

27 September 2021

Mr Huw Colechin
AVEA 2020 Implementation Lead
People & Culture
Ambulance Victoria
375 Manningham Road
DONCASTER VIC 3108

By Email: huw.colechin@ambulance.vic.gov.au

Dear Huw,

Re: Draft outline for LM Single Officer and ACO Training Program – Session Plan

We write in response to correspondence received from Ambulance Victoria (**AV**) on 23 August 2021 detailing AV's draft proposal for a trial in accordance with clause 6.3 (c) of the Ambulance Victoria Enterprise Agreement 2020 (**the Agreement**).

While the Ambulance Employees Australia Victoria (**AEAV**) broadly supports the trial proposed by AV, the AEAU has concerns regarding the scope of the trial and the proposed timing of the trial.

Scope of the Proposed trial

AEAV does not accept that the proposed trial fulfils the obligations of the Agreement. The terms of the trial have been unilaterally decided by AV, with consultation only on the detail, not the scope.

The particular issue of concern for AEAU, is that while the proposed trial will assist in preparing paramedics for working with Ambulance Community Officers (**ACO's**) it fails to address significant concerns regarding "spares", including:

- Failing to provide a mechanism to adequately support staff who feel vulnerable when working single officer in remote locations;
- Failing to address safety concerns when working single officer in locations where back-up is not readily available;
- The survey fails to provide employees the opportunity to raise the issues affecting those rostered as spare and the impact on them; and
- Failing to acknowledge that the concern regarding spares is broader than "the Bendigo area" which is referenced in the proposed trial. While Bendigo was referenced as an example, concerns have been raised by paramedics from multiple rural regions.

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The AEAV acknowledges, that in email correspondence on 7 September 2021, AV accepted that there were further issues that may need to be addressed in relation to the trial under clause 6.3(c). The AEAV looks forward to these discussions to address the outstanding issues.

Timing of Proposed Trial

The AEAV believes it would be inappropriate to attempt to facilitate this additional training at this time. The AV workforce is currently dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and, is preparing for significant additional pressure that will be placed on them in the coming months. As has been acknowledge by AV, these additional stressors are being placed on a workforce that is already under strain.

In the view of the AEAV, the trial as currently proposed will have minimal positive impact on the welfare of paramedics. As such, the AEAV suggests that the proposed trial be delayed to a more suitable time and that instead all AV resources be focused on physically and mentally supporting staff.

Recommendations for proposed Trial

Notwithstanding the above concerns regarding timing and scope, the AEAV broadly supports the trial proposed by AV. If AV is inclined to proceed with the trial based on its current scope (noting that further discussions must take place regarding other issues to be addressed under clause 6.3(c)), the AEAV makes the following recommendations:

- The survey questions be reframed to ensure they are not drafted in a leading manner that would result in inaccurate data. In particular, the AEAV is concerned that employees will not be comfortable in rating their confidence and abilities on a low scale to their employer, thereby undermining the validity of the survey;
- Additional questions regarding broader safety concerns be included in the survey. The current questions do not provide the employees an opportunity to raise their safety concerns; and
- In order to gain the maximum benefit from surveying employees, the survey should be competed both preceding and following the trial.

Additionally, the AEAV has concerns in relation to the “Existing Practice” in Loddon Mallee. It is the AEAV’s understanding that these statements are inaccurate. This has caused the AEAV to have concerns regarding the foundations for the program.

Finally, the AEAV asks that the outcomes from the survey be provided to representative bodies to allow balanced interpretation of the data and transparency.

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Working Group Meeting

We look forward to discussing the proposal in detail at the next Implementation Working Group meeting and request clarification of the time and date for the next meeting.

In particular, we ask that AV be prepared to address:

- AEAV's recommendations that the trial be delayed;
- The scope issues identified by the AEAV; and
- The AEAV's recommendations on the trial as it is currently proposed.

Yours faithfully,



Brett Adie
Secretary
Ambulance Employees Australia Victoria (AEAV)

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