories of the 2017 Queensland Mental Health Achievement Awards. Research and externally validated reviews consistently demonstrate that the QAS has an effective and mature support system through the Priority One service. In addition, Priority One's programs have been replicated within ambulance services and other organisations, both in Australia and overseas.

The QAS continues to review and develop Priority One through ongoing collaboration across the country to ensure it remains best practice, and that QAS employees continue to receive quality support. We have also undertaken significant reviews and improvements within our workplace health and safety and recruitment processes, to ensure the most appropriate assessment of applicants and their suitability to our key roles.

Office of the Commissioner  
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GPO Box 1425 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 [REDACTED]  
Facsimile +61 [REDACTED]  
Website [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)  
ABN 89 519 542 578



I am also committed to hearing from all QAS employees regarding their issues both personally and professionally. The QAS also holds workforce forums, which provide staff with the opportunity to engage directly with myself and the QAS Executive team to address any issues that they are facing within the organisation. In August of this year the QAS will hold a forum with approximately one hundred and fifty staff from across the organisation that will be totally dedicated to staff health and wellbeing.

I welcome all feedback and advice with regards to how improvements can be made to the QAS to ensure the necessary ongoing support and assistance is available to our employees. I have established a Commissioner confidential reporting line for staff to contact me if they are not satisfied with the resolution of their concerns, and I would encourage anyone who holds a concern about the mental health or risk of mental health of an employee as a result of undesirable management action, to share this with me as a matter of urgency.

Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, I have arranged for Mr Michael Metcalfe, Deputy Commissioner - Executive Director, Corporate Services, QAS, on telephone [REDACTED], to be available to assist you.

Yours sincerely



Russell Bowles ASM  
**Commissioner**

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** [Darren Hall](#) on behalf of [Russell Bowles](#)  
**To:** [QAS Correspondence](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Senate Education and Employment References Committee: Offer of Response to Submission  
**Date:** Thursday, 12 July 2018 1:00:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.ipa](#)  
[image003.jpg](#)  
[Australian Paramedics Association Queensland.zip](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.ipa](#)

**Importance:** High

Narelle,

Can you forward this to Nathan please and have Corporate Services draft a QAS response to the submission lodged by APAC please? Due date of CoB Monday please.

Tx

**Darren Hall**

Director

Executive Services | Office of the Commissioner | Queensland Ambulance Service

Department of Health | Queensland Government

GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4001

t. 07 [REDACTED]

e. [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au) | [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)



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Email Signature - accredited workplaces low res



**From:** Committee, EEC (SEN) [mailto:[REDACTED]@aph.gov.au]

**Sent:** Thursday, 12 July 2018 10:44 AM

**To:** Russell Bowles [mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au]

**Cc:** Committee, EEC (SEN) <[REDACTED]@aph.gov.au>

**Subject:** Senate Education and Employment References Committee: Offer of Response to Submission

**Importance:** High

CRST30MM.TIF



**THE SENATE**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Mr Russell Bowles ASM  
 Commissioner  
 Queensland Ambulance Service

Dear Mr Bowles,

**Inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first responders, emergency service workers and volunteers**

The committee has received a number of submissions which contain allegations relating to Queensland Ambulance Service, such as the attached from the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland, which is due to be made public on **Monday, 16 July 2018**. QAS is invited to respond to this and similar submissions as they become available on the committee's website at [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Education\\_and\\_Employment/Mentalhealth](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/Mentalhealth).

Please note that any response QAS provides will be treated as evidence by the committee, and may be published on the committee's website. If you have any objections to the committee making your response public, please detail your objections in your correspondence.

Please note that evidence accepted by the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. Any threat made to, or penalty imposed on, any person as a result of their appearing before, or making a submission to, the committee could be considered to be a contempt of Parliament.

Further information about the inquiry is available [here](#) and information about submissions, including parliamentary privilege and adverse comment can be found at:

[www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/How\\_to\\_make\\_a\\_submission](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/How_to_make_a_submission).

Should you have any further queries regarding this correspondence please contact the committee secretariat on [REDACTED], or by emailing [REDACTED] [@aph.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@aph.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Machine generated alternative text:



Stephen Palethorpe  
Secretary

PO Box 6100, Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 [REDACTED] Fax: ( [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED] [@aph.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@aph.gov.au) Internet: [www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Education\\_and\\_Employment](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment)

# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**Director-General Brief for Approval**

Requested by:

☒ Department☐ Minister's office

RM folder reference No:	C-ECTF-18/6471 CAPS1196
Division/HHS:	QAS
File Ref No:	03440-2018

**SUBJECT:** Queensland Ambulance Service responses to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment regarding the inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first responders, emergency service workers and volunteers

**Recommendation**

It is recommended the Director-General:

1. **Approve** the attached two responses from the Commissioner, Queensland Ambulance Service (Attachments 1 and 3) in reply to correspondence from Mr Stephen Palethorpe, Secretary, The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment, in relation to the inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first responders, emergency service workers and volunteers.

**APPROVED / NOT APPROVED**


**MICHAEL WALSH**  
Director-General

Date: 5 / 9 / 18

Ministerial Brief for Approval required ☐

Director-General's comment

Ministerial Brief for Noting required ☐**Issues**

1. **URGENT.** The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment ('the Senate') has provided the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) the opportunity to respond to two submissions published on the committee's website on 16 July 2018.
2. The Senate is conducting an inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first responders, emergency service workers and volunteers.
3. The QAS has contributed information relevant to this inquiry in separate submissions that have been provided to the Senate Committee: (a) the 'Queensland Government Submission June 2018' (which includes information from the QAS, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Queensland Police Service); and (b) the Council of Ambulance Authorities submission.
4. The Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APAQ) has provided a submission to the Senate, dated 4 July 2018, which contains a range of contentions regarding the management of employees who have suffered a mental illness whilst they have been employed in the QAS.
5. The QAS has drafted a response to the Senate Committee (Attachment 1) which provides organisational context around certain components of the submission made by APAQ and broadly covers the following areas:
  - 5.1 Safety and Injury Management;
  - 5.2 White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation;
  - 5.3 Fitness for Duty;
  - 5.4 Fatigue Management;
  - 5.5 Workforce Forums;
  - 5.6 Staff Support Services; and
  - 5.7 Occupational Violence Taskforce.

RM folder reference No:	C-ECTF-18/6471 CAPS1196
Division/HHS:	QAS
File Ref No:	03440-2018

6. The QAS has also drafted a response to the Senate Committee regarding another submission made to the inquiry by a former QAS officer [REDACTED] (Attachment 3).
- [REDACTED]

## Vision

7. The contents of this brief align with the 10 year vision My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026: Delivering healthcare, specifically in focus area 2.2 – Empowering our workforce.

## Results of Consultation

8. Consultation has occurred between the QAS Human Resources Branch (including the Workplace Health and Safety Unit and the Industrial and Employee Relations Unit), Priority One, and Ms Loretta Carr, Director, Cabinet and Parliamentary Services, in the drafting of this response to the Senate Committee.

## Resource Implications (including Financial)

9. There are no financial implications.

## Background

10. United Voice Queensland are the only registered industrial organisation pursuant to the *Industrial Relations Act 2016* for Paramedics in Queensland in a collective bargaining or industrial context.
11. The APAQ is not a registered industrial organisation but does represent individual QAS employees on an individual or private basis as an agent.

## Attachments

12. Attachment 1: QAS response to the APAQ's submission to the Senate
- Attachment 2: Copy of APAQ submission to the Senate
- Attachment 3: [REDACTED]
- Attachment 4: [REDACTED]

Author:	Cleared by: (SD/Dir)	Content verified by: (CEO/DDG/Div Head)
David Hill	Michael Metcalfe	Russell Bowles
A/Director	Deputy Commissioner	Commissioner
Workforce Governance Safety and Capability	Executive Director, Corporate Services	Queensland Ambulance Service
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
30 July 2018	30 July 2018	3 August 2018





Ref: 18/00996  
Mincor: 03440-2018



**Queensland  
Ambulance Service**

Department of  
**Health**

**12 SEP 2018**

Mr Stephen Palethorpe  
Secretary  
The Senate  
Standing Committee on Education and Employment  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

Thank you for your email dated 12 July 2018, offering the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) the opportunity to respond to a submission made by the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APAQ) to the *'Inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first responders, emergency service workers and volunteers'*.

It should be noted that the QAS has taken the opportunity to contribute information relevant for this inquiry into separate submissions that have been provided to the Senate Committee from the Queensland Government and the Council of Ambulance Authorities respectively. These submissions collectively contain considerable information about the arrangements in place for the QAS in relation to the specific terms of reference for the inquiry. The information contained in this submission is more generalised to provide the Committee with some broad organisational context around certain components of the submission received from APAQ.

Firstly, I recognise the increased demand in the health system over recent years and the demands this places on the service and our employees to respond to more cases than they ever have before. The QAS continues to review these service delivery demands on a regular basis to develop strategies and review resourcing allocations to appropriately manage these demands. Over the last five years this analysis of demand for ambulance services has resulted in an additional 512.75 full time equivalent ambulance operatives being employed by the QAS.

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

Office of the Commissioner  
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I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to all the staff within the QAS who deliver a tremendous service to the people of Queensland, sometimes in trying and difficult circumstances. As Commissioner of the QAS, I am enormously proud of the work that is undertaken daily by our people.

While I recognise that QAS officers are often faced with challenging circumstances, I absolutely refute any suggestions or claims alleging broad systemic failures across the QAS to provide appropriate support and assistance for officers who have suffered a mental illness, or any other injury, whilst they have been employed in the service. There will always be factors present for each case which all require consideration to determine the most appropriate way to manage each person and case. I am confident that our management systems to support and rehabilitate our ill or injured workers are robust and evidence-based, which includes processes to review and improve these systems.

I take the health, wellbeing, and safety of our people very seriously. My senior leadership team and I recognise that the safety of our people is of paramount importance in continuing to deliver excellence in ambulance services to the Queensland community. I would like to provide the following information to support the Standing Committee's deliberations.

### **Safety and Injury Management**

Safety is a critical area of focus of the QAS Board of Management, and all QAS Local Ambulance Service Network Managers and is an area that is constantly being reviewed and monitored.

Upon release of the QAS Strategy 2016–2021, health and safety of our staff was highlighted as a key value for the organisation. This important value was underpinned by a desire to ensure that our staff understand that we need to continually seek to ensure the safety of ourselves, our patients, and others around us; recognise that our ability to care for our patients relies directly on our own safety; and that we are fit for duty.

