

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Health:

**Increase in funding to paramedic services**

1. Please provide details of the \$7 million of additional funding announced for paramedic services.
2. Where exactly is the funding of \$7 million coming from within the Northern Territory Budget?
3. Is this \$7 million a once off increase to funding or will this be an ongoing increase?
4. Will the entire extra funding go to St John Ambulance?
5. Is it an increase in general funding for St John Ambulance?
6. Is it a special grant? If so please provide details?
7. How many additional new staff will this new funding be expected to employ?
8. How many new positions will be created in Darwin and Alice Springs? Please provide details of numbers and locations of the new positions.
9. Will these new positions be permanent?
10. Where will new ambulance staff be sourced?
11. What has triggered this additional funding to paramedic services in the Northern Territory?
12. How is the government working to protect ambulance officers from violence and abuse on the job?
13. How many incidents of violence against ambulance workers were recorded in the calendar years 2020 and 2021?
14. What services are available to ambulance officers who are victims of violence whilst undertaking their duties?
15. What is the attrition rate for ambulance officers in the Northern Territory?
16. What is the average length of retention for Northern Territory ambulance officers?

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On 14 January 2022, Acting Minister for Health announced an increase of \$7 million in funding into paramedic services in Alice Springs and Darwin.

Following receipt of the St John NT Covid-19 Additional Resourcing Request, and negotiation with NT Health, the following additional resourcing was agreed:

- 2021-22 Financial Year (FY) (1 January- 30 June 2022). Capital grant of \$831,000 being for new ambulance units and fit-out
- 2021-22 FY (1 January- 30 June 2022). Operational grant of \$3,193,000 being for 42 additional FTE
- 2022-23 FY (1 July- 31 December 2022). Operational grant of \$3,193,000 being for continued funding of 42 additional FTE.

This funding will provide business continuity, meet the demands of the contracted road ambulance service, and meet the increased demand associated with transportation of Covid positive and close contact patients.

The operational grant of \$6,386,000 over FY 2021-22 and 2022-23 will be funded 50% from the Northern Territory Government and 50% claimed through the Commonwealth National Partnership Agreement Covid Response. The capital grant of \$831,000 in FY 2021-22 will be funded 100% by the Northern Territory Government.

Current funding allocation is until 31 December 2022, specifically for additional resources respond to Covid-19. It will go entirely to St John NT and fund an additional 42 FTE, which includes:

- 12 paramedics and 1 ambulance for an 1 additional 24/7 resource in Darwin
- 12 paramedics and 1 ambulance for an 1 additional 24/7 resource in Alice Springs
- 6 paramedics and 1 ambulance will provide an additional 12 hour daytime resource in Katherine
- 5 clinicians in the Emergency Communications Centre to provide increased triaging services
- 5 Emergency Medical Dispatchers in the Emergency Communications Centre to meet increased workload
- 2 additional positions for COVID-19 logistic support

Recruitment campaigns will target people nationally and internationally.

St John NT paramedics do an incredible job in often difficult circumstances. Any assault on an emergency worker is one to many. In 2019, the Territory Labor Government introduced legislative amendments to strengthen protections for our paramedics, bringing the penalty of an assault of an emergency worker in line with that of a police officer.