



24 December 2021

The Hon. Martin Foley  
Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services and Minister for the Co-ordination of  
Health and Human Services COVID-19  
Level 22/50 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne VIC 3001

**By Email Only:** [minister.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:minister.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

Dear Health Minister

### **AMBULANCE VICTORIA - SURGE WORKFORCE**

We write to you in relation to the surge workforce which is currently being utilised extensively by Ambulance Victoria (**AV**) to provide additional resourcing for emergency ambulances.

The implementation of the unqualified surge workforce to assist with resourcing by AV has put unprecedented pressure on paramedics. The result has been that qualified paramedics are having to work numerous shifts with unqualified persons. This is contributing to early burnout of paramedics and an increase in the use of personal leave.

In recent days AV has commenced rostering qualified paramedics with less than 12 months experience (**AP12**) with surge workforce staff. This has further exacerbated the risk to operational paramedics.

Ambulance Employees Australia Victoria (**AEAV**) accepts that assistance was required to maintain service delivery as a result of AV confronting the COVID-19 pandemic with a fatigued and stretched workforce. However, the AEAU believes the current allocation of the surge workforce is harming paramedics and that alternatives were not exhausted before implementation.

### **Proposal**

1. Graduate Ambulance Paramedics (**GAP's**) employed as part of the Medium Acuity Transport Service (**MATS**) be transferred to emergency roles after four roster cycles. MATS graduates to fill shifts currently filled by the unqualified surge workforce.
2. All AV operational managers who are registered paramedics to perform at least one shift per week on road as part of surge workforce.

@aeavunion

## Benefits

- a. Paramedics work with a qualified paramedic or graduate paramedic and are able to share workload.
- b. Many operational managers, if exposed to a COVID-19 positive patient can continue to work from home in substantive role whilst furloughed.
- c. Indication to frontline workforce that all options have been exhausted prior to requirement to work with unqualified.
- d. Potential reduction in personal leave currently utilised by operational workforce.
- e. MATS GAP's eligible to fill overtime shifts if qualified paramedic not available.

The AEAV has significant concerns that the current process for allocating the surge workforce is being expanded without AV having explored alternative options that would cause significantly less harm to the workforce. The indication from members is that the current process is not sustainable.

The Victorian health sector is experiencing significant issues with the availability of suitably qualified personnel and the AEAV believes all options should be considered to keep the workforce and ultimately the community safe.

We respectfully request a response by close of business Friday **14 January 2022**. Should you have any questions in relation to this request, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0419 317 289.

Yours faithfully



**Brett Adie**  
**Secretary**  
**Ambulance Employees Australia Victoria (AEAV)**