For consecutive years, the QAS has experienced positive trends in performance measures on a range of workplace health and safety indicators. This serves as evidence of the positive impact that the broad approaches adopted by the QAS to engage and focus on staff safety has made towards workforce safety and wellbeing.

In relation to Lost Time Injury (LTI) claims that were accepted by WorkCover Queensland, the QAS has experienced a year on year improvement since 2012-13 where the number of accepted LTI claims per year has reduced from 276 to 167, as at 30 June 2018.

A corresponding year on year performance improvement has also been seen in relation to the Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) where the LTIFR dropped from 40.19 in 2012-13 to now be 19.71, as at 30 June 2018.

This year on year reduction in LTIFR has been achieved in an environment where the actual hours worked has steadily increased since 2012-13 however, the actual hours lost due to work-related injury has decreased on a year on year basis. This is represented in the Injury Downtime Rate steadily decreasing from 1.20% in 2012-13 to 0.41% as at 30 June 2018.

This steady and continuous improvement in the workplace health and safety performance data provides a level of confidence that the management systems, support services, and management attention to health and safety are working and contributing positively to the workplace safety and rehabilitation culture. It is my expectation that in all cases where an employee suffers an injury, they are contacted by a manager within their area as soon as possible after the incident to provide immediate support and at regular intervals thereafter to determine the best strategy to facilitate a suitable return to the workplace.

When examining WorkCover claims for psychological injuries within the QAS over the past three financial years, the QAS has also experienced a lower level of 'registered' claims compared to other mechanisms of injury. In relation to claims 'registered' with WorkCover Queensland, psychological claims represented 7.28% of all registered claims in 2015-16; 6.03% in 2016-17; and 4.35% in 2017-18. In relation to claims 'accepted' with WorkCover Queensland, there were 14 psychological claims 'accepted' in 2015-16, in 2016-17 there were 18 and in 2017-18 there were 11. While one psychological injury is one too many, I am proud of this improvement.

### **Staff Support Services**

The QAS has its own internal evidence-based, multi-layered Staff Support Service, known as Priority One, which has been in place for over 25 years and is one of our major support mechanisms. This service not only provides free confidential support to the entire QAS workforce following an incident through Counselling, Chaplaincy and Peer Support Services, but also makes available these services to staff and their immediate families for any issue (both during their employment and post separation from the QAS).

This Staff Support Service has been rigorously researched, reviewed and evaluated over the years and has shown to not only be highly valued by staff but also provides protection in relation to the potentially detrimental impact of exposure to trauma and the sometimes unique stressors of working within an emergency service environment. Due to this evidence base, the program has been replicated by other agencies and states nationally and internationally.

In addition to the internal staff support service through Priority One, the QAS also provides access to the external services of LifeWorks (formerly known as Optum). This ensures that staff who may be uncomfortable using an internal service have access to a third party and external provider of employee assistance services.

Of note, access to both of these internal and external staff support services is via contact from the individual employee to the service provider directly and does not require any management intervention or approval. This ensures that the services accessed and provided are done so with complete independence and confidentiality.

All QAS Staff Support Services and associated contact details are advertised via the QAS internal staff intranet, a suite of brochures in all stations, various promotional materials and annual mail outs to all staff members.

Priority One is trusted by our staff, who regularly access the relevant support services. For example, Priority One counsellors across the State undertook 4,475 consultations in 2017, up from 2,646 consultations in 2014. This number excludes peer support interactions, which total approximately 300 interactions per month across the service.

Beyond these supports and services, the QAS has also recently introduced enhanced psychometric assessments into our recruitment processes for higher risk frontline roles. This enables the early identification of people who may be at greater risk of suffering a psychological injury to ensure early intervention personal mental health monitoring and coping strategies are reviewed, enhanced and embedded as needed. This provides greater assistance to individuals to ensure that they are equipped to deal with and appropriately manage some of the experiences they may face while undertaking their role.



There is also a suite of other psycho-educational programs and promotional activities provided at all levels within the organisation aimed at promoting good health and wellbeing for all staff on an ongoing basis throughout their employment.

I am also pleased to advise that the QAS Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023 was endorsed by the QAS Board of Management on 20 April 2018. This strategy represents the commitment of the QAS to address the psychological wellbeing of our people, reduce the stigma of mental health issues, remove barriers to accessing support services, and creating a culture of resilience and safety. The strategy is attached for your reference and was officially communicated to all staff on 25 July 2018.

### **White Ribbon Accreditation**

In addition to the services provided by Priority One, in November 2017, the QAS was proudly accredited as a White Ribbon Workplace, under the White Ribbon Australia Workplace Accreditation Program. This accreditation was undertaken over a 12-month period and accredits workplaces taking active steps to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence. The QAS recognises domestic and family violence as a workplace issue and the negative impacts this can have on employee health and wellbeing. The QAS has developed a range of material and support options for employees who are affected by domestic and family violence, including paid leave.

The QAS will continue to undertake work in this area to maintain accreditation as a White Ribbon Workplace. A number of initiatives will be rolled out in the next three-year period, which will ensure that the QAS continues to build on the work commenced during the accreditation period to create a future free from domestic and family violence whilst ensuring the ongoing support of those employees who are affected by these issues.

### **Fitness for Duty**

In 2017, the QAS established a Fitness for Duty (FFD) Working Group to provide a meaningful consultative forum, consisting of QAS management and representatives of the registered industrial organisation for ambulance operatives in Queensland in the United Voice Queensland (UVQ) to lead the design, development, and implementation of an organisational FFD Framework.

The framework, once finalised, intends to ensure the appropriate balance and focus is placed on the protection, safety and wellbeing of our employees and the broader community.

### **Fatigue Management**

The QAS recognises fatigue as a risk factor for its workforce. In 2015-16, the QAS in collaboration with the UVQ, undertook a review of fatigue management procedures and governance arrangements to support the safety of QAS employees. This included a continued focus on the identification of fatigue, risk mitigation and education, including investment in technology solutions with the implementation of a fatigue management application on operational iPads and meal management software.

These solutions provide the QAS the capability to ensure that employee rosters allow adequate breaks for necessary recovery between shifts and operational supervisors have better oversight and ability to ensure employees receive appropriate meal breaks.

## **Workforce Engagement**

Over the course of 2017 and 2018, the QAS has engaged with staff through a series of face-to-face workforce forums to further enhance the workforce culture within the service.

These forums are designed to facilitate the opportunity for staff at all levels of the QAS to be engaged and shape the future of the workforce by providing an environment for the QAS Leadership Team to listen to issues raised by employees first hand, understand their challenges, and engage them in the development of real and meaningful solutions to these issues.

During these forums, staff can provide anonymous, real time feedback, using mobile and online technology. In our experience, staff have taken these opportunities and raised issues that has generated meaningful and positive dialogue between our frontline staff and leadership team that may have not otherwise been raised.

To date, six workforce forums have been held with over 500 QAS employees attending as participants and have tackled a range of issues that have come from information derived out of the annual employee opinion surveys.

The QAS has established the Workforce Forum Implementation Group which is responsible for taking the suggestions raised at the forums and developing them into meaningful actions and initiatives. The QAS has implemented a number of initiatives which have resulted from these forums and have been well received by QAS employees (for example: ensuring all staff had access to single days of accrued time, subject to operational requirements, rather than adherence to a strict rule of only being able to access accrued time in week long blocks). A range of other longer term workforce initiatives will continue to be considered by this working group to ensure our employees have a say in the issues affecting their workplaces and work practices.

The QAS will continue to engage with employees at the workforce forums with events scheduled for August, October and November 2018. The planning for the forum scheduled in August is well underway and will have a focus on employee mental health and wellbeing. I look forward to the discussions that will be held at this forum aiming to understand from our employees what issues they are facing and how our services can improve to better support them.

As an additional mechanism for staff to raise issues or concerns, I have made it widely known to all employees within the QAS that they can contact the Commissioner's Confidential Reporting Line or send me an email directly to either provide feedback or raise concerns that they feel have not been appropriately addressed within their local areas.

## **Occupational Violence Taskforce**

The threat of deliberate physical or verbal harm is a hazard faced by QAS's frontline workforce. In December 2015, the QAS and the UVQ collaboratively established an Occupational Violence Working Group, which became the Paramedic Safety Taskforce in January 2016.

The Taskforce undertook a review of current strategies, systems and processes to mitigate risks related to occupational violence and on 7 April 2016, handed down their final report containing 15 recommendations.

On 28 April 2016, the Queensland Government accepted all 15 recommendations in the report.

The recommendations include:

- A public awareness campaign, a revised occupational safety training program, and the rollout of droperidol to allow Advanced Care Paramedics to chemically sedate violent patients.
- Duress monitoring systems fitted in all acute ambulances, and the enhancement of the analogue radio network in regional Queensland gives paramedics the ability to quickly alert their colleagues of a potentially dangerous situation and seek urgent assistance.
- The Inter Agency Computer Aided Despatch Electronic Messaging System allows for near real-time sharing of incident information between the QAS and the Queensland Police Service (QPS).
- A review by the QPS of the QAS training program 'Situational Awareness for Everyday Encounters' to ensure best-practice for frontline paramedic safety in potentially violent situations.

On 1 July 2017, the new training program was introduced. This is a mandatory training program for all frontline paramedics, delivered on a certification basis, meaning every paramedic must complete an annual refresher. It is also delivered as part of the induction program for all new QAS frontline officers.

The implementation of all recommendations continues to be monitored in a collaborative way by the QAS, in consultation with the UVQ, on a bi-monthly basis.

In terms of incidents of occupational violence reported by QAS personnel, there has been a decrease in the number of incidents reported year on year for the past three years. In 2015-16 there were 381 incidents of occupational violence reported; in 2016-17 there were 343; and in 2017-18 there were 301. Importantly, the QAS has also experienced a reduction in the number of LTIs due to occupational violence (from 20 occupational violence related LTIs in 2015-16 to nine LTIs in 2017-18).

## Conclusion

I trust the detail contained in this submission further demonstrates the commitment of the QAS to the safety and wellbeing of our employees. I welcome any feedback on opportunities to improve our systems, process and management of these complex issues and look forward to the outcomes of the inquiry in due course.

