

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry into the 2023-24 Budget Estimates – Questions on Notice
7 JUNE 2023

PORTFOLIO: AMBULANCE SERVICES

Members

Sarah Connolly – Chair	Lauren Kathage
Nicholas McGowan – Deputy Chair	Bev McArthur
Michael Galea	Danny O’Brien
Paul Hamer	Ellen Sandell
Mathew Hilakari	

Witnesses

- Ms Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Ambulance Services
- Professor Euan Wallace, Secretary
- Ms Louise McKinlay, Acting Deputy Secretary, Commissioning and System Improvement, Department of Health
- Ms Jane Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Ambulance Victoria

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTION 1 (Directed to the CEO, Ambulance Victoria)

On pages 13-14

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Mr Hilakari, your time has expired. We will go on to Ms Sandell for the next 5 minutes.

Ellen SANDELL: Thank you, Chair. Maybe this is one for the CEO of Ambulance Victoria. My understanding is that paramedics in rural Victoria do not have access to mobile data terminals like their metropolitan counterparts, meaning they are reliant on pager systems for critical information regarding dispatch jobs in areas with intermittent mobile coverage. Is that correct, and does the government have plans to upgrade their IT systems in rural and regional Victoria?

Jane MILLER: We are currently working to make sure that our paramedics and first responders in regional and rural Victoria are better connected. We do have a current project of work that will support us to address that and make sure that they do have the tools and equipment that they need.

Ellen SANDELL: And does that include giving them access to the mobile data terminals, or are there barriers to that?

Jane MILLER: I do not have the particular detail, but I can certainly confirm that it is a priority for us to make sure that they are better connected and have the services that they need.

Ellen SANDELL: Okay. But not specifically about mobile data terminals?

Jane MILLER: I do not have that particular detail.

RESPONSE

In rural Victoria, Ambulance Victoria uses a paging service for dispatch messaging and case update alerts. Paramedics and volunteers in rural Victoria also have dedicated mobile phones to access to the 4G/5G LTE network. These, alongside analogue radio communications, provide additional connectivity and communication options as well as navigational services.

Work on the Digital Radio Upgrade Program, which is led by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) on behalf of AV and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), is continuing.

In parallel, Ambulance Victoria has started work on a project to enable rural paramedics to use mobile data devices to receive dispatch information. This project is currently in the design phase.

Source:

Advice from Ambulance Victoria, via email 9 June 2023