

6 December 2019

Mr Tony Walker
Chief Executive Officer
Ambulance Victoria
PO Box 2000
DONCASTER VIC 3108

By Email: tony.walker@ambulance.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Walker

Re: AV Recruitment Procedures and VPSC Employment Standards

We are writing to you with concerns regarding the current Ambulance Victoria (**AV**) Recruitment Process.

The current process was implemented in early 2019 to facilitate recruitment to existing positions and new positions resulting from the organisational review. To date the new process has been used to identify and recruit Area Managers, ALS Team Managers, MICA Team Managers and Clinical Support Officers and most recently, Senior Team Managers. A version of this process is also being used for Graduate recruitment.

AEAV has concerns that by using this process AV has not consistently identified the most suitable candidates for shortlisting. We have further concerns that AV has created an inconsistent and non-transparent process that has harmed the career and advancement opportunities of suitably qualified paramedics. It is our contention that this does not adhere to section 62 of the *Public Administration Act 2004 (the Act)*. Section 62 of the Act requires the Victorian Public Sector Commission (**VPSC**) to establish binding standards for employment across the Victorian Public Sector.

The 6 employment principles set out by the VPSC are:

- Fair and Reasonable Treatment
- Merit in Employment
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Human Rights
- Reasonable Avenue of redress
- Career Public Service

Specifically, the AEAV has concerns that AV is non-compliant with the following employment standards:

Fair and Reasonable Treatment

The AEAV believes the use of psychometric testing as a “rule in/rule out” test for candidates is deeply flawed and should cease immediately. Research on the use of psychometric testing clearly identifies that it should be completed *after* an initial interview, and should only *be part of a wider evaluation strategy*, which includes an interview, reference checks and review of the candidates skills and attributes. The AEAV notes that psychometric testing is still being used as a “rule in/ rule out” criteria despite clear and egregious problems with its usage and despite the representations by Ambulance Victoria.

In addition, during the process AV have changed the rules regarding who can apply for the positions. This has resulted in some individuals not applying for positions as the changes had not been communicated to all potential candidates. This is not considered by AEAV to be fair and reasonable treatment as per the VPSC standards.

Merit in Employment

By using the psychometric testing erroneously AV is excluding candidates who have ultimately proven that they are effective and dynamic leaders, with the leadership qualities required by AV. The limitations of the psychometric testing are evidenced by the fact that a significant number of candidates, who were initially excluded on the basis of their psychometric results, were subsequently offered positions when the psychometric results were nullified and they were allowed to continue through the process.

Further to this, AV has limited the field of candidates without identifying candidates using objective criteria. As a consequence, well qualified employees have had their applications rejected because they are not in a substantive position which is ultimately unrelated to the advertised position.

Reasonable Avenue of Redress

The procedure established by AV for appealing the process requires candidates to submit a grievance to Workplace Relations. However, the VPSC standards oblige AV to provide appropriate delegation and accountability to enable appeals to be effectively considered, and that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied throughout the review process. The AEAV considers that using the Grievance Procedure (PRO/PAC/001) to hear appeals is a breach of the above standards and results in issues not being resolved effectively or in a timely manner.

Next steps

In order to resolve the concerns of AEAV members, we request that AV immediately refers the entire recruitment process to the VPSC for review under section 63 of the Act. The resulting recommendations, if any, should then be implemented to ensure compliance with the Act. In the interim, the AEAV is prepared to aid AV in the provision of a reasonable right of redress. The AEAV is proposing that an AEAV representative sits on a panel alongside operational and HR nominees to review appeals to ensure the VPSC guiding principles are adhered to.

We look forward to hearing from AV by **December 16, 2019** and are hopeful that by raising our concerns we can assist AV with the preparation of compliant employment processes which minimise harm to our members.

Yours faithfully



Max Resic
Industrial Officer
Ambulance Employees Australia – Victoria