I again thank you for the opportunity to reply to the submission made by APAQ to this inquiry. If you would like any further information, please contact Mr Michael Metcalfe, Deputy Commissioner - Executive Director, Corporate Services, QAS, on telephone (07) [REDACTED] who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely

  
 Russell Bowles ASM  
 Commissioner

DISCLOSURE LOG



Ref: 18/01004  
Mincor: 03602-2018

06 AUG 2018

Mr Adam Gett  
President  
Australian Paramedics Association Queensland  
By email: [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au

Dear Mr Gett

I write to you regarding your organisation's submissions and oral evidence to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment's Inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first responders, emergency service workers and volunteers (the Inquiry).

As you are no doubt aware, the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) has also provided submissions and given oral evidence to the Inquiry.

From the outset, I would like to convey my commitment to ensuring the mental health and wellbeing of QAS staff. The QAS places utmost importance on the health and safety of our people – it is one of our core organisational values.

I am very proud of the improvements the QAS has made in the last five years towards improving the safety and wellbeing of our people. All our key safety performance indicators have shown significant improvement over that timeframe and I believe this is due to the collaborative and focused efforts of all our staff – managers, supervisors and frontline personnel alike.

I am very pleased to advise that, in 2017, there were over 4,400 confidential consultations undertaken by Priority One's network of independent counsellors. I also understand that there is an average of over 300 engagements between staff and peer support officers each month. This high level of engagement with Priority One services shows the faith and trust our people have in the Priority One system.

I also strongly believe the implementation of regular QAS Workforce Forums, which members of your association attended, have continued to drive improved engagement between staff and managers. I have personally enjoyed every Forum because it has been an opportunity to hear directly from staff about the issues that matter to them most. Not every contribution in those forums is positive. Staff who attended have been open in discussing the matters affecting their work and workplace. Part of the success of the forums is that staff feel safe in raising these issues.



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Most importantly, staff have also been willing at the forums to strongly advocate for solutions to problems. Many of the issues raised have been able to be resolved quickly, with other issues being more complex and requiring continued focus and effort, both from management and staff, including through the implementation group which has been formed.

We have a continuing commitment to engaging with staff through these forums. The overall feedback we have received from attending staff is that the forums are a very positive experience. We have been inundated with expressions of interest to attend future forums. The next Workforce Forum in August will focus on employee health and wellbeing. I am very much looking forward to hearing from staff and invited experts in the field, not only on the issues our people face in looking after themselves and their colleagues but also on what solutions the QAS could implement to better support our people.

In our ongoing efforts to improve staff safety and wellbeing, we have always tried to ensure our staff are engaged both in identifying problems and providing solutions. In this regard, we have successfully collaborated with United Voice Queensland on a range of safety related initiatives, including a review of Fatigue Risk Management, the Occupational Violence Taskforce and, more recently, the formation of a joint Fitness for Duty Working Party. Through this engagement, we have been able to devise more employee-centric solutions to safety related challenges.

With many of the changes we have made in recent years, particularly as we transition from an emergency service to a health service, I believe the culture of our workforce is continually improving. The feedback we receive from staff through the annual Working for Queensland Survey improves each year. Our annual staff separation rate is significantly better than it was five years ago. The QAS turnover rate of 3.65% in 2017-18 is incredibly low compared to other industries. In the 2018 Report on Government Services released by the Productivity Commission, the QAS turnover rate was the second lowest among Australian ambulance services. Last year, we also successfully negotiated a new Certified Agreement that gave wage parity for our employees and a future focused classification structure to provide greater flexibility for our employees and the roles they can undertake.

Our approach to mental health and wellbeing has recently been assessed against beyondblue's *Good practice framework for mental health and wellbeing in first responder organisations*. The QAS's extensive support system, particularly through Priority One, is compliant in all respects, with the recent release of the QAS Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. A copy of the Strategy has been mailed to all QAS staff. I commend all involved across the organisation who work incredibly hard to ensure we have all the right systems, processes, support and guidance for staff who perform critical roles in the community, sometimes under very trying conditions.

However, despite these improvements, I am concerned that, in submissions made on the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland's behalf, examples were provided where your organisation is of the view staff were not treated appropriately. Unfortunately, it is the case that, in a system of over 4,500 people, mistakes may be made in the management and treatment of staff. I would like to provide you with my assurance that, whenever issues of this nature are raised with me or my executive management team, they are treated with the utmost importance and appropriate strategies are implemented to resolve concerns.

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I know that Mr Michael Metcalfe, Deputy Commissioner – Executive Director, Corporate Services, in his oral evidence to the Inquiry, publicly offered that any individual or group aware of instances of inappropriate management could contact him directly to raise concerns. I would like to personally extend this offer to you and your organisation. If you or your members have any information about circumstances where employees have been treated inappropriately, I urge you to forward the information to me. I can provide you with my commitment that any issues raised by you or staff members will be properly and sensitively reviewed and all necessary remedial action taken to ensure fairness in all of our management processes. It is vital that our people feel that they can raise issues without fear of repercussion. It is also important that staff know that the QAS has the right management systems, policies and processes in place to ensure they will be treated fairly, consistently and in accordance with all legal requirements.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you and your members of the confidential reporting line that I have established. Anyone with any issue that they feel uncomfortable raising with their local management team is free to call the confidential Commissioner's Reporting Line on (07) [REDACTED]. I can assure anyone calling this number that information provided is dealt with in absolute confidentiality. I also welcome any staff member with concerns, issues or feedback to contact me directly through my email address – [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au. I make these offers every time I speak to staff members and I welcome our people contacting me directly if local resolution is not possible or appropriate.

In conclusion, I am very proud of the work undertaken by the QAS to support its employees. However, I know that we do not have all the answers, nor is the job completed in terms of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. The improvements we have made to date have been driven by direct feedback from our people and a shared commitment to continuous improvement. I remain committed to listening to our staff, resolving issues and implementing new solutions. I therefore welcome all contributions which are focused on helping us make the QAS a more safe and supportive workplace.

If you would like any further information, please contact Mr Metcalfe on telephone [REDACTED], who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



Russell Bowles ASM  
Commissioner

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** [Maria Parker](#)  
**To:** [QAS Correspondence](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Letter from APA Qld  
**Date:** Thursday, 25 October 2018 11:24:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [Letter to Commissioner from APA Qld President.pdf](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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Hi Narelle

Can you please register and park for now.

Thank you

Maria.

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**From:** Adam Gett [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@apaq.com.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@apaq.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 24 October 2018 11:01 AM  
**To:** Russell Bowles [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Letter from APA Qld

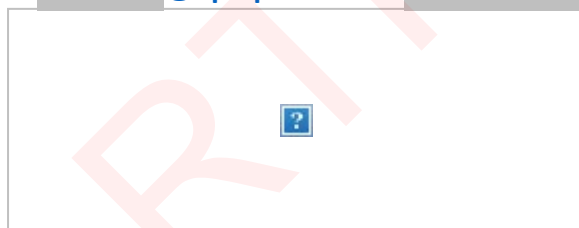
To Commissioner Bowles,  
Please find attached a letter in response to your correspondence received by the President of Australian Paramedics Association Queensland on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2018.  
Thankyou for writing to us, we appreciate the correspondence and engagement and look forward to further communication.  
Kind Regards,

**Adam Gett**

**APA Qld President –** [www.apaq.com.au](http://www.apaq.com.au)

**APA National Treasurer –** [www.apanational.com.au](http://www.apanational.com.au)

**E:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@apaq.com.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@apaq.com.au)> **T:** [REDACTED]



# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



22 October 2018

Mr Russell Bowles  
Commissioner  
Queensland Ambulance Service  
By email: [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Bowles,

We refer to your correspondence dated 6 August 2018.

Thank you for confirming that you remain committed to listening to staff, resolving issues and implementing new solutions. I apologise for the delay in responding, but we have been rather busy assisting members.

We have certainly observed a flurry of activity on the part of Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) in the mental health space since the public hearing on 18 July 2018, in the Senate Inquiry into the high rates of mental health conditions experienced by first respondents, emergency service workers and volunteers (the **Inquiry**). The Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (**APA Qld**) intends to support every positive step QAS makes to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees.

The information and some of the feedback we have received from members is that they query the statistics QAS has quoted about the number of 'Priority One contacts'. The information we have received is that the statistics are skewed heavily by the mandatory 'silver linings' contacts that need to be made by the graduates in their first 6 months. The issue of under reporting of mental health conditions remains an issue that does not seem to be acknowledged at all by QAS, let alone addressed. The fact remains that a high number of APA Qld members continue to express distrust in the confidentiality of Priority One. These QAS employees have stated that they are "*afraid of the system*" and that is preventing them from reporting PTSD symptoms. These QAS employees are in fear of losing their career and that fear is a direct result of how they have observed their colleagues with similar concerns being handled by middle management and certain LASN managers.

We have received feedback from several of the QAS employees who have had the opportunity to attend the workplace forums and they have described them in part as productive but a level of mistrust remains because they say that they believe that the



initiatives are “*all for show*”. APA Qld appreciates the challenges ahead in changing the perception of the workforce so that employees can see when QAS has made genuine attempts to improve the workplace. APA Qld commits to encouraging its members to support genuine attempts made by QAS to improve the mental health of QAS employees.

As a result of consulting with APA Qld’s membership, we have learnt that paramedics believe that the transition of QAS from an emergency service to a health service is fraught with problems for paramedics who feel their day to day workload is not the job they signed up for. This has had the result of diminishing job satisfaction and decreasing employee engagement with QAS. APA Qld is of the view that a crucial part of improved mental health in the workplace is increasing employee engagement. QAS employees should be proud to work at QAS. While APA Qld is not privy to the statistics, if what APA Qld’s members have expressed is reflective of the general workforce, the current employee engagement levels must be low.

In September 2018, representatives from APA Qld attended a 3 day conference in Sydney where paramedics from New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland exchanged information about issues affecting Paramedics. The dominant topic was the mental health of paramedics and how the ambulance services have addressed the obvious risk to the health and safety of employees. The conference was very insightful. During the conference, the Commissioner of New South Wales Ambulance Service delivered a comprehensive presentation that was transparent and provided a wealth of specific and detailed information about the implementation of recent initiatives relating to supporting the mental health of employees and the specific strategy relating to employee engagement into the future.

In time, we believe that it will become obvious which ambulance services have carefully considered what changes and initiatives will genuinely benefit paramedics and which ambulance services have scrambled to make superficial changes.

As it stands now, as an association in Queensland, we know more about the initiatives of the New South Wales Ambulance Service than we do about the initiatives of QAS. The QAS Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has not provided us with sufficient information to understand the work that you have stated that you are so proud of. We would like to obtain from you a better understanding of the specifics of the systems, processes and support you have briefly referred to in your correspondence.

Thank you for confirming that you welcome all contributions which are focussed on helping make QAS a more safe and supportive workplace. We have a number of suggestions and contributions received from our substantial membership base (since the Inquiry we have had a considerable spike in membership), and we would be pleased to share those suggestions with you.

QAS' executive representative said in QAS' oral evidence at the Inquiry that it would "*absolutely*" have discussions with APA Qld if it were approached to. APA Qld's representative did request a meeting with on 19 July 2018. To date, a meeting has not been scheduled. We are now, requesting a meeting with you so that you can expand on your brief statements in your correspondence to us and listen to the contributions of QAS staff that you have said that you would welcome.

APA Qld well understands that United Voice is the registered industrial body. We also know that this does not prohibit QAS from engaging with an association that supports a significant number of QAS employees who have chosen to be a member of that association. APA Qld is not seeking to represent the QAS workforce industrially, APA Qld is seeking to engage with QAS to contribute to a safer workplace that supports QAS employees and our members.

We (like you have stated in your correspondence) place the utmost importance on the health and safety of employees. The health and safety of employees should take priority over all else. We look forward to discussing the suggestions of individual employees with you. To arrange a meeting time, please contact Ms Efthimia Voulcaris of Devaney Investigations on 0478 045 677.

Yours faithfully,



Adam Gett  
President - APA Qld,  
on behalf of the Management Committee and Members.

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



**Queensland  
Ambulance Service**

Department of  
**Health**

Ref: 18/01299  
Mincor: 05375-2018

Mr Adam Gett  
President  
Australian Paramedics Association Queensland  
Email: [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au

Dear Mr Gett

Thank you for your correspondence dated 22 October 2018, regarding mental health issues within the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), concerns regarding Priority One and your request for further information in relation to the systems, processes and support referred to in my previous correspondence of 6 August 2018.

I note your letter alleges a recent "flurry of activity" due to the Senate Inquiry into the mental health conditions experienced by first responders (the Inquiry). I refute that this is, on any part, due to the QAS participation in the Inquiry or the management of mental health conditions within the QAS. The psychological and physical wellbeing of all QAS personnel has always been of paramount importance to me personally and the QAS leadership team. The QAS continues to provide a significant evidence based multi-layered Staff Support Service, known as Priority One, which has been in place for over 25 years. This service continues to provide confidential support to QAS personnel following an incident, through Counselling, Chaplaincy and Peer Support Services, but also makes available these services for any issue to staff and their immediate families. In addition, the program provides an extensive suite of psycho-education and resilience building programs embedded across the organisation.

This Staff Support Service has been rigorously researched, reviewed, and evaluated over the years and has shown to not only be highly valued by staff but also provide protection in relation to the potential detrimental impact following exposure to trauma. Due to this evidence base, this program has been replicated by other agencies and states nationally and internationally. I am also proud to acknowledge that the success of this program has been recognised two years in a row, winning the *Mental Health Week Achievement Awards "Workplace (Large)"* category during Queensland's Mental Health Week. These nominations were evaluated by an external selection panel through Open Minds and the Queensland Mental Health Commission.

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ABN 89 519 542 578

Given due consideration to these respected accolades, I find your loosely veiled attack on our Priority One Program to be misguided and nonsensical. I am particularly concerned that your letter attempts to mount a negative and baseless campaign against Priority One. I request that you first ensure you have sufficient evidence to support your position before you criticise Priority One. I consider the approach you have taken has the potential to dangerously erode confidence in the important role Priority One undertakes and I would implore you to make only evidence-based comments into the future. Priority One consists of high calibre, selfless and experienced staff who volunteer to provide crucial support and assistance to many of your own peers every day. There is much I am proud to lead as Commissioner in QAS, but none more so than the excellent work undertaken by our Priority One staff. I am however encouraged by your commitment *“to support every positive step QAS makes to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees”* and I would suggest that this should begin with supporting our Priority One Program. I will watch with interest to see how your organisation honours this very important commitment.

As mentioned in your correspondence, I am proud to confirm that the QAS has released the *QAS Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023*. This document acknowledges the psychological risks inherent within the QAS and provides a future direction to ensure that QAS continues to identify and mitigate these risks into the future. The release of this document was not in reaction to the recent Senate Inquiry mentioned in your correspondence, but has been developed following extensive consultation across the organisation. In addition to internal stakeholders, a number of external experts including academics, the Queensland Mental Health Commission and Queensland’s Chief Psychiatrist were also consulted to ensure it represented best, evidence-based practice. This consultation process took place over a 18-month period prior to the Strategy’s release to ensure that all psychological risks were identified and measured against current psychological mitigation strategies.

During the consultation process, it was identified that there was little understanding of the evidence underpinning the Priority One Program and significant misconceptions in relation to mental health and wellbeing and of the requirements around confidentiality of the Program. In order to provide information around these misconceptions, Priority One has also released the *QAS Priority One Mental Health and Wellbeing Portfolio 2018*. I have included this document with this correspondence for your reference. It is also available to all QAS personnel on the QAS Portal, under the Priority One tab. Confidentiality is of critical importance to the success of the Priority One Program and I can assure you that as registered mental health professionals, all QAS Priority One Counsellors are subject to the strictest of confidentiality requirements.

Regarding the alleged feedback you reference from the QAS Workforce Forums, I would say that this is in stark contrast to the overwhelming feedback QAS has received over the past 18 months, where staff say that these are a genuine attempt by the organisation to engage with staff and provide their views on the overall management of the organisation. The Working for Queensland Survey, held annually across all agencies of the Queensland Public Service, provides detailed insight into how our staff are feeling, exploring key themes including employee engagement, job satisfaction, leadership within the organisation. The QAS has committed to the delivery of the QAS Workforce Forums as an additional channel for the QAS Executive and Local Ambulance Service Network (LASN) Management to engage with staff to better understand their perceptions and experiences in our workplaces. I am confident that these forums continue to be valuable for both staff and the QAS leadership team.

I am therefore genuinely surprised by your criticisms of our Workforce Forums, specifically your comments that it is “all for show”, given this is a genuine attempt by the QAS for our leadership team to actively engage face-to-face with over 1,000 staff. I would suspect that the success of the Workforce Forums may be damaging for your membership, as it makes it harder to trade on mistrust, given that your membership is now hearing directly from the entire leadership team in an open and engaging environment. The QAS Workforce Forums provide a real opportunity for QAS to make changes in our workplaces based on the feedback we directly receive from our staff. As you would appreciate, some of the issues we are working to resolve out of the Forums are complex in nature and require a systems-based approach to resolution. An implementation working group has therefore been established to take oversight and responsibility for developing solutions and actions to address the suggestions made by employees at these Forums.

However, some issues that have been raised by the workforce during these forums have been less complex in nature and have been able to be expedited by the QAS and implemented as a direct result of the forums. Examples include:

- progressing temporary Graduate Paramedic Induction Program employees to permanent employment status;
- communication of policies and procedures now occurs via HR News articles to all QAS staff;
- access to single day accrued time leave is now available, subject to operational requirements being met, and a revised procedure is being drafted;
- continuous refinements to the Supervisory Recruitment Campaign ensures the concerns raised by employees are addressed for future campaigns;
- in May 2017, I issued a communique advising operational staff that they can wear the rank of the position while acting in a higher position; and
- a review of the compassionate transfers process was undertaken, and these requests are now centralised.

These successful results aren't features or outcomes of events that are “just for show”, they demonstrate the value of these forums to the QAS workforce.

In August this year, over 100 staff participated in an employee health and wellbeing focussed QAS Workforce Forum. Over the course of two days, staff had the opportunity to hear from internal and external speakers in relation to mental health. This also provided a platform for employees to share their experiences directly with the Central Office Senior Executive and LASN Management team. These were very productive conversations that provided significant insight for the leadership team to determine areas of strength of existing programs, initiatives and support, along with opportunities for possible future improvements. This Forum was positively received by staff and I commend those attendees for the way they engaged with the complex topic. I am pleased to say that the Priority One team who also attended the Forum have already commenced several initiatives in response to the feedback provided by staff.

At the end of each of the QAS Workforce Forums, all attendees are provided with the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback regarding their experience. The feedback being consistently provided is that the QAS is progressing well; there is a high level of engagement and interest between employees and the leadership team; and a high level of interest and commitment to making progressive changes to improve the QAS workplace experience. I would suggest that both you and your members take the opportunity to come along and participate in the Forums, as it provides a great opportunity to have your say into the future of QAS.

In conclusion, I appreciate your acknowledgement that United Voice is the registered industrial body within Queensland and I would like to highlight that in partnership with them, we have just delivered the largest pay increase in QAS history making QAS staff the best paid paramedics in the country. In conjunction with United Voice, the QAS will continue to work with all staff, with their health and wellbeing being of foremost importance. If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office on telephone 3635 3765.

Yours sincerely

Russell Bowles ASM  
**Commissioner**

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** [Briana Watson](#) on behalf of [QAS Briefs](#)  
**To:** [QAS Financial Accounting](#)  
**Cc:** [QAS Briefs](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Gift and Donation Declarations due by COB Thursday 16 May 2019  
**Date:** Monday, 13 May 2019 10:28:43 AM  
**Attachments:** [Russell Bowles - Gifts declaration - Keepcup.pdf](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)  
[image012.png](#)  
[Tony King - Gifts declaration - Keepcup - Australian Paramedics Association - \\$18.00.pdf](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)

Good morning

Please find attached two gift declarations for the Office of the Commissioner

- Russell Bowles - Keepcup
- Tony King - Keepcup

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Regards



**Briana Watson**

A/Executive Support Officer  
 Executive Services | Office of the Commissioner  
 Queensland Ambulance Service | Department of Health  
 Emergency Services Complex Cnr Park & Kedron Park Roads Kedron Q 4031  
 GPO Box 1425 Brisbane Q 4001  
 T: 07 [REDACTED]  
 E: [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au) | [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)



**From:** Jenni Pearce (QAS Finance Kedron)

**Sent:** Tuesday, 7 May 2019 1:44 PM

**To:** Danielle Walton [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); Desley Dore  
 [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); Donna Holland  
 [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); Leanne Tickle  
 [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); Liz Scott [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); Matthew  
 Salter [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); QAS Briefs  
 [REDACTED] [@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au); QAS Cap Dev



<Q [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS Cape York Admin  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS Corp Serv  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS DC SPP [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS  
 GOL AC Correspondence [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS LASN CAH  
 Executive Officer [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS LASN Metro  
 South Executive Officer [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS LASN North  
 West Admin [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS LASN SunCoast XO  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS LASN West Moreton Executive Officer  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS LASN Wide Bay  
 Executive Officer [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; QAS State LASN  
 Ops [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Rebecca Geary  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Tracey Boden  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** QAS Financial Accounting [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Elizabeth  
 Dillon [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Gift and Donation Declarations due by COB Thursday 16 May 2019

Good afternoon everyone,

If you are unfamiliar with the monthly process for submitting gift and donation declarations please read the attached document "Monthly Gift Register Process".

Please email [declarations](#), together with [supporting documentation](#), including 'NIL' responses to generic email [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au by **COB Thursday, 16 May 2019**.

Information about gifts can be found the QAS Portal at

Kind regards



**Jenni Pearce**

Finance Officer

Financial Accounting Team | Finance | Corporate Services

Queensland Ambulance Service | Department of Health

Emergency Services Complex Cnr Park & Kedron Park Roads Kedron Q 4031

GPO Box 1425 Brisbane Q 4001

T: 07 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au | [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)



DOH DISCLOSURE LOG





**Queensland  
Government**

## DEPARTMENT of HEALTH DECLARATION of REPORTABLE GIFTS and BENEFITS

<b>GIFT or BENEFIT</b>	
Date the Gift was offered	17 / 04 / 2019
Cultural or heritage significance	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Category of Gift or Benefit	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input type="checkbox"/> Networking <input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Clinical <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) .....
Description of Gift or Benefit	340ml Keppcup
Reason for Accepting or Giving (Give Benefit to Qld Community)	Received in the mail - promotional item
Retail Value	\$18.00

<b>DONOR</b>	
Donor Name	AUSTRALIAN PARAMEDICS ASSOCIATION
Donor Organisation	
Donor Contact details	

<b>RECIPIENT</b>	
Recipient First Name	Russell
Recipient Family Name	Bowles
Recipient Employee Number	

<b>SUPERVISOR APPROVAL (&lt;\$150) or RECOMMENDATION</b>	
Line Manager recommendation	Note: <\$150 Supervisor/Line manager approves. ≥\$150 The above endorses & submits for Commissioner approval.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Return gift <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recipient may accept gift <input type="checkbox"/> Surrender gift to Executive Officer for decision <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) .....
Name	BARBARA PHILLIPS
Position Title	DEPUTY DIRECTOR - GENERAL
Signature & Date	8 / 5 / 2019
Comment	

<b>DDG or equivalent APPROVAL (≥\$150) i.e. Commissioner</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved
Name	
Position Title	Commissioner, QAS
Signature & Date	
Comment	

<b>DG APPROVAL (gifts to DDGs or equivalent) – brief may be required</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved
Signature & Date	
Comment	



SHOP

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ABOUT KEEP CUP

All - \$AUD ↓



KITCHEN | DESIGN YOUR OWN CLEAR KEEP CUP

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TYPE



BREW CORK



BREW



ORIGINAL



CLEAR



LONGPLAY

SIZE

MEDIUM CORK / 340ML



WHAT'S MY SIZE?

BODY

WHITE



LID

TOMATO RED (NEW)



SLUG

KISS BLUE (NEW)



QTY

1



# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



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ABOUT KEEP CUP

NEW! \$1 - \$100+



HOME / DESIGN YOUR OWN CLEAR KEEP CUP



\$18.00

IN STOCK

## Specification



# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



**Queensland  
Government**

## DEPARTMENT of HEALTH DECLARATION of REPORTABLE GIFTS and BENEFITS

### GIFT or BENEFIT

Date the Gift was offered 17 / 04 / 2019

Cultural or heritage significance ☐ Yes ☒ No

Category of Gift or Benefit ☐ Entertainment ☐ Education ☐ Research ☐ Networking  
☐ Medical/Clinical ☐ Other (specify) .....

Description of Gift or Benefit 340ml Keepcup

Reason for Accepting or Giving (Give Benefit to Qld Community) Received in the mail - promotional item

Retail Value \$18.00

### DONOR

Donor Name AUSTRALIAN PARAMEDICS ASSOCIATION

Donor Organisation .....

Donor Contact details .....

### RECIPIENT

Recipient First Name Tony

Recipient Family Name WING

Recipient Employee Number [REDACTED]

### SUPERVISOR APPROVAL (<\$150) or RECOMMENDATION

Line Manager recommendation

Note: <\$150 Supervisor/Line manager approves.  
 ≥\$150 The above endorses & submits for Commissioner approval.

☐ Return gift  
☒ Recipient may accept gift  
☐ Surrender gift to Executive Officer for decision  
☐ Other (specify) .....

Name RUSSELL BOWLES

Position Title COMMISSIONER

Signature & Date R. Bowles 10 / 05 / 19

Comment .....

### DDG or equivalent APPROVAL (≥\$150) i.e. Commissioner

☒ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Name .....

Position Title Commissioner QAS

Signature & Date R. Bowles 10 / 05 / 19

Comment .....

### DG APPROVAL (gifts to DDGs or equivalent) – brief may be required

☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Signature & Date .....

Comment .....





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AU — \$ AUD ↓

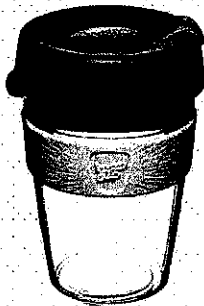


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TYPE



BREW CORK



BREW



ORIGINAL



CLEAR



LONGPLAY

SIZE

MEDIUM 12OZ / 340ML

[WHAT'S MY SIZE?](#)

BAND

WHITE



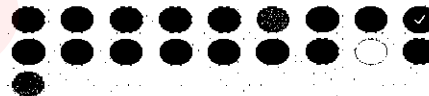
LID

TOMATO RED (185C)



PLUG

NEW BLUE (185C)



QTY

1



# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



SHOP

DESIGN YOUR OWN

BRANDED KEEPCUPS

ABOUT KEEPCUP

AU — \$AUD↓



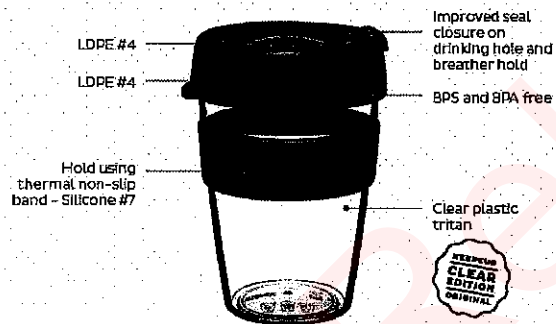
HOME / DESIGN YOUR OWN CLEAR KEEPCUP



\$18.00

IN STOCK

## Specification



# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** [Nicola Busch](#)  
**To:** [QAS Correspondence](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Respect for Paramedics who are the subject of disciplinary matters and the rule of law  
**Date:** Wednesday, 17 February 2021 5:03:13 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Email 1 "Respect for vulnerable patients.pdf" Redacted.pdf](#)  
[Email 2 sacked from QAS, charged wit...pdf](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

Hi Narelle

Russell has requested that Steve Rashford draft a Commissioner reply for Russell to consider sending. We will most likely also need to seek some input from Nathan.

I'm going to send a holding email now as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or wish to discuss.

Regards



**Nicola Busch**  
 Acting Director  
 Executive Services | Office of the  
 Commissioner  
 Queensland Ambulance Service |  
 Department of Health  
 Emergency Services Complex Cnr Park  
 & Kedron Park Roads Kedron Q 4031  
 GPO Box 1425 Brisbane Q 4001  
 T: 07 [REDACTED] M: [REDACTED]  
 E: [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au  
[www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)

**From:** Commissioner QAS [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 16 February 2021 3:41 PM  
**To:** Russell Bowles [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Respect for Paramedics who are the subject of disciplinary matters and the rule of law

**From:** Efthimia Voulcaris  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 16, 2021 3:39:06 PM (UTC+10:00) Brisbane  
**To:** Commissioner QAS  
**Subject:** Respect for Paramedics who are the subject of disciplinary matters and the rule of law

Dear Commissioner,

As you would be aware from our previous interactions, I act for the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APAQ).

I am contacting you about an issue that affects APAQ's members generally and specifically.



In recent times, the Medical Director, Dr Stephen Rashford, has been emailing all QAS staff and providing his opinion about conduct or disciplinary matters (see attachment 1 for example).

In fairness to Dr Rashford, I am aware unofficially that he resisted sending such emails for a period of time before the Commissioner's office insisted that he do so.

In any case, the purpose of my email to you is to inform you about why such emails are inappropriate and provide you with an opportunity to provide an undertaking that emails of this nature will cease. If you decide not to provide that undertaking, that is your prerogative and I will raise APAQ's concerns externally.

The reasons that you/QAS should cease sending emails about conduct or disciplinary matters are as follows:

1. The emails are sent from Dr Rashford to potential witnesses while litigation is on foot and the emails have the potential to interfere in the course of legal proceedings which is potentially corrupt conduct.
2. The emails sent do not need to include the name of the paramedic to provide enough information to determine who the email is about. This may amount to a privacy breach and a misuse of confidential information which is potentially corrupt conduct.
3. There is always the possibility that a dismissed employee might be reinstated by the QIRC. QAS should wait for the QIRC decision before it publicly defames an employee.
4. Paramedics read the emails and cringe that the Medical Director feels compelled to share such information and they do not feel that the comments are respectful towards their former colleagues (remember that *'Respect' should extend both inside and outside of the QAS*).
5. Lastly, and most importantly, I know for a fact that I speak to more terminated QAS staff than you do. That being so, allow me to explain that when a paramedic is terminated (whether that be fairly or unfairly), they are at the lowest point in their lives. Quite often they have been on a lengthy period of suspension where they have been at home 'doing their head in' about particular traumatic cases that have made their mark on the mental health of the paramedic. For QAS at that point in time, to send an all staff email which is received by the paramedic's support network (and quickly gets back to the paramedic) is really kicking someone when they are down. I am informed that this increases their risk of suicide. I see this as a real risk and you should too. Or forever hold your peace in an inquiry when this email is produced.

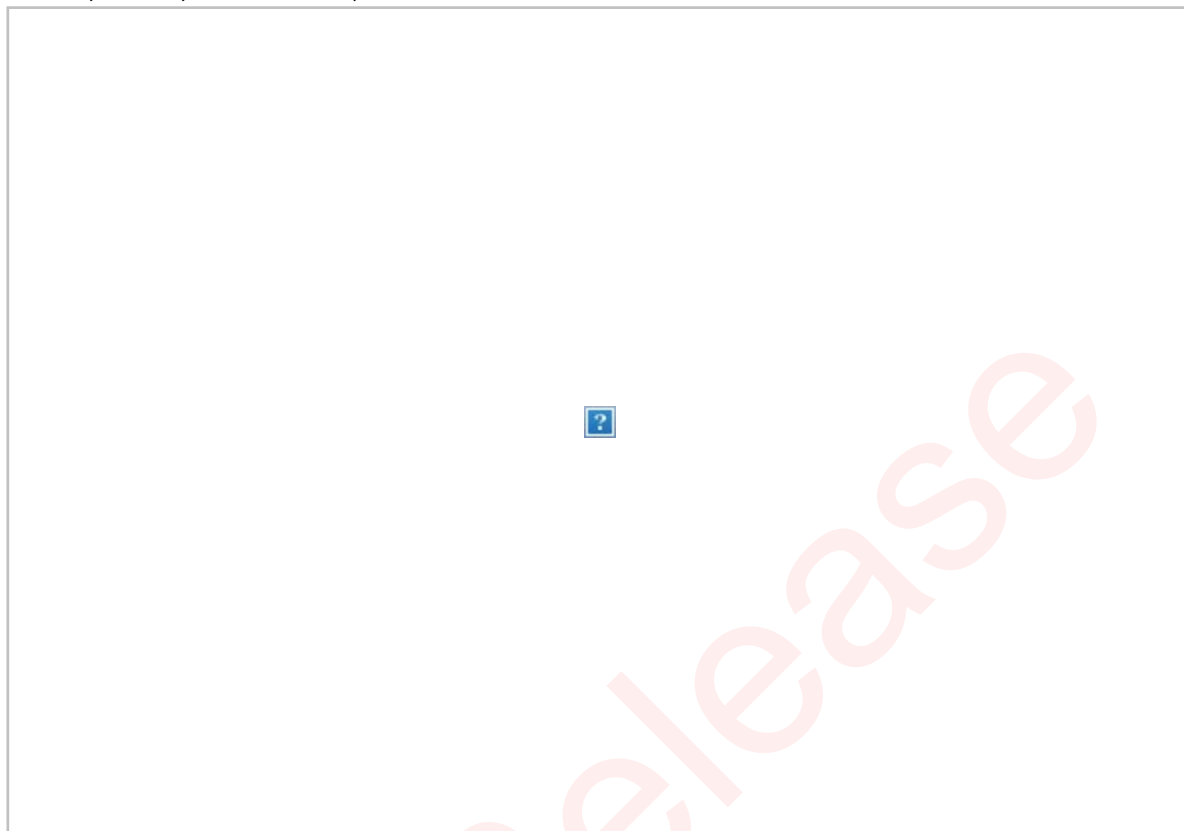
In closing, there is no reason why QAS needs to circulate an opinion about cases that are before the Court. Both matters in attachment 'Email 1' are before the Court.

In relation to one of the cases, a QAS spokesman said they could not comment because the matter is before the courts (see Email 2 attached). That should be the position taken internally and externally.

APAQ is currently representing a number of suspended paramedics that may be affected by QAS' practice of emailing all staff about real or perceived misconduct. If you are not inclined to provide me with an undertaking to cease the inappropriate emails circulated by the Medical Director (or anyone else at QAS), I am concerned enough about the legal ramifications as well as the health

and welfare of my clients, to escalate the concern elsewhere. That will occur if I have not received a satisfactory response within 14 days of this correspondence.

Thank you for your time. Keep well.



## DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** Stephen Rashford [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 14 December 2020 8:28 AM  
**To:** All QAS Staff [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Respect for vulnerable patients



Dear All,

The trust people place in QAS staff is something we trade off when responding to our community.

It is a fundamental tenet of our practice and something we should value dearly.

It is even more important when dealing with vulnerable community members.

‘Respect’ should extend both inside and outside of the QAS.

Therefore, it is with sadness that I report two cases that have recently involved termination of paramedics from the QAS, in addition to notification to the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO).

1. A paramedic was recently the subject of an internal investigation as a result of aberrant behaviour towards an geriatric patient. This behaviour was witnessed by numerous health care professionals, being immediately reported. These allegations were substantiated, and

as such, the paramedic was terminated from employment. At this point in time, the OHO is conducting an independent investigation of the matter.

2. A paramedic was recently charged by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) for Stealing whilst on scene providing patient care. The incident was appropriately reported immediately by attending paramedics.

At this point in time, the OHO is conducting an independent investigation.

We should not diminish the great work our staff do on a daily basis by the actions of a very small few. The types of behaviour listed above are completely unacceptable.

Regards

Steve



**Dr Stephen Rashford ASM MBBS FACEM**  
Specialist Emergency Physician & Medical Director  
Queensland Ambulance Service

Emergency Services Complex,  
Cnr Park & Kedron Park Roads Kedron, Qld 4031

M: GPO Box 1425 Brisbane QLD 4001  
T: 07 [REDACTED] m. [REDACTED]  
E: [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au  
[www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)

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RTI Release

## DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



Read Today's Paper

Tributes

8:45pm Monday, February 15th, 2021

 RewardsBrisbane Today  20°/30°**The Courier Mail** Hi, Ef My  
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QLD

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World

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Sport

[True Crime Australia](#) > [Police & Courts](#)

# Paramedic fronts court, sacked for allegedly stealing from dead patient

A paramedic with nearly 40 years' experience has fronted court accused of a crime against a patient who died in their bed.

Kate Kyriacou &amp; Kay Dibben

 less than 2 min read February 8, 2021 - 5:05PM The Courier-Mail

## DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

Divorce, bankruptcy and citizenship issues – these are all matters that might land you in court. But not all courts are created equal. So how does Australian courts work?

A paramedic with nearly 40 years' experience was sacked immediately after allegedly being caught swiping cash from the wallet of a man who had died in his bed. DOH RTI 3355

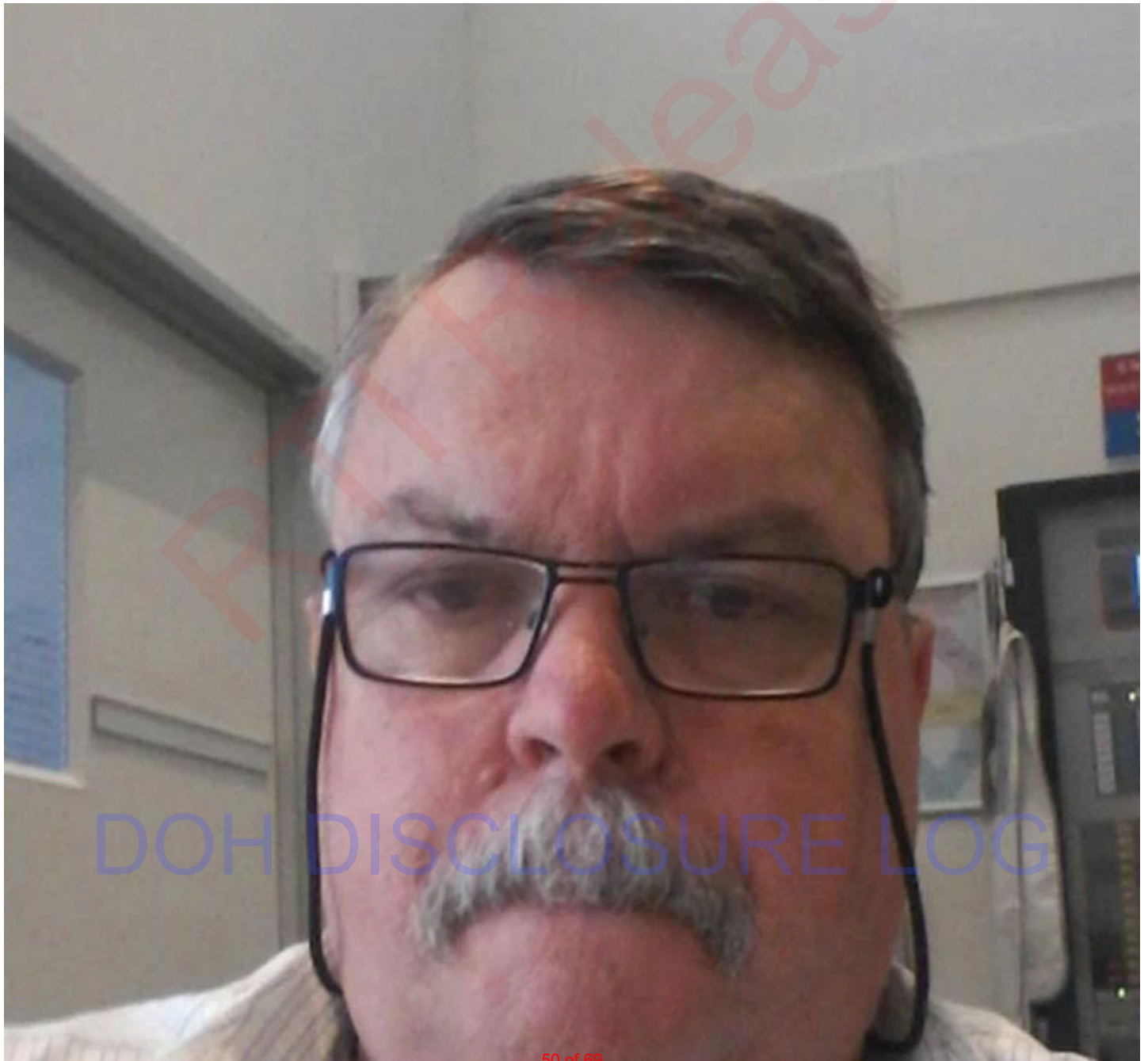
Louis Roza, 62, appeared before Brisbane Magistrates Court today charged with stealing a sum of money.

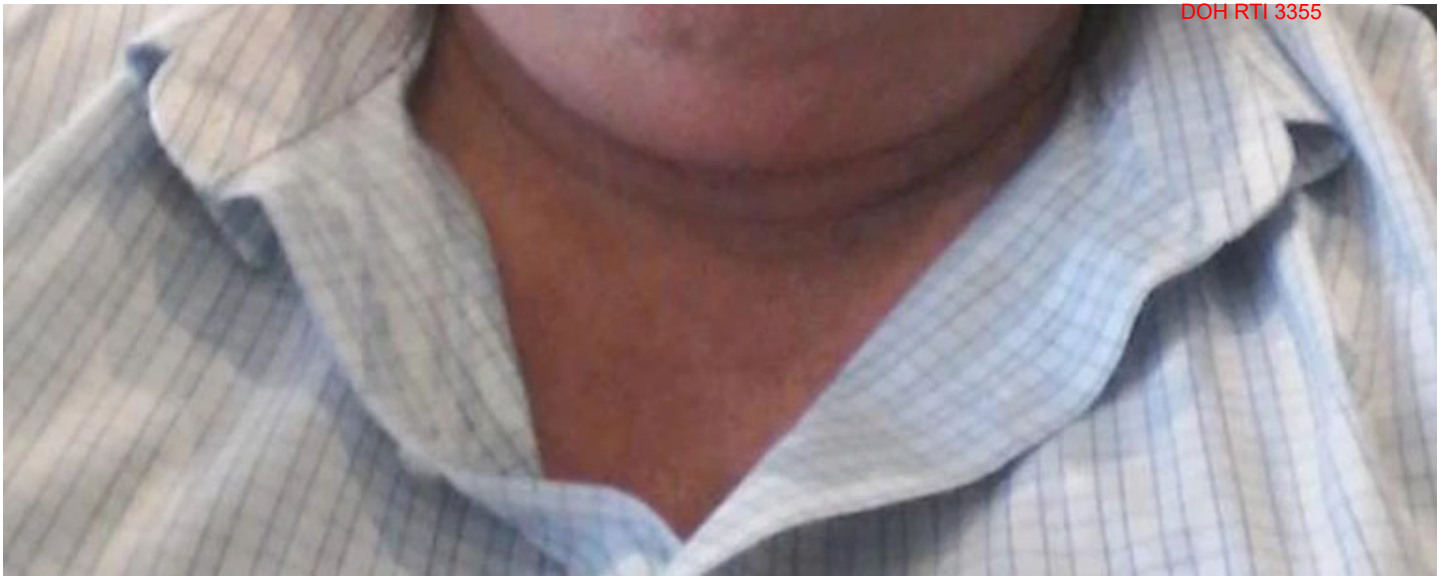
Paramedics were called to the home of an elderly couple in Aspley on November 18 where a man had died.

Police will allege Roza swiped money belonging to the patient from a bedside table.

It will be alleged he was spotted by his colleague who immediately reported what he'd seen.

Roza's position with Queensland Ambulance Service was terminated that day and his registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency was restricted.





Paramedic Louis Roza was dismissed from Queensland Ambulance Service after he allegedly stole money from a dead man

Information listed on the AHPRA website shows Roza has conditions imposed on his registration preventing him from having any contact with patients or their property.

“The practitioner must not practise in any role that includes direct patient contact or being in the vicinity of patients’ property,” the website says in reference to Roza.

“The practitioner must only practise in employment and at practice locations approved by the Health Ombudsman.”

#### FROM OUR PARTNERS [↗](#)

NZ v AUS T20I Series live on FOX CRICKET from Feb 22 **Find out more**

The restrictions will remain in place unless set aside by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal or removed by the Health Ombudsman.

Roza’s matter was adjourned until March 3.

He was given bail on his own undertaking.

A Queensland Ambulance Service spokesman said they could not comment because the matter is before the courts.

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

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### Everyone appearing in Brisbane court today

Daily court listing for Queensland, covering Supreme, District, Magistrate, Civil and Federal courts on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.





Police &amp; Courts

**Block-busted: Film worker's 'chilling' road violation**

A Gold Coast film industry worker, whose credits include the blockbuster Aquaman, has had a guest appearance in court.

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Island national park’s new name revealed

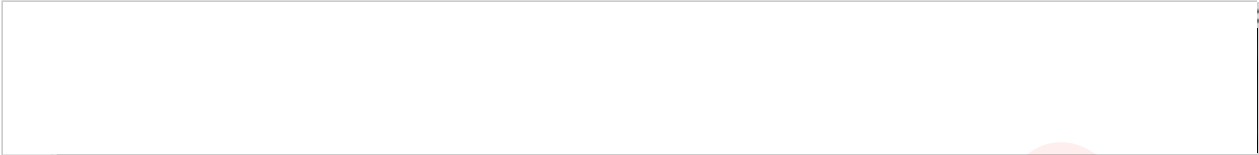
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DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** [QAS Statewide Operations](#)  
**To:** [QAS MD Corro](#)  
**Cc:** [QAS Statewide Operations](#)  
**Subject:** RE: GPIIP length survey report  
**Date:** Tuesday, 18 May 2021 9:10:39 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)  
[image012.png](#)  
[image013.jpg](#)

---

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Hi Ash

Thanks for your response. Dee has asked if your office can please register this in Mincor.

Thanks

Linda

---

**From:** QAS MD Corro [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 May 2021 9:03 AM  
**To:** QAS Statewide Operations [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** QAS MD Corro [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: GPIIP length survey report

Classified as OFFICIAL

Morning Linda

I have not created any Mincor items relating to the below correspondence, nor has this email trail come across my desk.

Let me know if you need any further information.

Thanks

Ash



**Ashleigh Hourigan**

A/Executive Services Officer  
 Office of the Medical Director  
 Queensland Ambulance Service | Department of Health  
 Emergency Services Complex Cnr Park & Kedron Park Roads Kedron  
 Q 4031  
 GPO Box 1425 Brisbane Q 4001  
 T: 07 [REDACTED]  
 E: [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au | [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)  
 Part Time – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** QAS Statewide Operations [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 May 2021 8:53 AM  
**To:** QAS MD Corro <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** QAS Statewide Operations <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: GPIIP length survey report  
**Importance:** High

Classified as OFFICIAL

Good Morning Fiona & Ash

Please refer Dee's email below for your advice.

Thanks

Linda

---

**From:** Dee Taylor-Dutton [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 17 May 2021 7:54 PM  
**To:** QAS Statewide Operations [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: GPIIP length survey report  
**Importance:** High

Classified as OFFICIAL

Hi Team

Can we please confirm this has been logged in Mincor by Steve's team??

Regards

*Dee*



**Dee Taylor-Dutton ASM**

Deputy Commissioner, Statewide Operations  
Queensland Ambulance Service | Department of Health  
Emergency Services Complex, Cnr Park & Kedron Park Roads, Kedron Q  
4031  
GPO Box 1425, Brisbane Q 4001  
T: 07 [REDACTED]  
E: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@ambulance.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au)> | [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)  
V: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@video.dcs.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@video.dcs.qld.gov.au)> | <https://twitter.com/QASDeputyDTD>

A picture containing food? ? Description automatically generated

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** Adam Gett <[REDACTED]@apaq.com.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 23 April 2021 10:32 AM  
**To:** Dee Taylor-Dutton <[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Tony Hucker  
<[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Stephen Rashford <[REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** GPIP length survey report  
**Importance:** High

Hi Dee, Steve and Tony.

APA Qld recently surveyed our members regarding the length of the current Graduate Program and the shortening from 12-months to a 6-months and any issues this may have caused.

As this survey is somewhat in line with the Staff-led Strategy of QASRESPECT and workplace forums, the Association Executive Committee thought it may be of interest.

We believe the program is now based on hours worked, not a time period.

We have reports of Graduates not wishing to take overtime as the hours add to the time they are required to amass to qualify, and they don't want to qualify too quickly.

Thank you for considering. The intent is to advocate for Paramedics in Qld by informing the employer.

On behalf of the Association Executive Committee,

**Adam Gett**  
APA QLD President  
APA National Treasurer  
W: [www.apaq.com.au](http://www.apaq.com.au)  
E: [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au  
T: [REDACTED]



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# DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



**From:** [Adam Gett](#)  
**To:** [Stephen Rashford](#)  
**Subject:** RE: GPIIP length survey report  
**Date:** Friday, 23 April 2021 3:38:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)

---

Hi Steve,  
 Thanks for replying and engaging, much appreciated.  
 Adam.

---

**From:** Stephen Rashford [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 23 April 2021 10:46 AM  
**To:** Adam Gett [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au>; Dee Taylor-Dutton <[REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Tony Hucker [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Timothy Eva [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Ian Tarr  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: GPIIP length survey report

Thanks Adam,

QASEC has moved under my remit.

Of course, Dee as DC State Ops has buy in as well to this issue.

I will have a read.

The 800 hours is about ensuring a minimum, not a maximum.  
 As you would be aware, there is no formal "internship" requirement for paramedics (or nurses)...  
 only for doctors.  
 But, we are firmly committed to an appropriate supported program as they enter practice.

Day 1 for every induction group, I tell them the 26 weeks is notional and we should look at  
 people's needs. Some may require longer.

Anyway, let me have a look at this document and I will get back to you.

Thanks for sending through.

Regards  
 Steve

---

**From:** Adam Gett [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 23 April 2021 10:32 AM  
**To:** Dee Taylor-Dutton [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Tony Hucker  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>; Stephen Rashford  
 [REDACTED]@ambulance.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** GPIIP length survey report

Hi Dee, Steve and Tony.

APA Qld recently surveyed our members regarding the length of the current Graduate Program and the shortening from 12-months to a 6-months and any issues this may have caused. As this survey is somewhat in line with the Staff-led Strategy of QASRESPECT and workplace forums, the Association Executive Committee thought it may be of interest. We believe the program is now based on hours worked, not a time period. We have reports of Graduates not wishing to take overtime as the hours add to the time they are required to amass to qualify, and they don't want to qualify too quickly.

Thank you for considering. The intent is to advocate for Paramedics in Qld by informing the employer.

On behalf of the Association Executive Committee,

**Adam Gett**

APA QLD President

APA National Treasurer

W: [www.apaq.com.au](http://www.apaq.com.au)

E: [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au



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## DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

**From:** [EXECSUPPORT](#)  
**To:** [QAS Correspondence](#)  
**Subject:** C-ECTF-21/6800 - MIN AD- VIP - Patrick Tomkins - Australian Paramedics Association Queensland - QAS and the practice of single officer stations and response  
**Date:** Monday, 17 May 2021 1:27:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[FW APA Old Correspondence to Minister 22 April 2021.msg](#)

Good afternoon

Please refer to the attached which requires a response as follows:

<b>CM Number / Subject</b>	C-ECTF-21/6800 - MIN AD- VIP - Patrick Tomkins - Australian Paramedics Association Queensland - QAS and the practice of single officer stations and response
<b>Response Type</b>	Action Direct – please provide signed copy of response or action taken to ExecSupport *
<b>Relevant Template</b>	N/A
<b>Brief Required</b>	No
<b>Due to ExecSupport</b>	N/A
<b>Related Records</b> (please attach)	Nil
<b>Other Instructions</b>	Nil

\* Where a HHS is allocated Ministerial correspondence for an Action Direct management, and it is determined that a letter of response is appropriate, the signatory to this response must be the HHS Chief Executive.

Many thanks



**Linda Battaglia**

**A/Information Officer**

Ministerial and Executive Services Unit, Office of the  
 Director-General & Executive  
 Director | Queensland Health

**P** [Redacted]  
**E** [Redacted]@health.qld.gov.au  
**W** [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)  
**A** [1 William Street, Brisbane](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

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**From:** [Veronica Tomic](#)  
**To:** [Ministerial](#)  
**Cc:** [Darren Brown](#)  
**Subject:** FW: APA Qld Correspondence to Minister 22 April 2021  
**Date:** Thursday, 13 May 2021 10:31:10 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[APA Qld Correspondence to Minister 22 April 2021.pdf](#)

---

Good morning

The attached meeting was considered, the Minister is not meeting with APA.

Can you please progress for a response from QAS?

Many thanks

Veronica

---

**From:** Health [REDACTED]@ministerial.qld.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 22, 2021 11:35 AM  
**To:** healthadmin@ministerial.qld.gov.au  
**Subject:** FW: APA Qld Correspondence to Minister 22 April 2021

---

**From:** Patrick Tomkins [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 22 April 2021 11:34 AM  
**To:** Health [REDACTED]@ministerial.qld.gov.au>  
**Subject:** APA Qld Correspondence to Minister 22 April 2021

Good Morning,

Please find the attached correspondence to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services on behalf of Australian Paramedics Association Queensland.

We sincerely appreciate your time regarding this matter and we look forward to discussing this further.

*Warm Regards,*

**Patrick Tomkins**  
**Secretary**



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## DOH DISCLOSURE LOG





22 April 2021

**Attention: The Hon. Yvette D'Ath, MP**

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services  
Ministerial Office  
1 William Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

By Email: [REDACTED] [@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

### **Queensland Ambulance Service and the practice of single officer stations and responses**

Firstly, congratulations on your recent appointment to the role of Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. We understand it is a particularly complex time to assume responsibility for a substantial portfolio and we wish you the best handling an unprecedented pandemic.

The Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APA QLD) seeks to develop a working relationship with your office for the best interest of Paramedics and the community.

### **APA Qld background**

In 2005, two Queensland Paramedics formed an employee association called the Emergency Medical Service Protection Association (**EMSPA**). EMSPA is now called the Australian Paramedics Association Queensland (APA Qld).

Since 2005, APA Qld has been providing support and representation to Paramedics and Emergency Medical Dispatchers and our membership has grown significantly. Over the past 13 years, other States including New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria have replicated the APA Qld model with success.

With over 1100 members, APA QLD represent a substantial portion of Queensland Ambulance Service (**QAS**) staff and APA Qld's membership is growing each week.

### **Single officer stations**

The purpose of our correspondence to you is to raise APA Qld's concerns about single officer stations. Our concerns are two-fold, we are concerned about Paramedic safety and we are concerned about patient health outcomes.

As you may be aware, there are Paramedics currently responding to emergencies on their own from single officer stations throughout Queensland. We estimate that over 80 single officer stations operate throughout Queensland and those Paramedics, and the community, are being put to unnecessary and unreasonable risk.

In recent years, several incidents have occurred nationwide resulting in death or severe injury to healthcare workers who were working alone as single responding Officers. For example, we refer to the most recent South Australian Inquest into the death of remote healthcare worker Gayle Woodford. Ms Woodford was working on call alone at night in a community ambulance when she



responded to a call and was raped and murdered by the patient she was caring for. On 15 April 2021, the Coroner provided findings into the tragic and avoidable death of Gayle Woodford.

In particular, we bring to your attention recommendation 8 and 10 of the Coroner's findings which are as follows.

- *"Notwithstanding the requirements contained within the relevant provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010 and the Regulations made thereunder (Gayle's Law), that the NHC establishes processes to ensure that its health practitioners are accompanied by a responsible person en route on any callout regardless of the time of day or night."*
- *"That in any review of the operation of the relevant provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010 and the Regulations made thereunder as they apply to health practitioners providing services in remote areas of South Australia, that consideration be given to clarifying whether the requirements in respect of a second responder should apply to presentations by a patient to the home of the health practitioner. The other matter that should be considered in any such review is whether health practitioners should be accompanied by the second responder during any journey to the location where the health service is to be provided."*

A further example was in New South Wales. Officer Kristofer Markworth was a Paramedic working at a single officer station. Officer Markworth began to suffer an asthma attack while on shift and called 000. Due to the symptoms of his episode, he was unable to communicate with emergency dispatchers. The New South Wales Ambulance Service paged Officer Markworth for the emergency response for his own case. Officer Markworth died on shift knowing that there was no help on the way after he had spent his career helping others. Following this incident, New South Wales Ambulance Service's rostering was significantly changed.

In Queensland, a Paramedic on Fraser Island, was stabbed in his arm and abdomen before being left unconscious. The Officer was the only Paramedic on Fraser Island at the time. Also recently, Officer Craig McCulloch died when he crashed and rolled the ambulance he was driving code 1 as a single responding Officer. An autopsy revealed that Officer McCulloch had suffered a severe medical event that may have been manageable if another Paramedic was with him at the time. If Officer McCulloch had not been working alone, the outcome may have been different for him.

The incidents outlined above present undeniable evidence that the practice of dispatching single responding Officers poses a significant risk to the health and safety of Paramedics, and requires attention.

### **Current status**

Throughout Queensland, in regional and metropolitan areas, our members are being dispatched as single responders to emergencies. This is becoming considerably more frequent with rostering shortages and resourcing deficiencies.

It is also becoming increasingly common for Critical Care Paramedics (who are senior clinicians) to be dispatched as a single responder to a case for the reason that they are the only resource available. This is not only creating a safety risk for the responding Officer, but also prevents these Officers from responding to higher acuity cases that require their extended scope of practice. In turn, this compromises patient outcomes and risks the lives of the community.

Historically, it has been QAS' practice to utilise 'community volunteers' as 'emergency drivers' to assist QAS with transporting patients to hospital. In the experience of APA Qld's members, there are



several regions struggling to enlist enough volunteers or provide the appropriate emergency coverage to the community.

Although the support of volunteers is heart-warming, it is common knowledge that their support should not be relied upon as a resource and that doing so is an outdated practice. In 2021, the QAS should not be relying on the goodwill of community volunteers for emergency coverage to be provided to rural and remote Queenslanders. It is also our observation that rural communities and lower socioeconomic areas are impacted by this outdated practice more than other areas. We are firmly of the view that rural and regional communities deserve the same standard of pre-hospital care as metropolitan areas, and for that to occur, there needs to be a minimum of two Paramedics working together in every ambulance across Queensland.

### **Work health and safety risk**

APA Qld places on record to you, as the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, that the dispatching of Officers as a single responder is a significant work health and safety risk to Paramedics and patient health outcomes. In relation to the risk to QAS staff, QAS is aware of this risk but has continued to undertake the practice of dispatching Officers as single responders. As you are no doubt aware, QAS, and its Executive Officers and employees, have duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) (**WHS Act**) to, so far as is reasonably practical, prevent injury and certainly, prevent death. QAS also have a primary duty of care that includes ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable:

- i. the provision and maintenance of a work environment that is without risks to health and safety;
- ii. the provision and maintenance of safe systems of work;
- iii. the provision of any information, training, instruction or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety arising from work carried out as part of the conduct of QAS; and
- iv. that the health of workers and the conditions at QAS are monitored for the purpose of preventing an illness or injury of workers arising from the conduct of QAS.

Further to the above, the Executive Officers of QAS must exercise due diligence to ensure that QAS complies with its duties or obligations under the WHS Act, including the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Qld). This due diligence includes taking reasonable steps to ensure it has appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety from work carried out as part of the conduct of QAS. In our experience, QAS has not taken reasonable steps to ensure appropriate resources so that Officers are no longer dispatched as single responding Officers and faced with the associated risk. This is deeply concerning for APA Qld's members.

### **Meeting request**

APA Qld is of the view that QAS has the resources available to make the changes necessary to mitigate risk to the safety of Paramedics and ensure the health outcomes for the community. This issue should be a high priority for the Government and QAS. APA Qld's Executive Management Committee are all current on-road Paramedics from across Queensland and they have valuable



insight to contribute to addressing this serious issue. APA Qld's Executive Management Committee seeks a meeting with you to provide further information about the particular communities and areas that are vulnerable, and the potential solutions and changes that may address our concerns and mitigate risk to Paramedics and the community.

APA Qld have resolved to do everything within its control to prevent an injury or death by advocating for QAS to abolish single officer responding in Queensland. We believe that Government should prioritise this serious concern before another death or injury occurs.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss this serious concern further. The arrangements for scheduling a meeting can be made by contacting [REDACTED] [@apaq.com.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@apaq.com.au) or [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Tomkins  
Secretary, Australian Paramedics Association Queensland

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG



Ref: C-ECTF-21/6800  
Mincor: 04676-2021



DOH RTI 3355

Queensland  
Government

Queensland  
Ambulance Service

Department of  
Health

26 MAY 2021

Mr Patrick Tomkins  
Secretary  
Australian Paramedics Association Queensland

Email: [REDACTED]@apaq.com.au

Dear Mr Tomkins

Thank you for your letter to the Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, dated 22 April 2021, regarding Queensland Ambulance Service single officer stations and responses. The Minister has asked that I respond directly to you on this occasion.

Firstly, the Minister wishes to pass on her thanks for your congratulations on her appointment to the role of Minister for Health and Ambulance Services.

Unfortunately the Minister is unable to meet with you at this time, however I look forward to meeting with both you and Mr Adam Gett on 14 June 2021, to further discuss the concerns raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely

Russell Bowles ASM  
Commissioner

DOH DISCLOSURE LOG

Office of the Commissioner  
Emergency Services Complex  
Level 3 Block A  
Cnr Park and Kedron Park Roads Kedron  
GPO Box 1425 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 [REDACTED]  
Facsimile +61 [REDACTED]  
Website www.ambulance.qld.gov.au  
ABN 89 519 542 578