



**Ambulance Service
of New South Wales**

excellence in care

Volunteer Ambulance Officer and Community First Responder *Application Information Booklet*



Considering becoming a Volunteer Ambulance Officer or a Community First Responder?

Here's what you need to know...



About us

The Ambulance Service of New South Wales (Ambulance) provides emergency health transport, rescue and patient transport systems to the NSW community.

As part of NSW Health – and as one of the largest ambulance services in the world – we provide pre-hospital healthcare to a population in excess of seven million people, via a workforce of more than 4,000 employees and 250 volunteers in over 300 locations.

To carry out what can be life-saving work, we operate a fleet of more than 1450 ambulance and other vehicles, and our annual expenditure budget is in excess of \$600 million.

Paramedics and Ambulance Volunteers work within our Operational Services function, which is responsible for the delivery of front line pre-hospital care, medical retrieval and health related transport.

Despite the size of our organisation (and the many kilometres we cover), our core values are shared amongst all employees and volunteers. We strive to always uphold professional standards of behaviour, to promote and encourage teamwork, to act responsibly, be accountable and show care and respect.

About you

As an Ambulance Volunteer you will help to enhance patient's lives, and possibly even, save them.

We currently have over 280 volunteers based across rural NSW, who are just like you: selfless people who want to help their local community in a meaningful way.

It's therefore not surprising that our network of over 45 country volunteer teams is staffed by very special people who care about their family, friends and community.

Ambulance Volunteers are looking for a little more out of life – to go that extra mile, to help another person in need. The commitment, effort and support shown by our volunteers is nothing short of inspirational.

'If I had to sum up this role I would say the love you put in is what comes back to you through giving. Volunteering with Ambulance is definitely suited to people who are inspired to help others from their hearts...'

'Being a Community First Responder is a really fulfilling experience - people are so appreciative of the support and reassurance we bring.'



'Living in a remote location, I would attend to accidents and it occurred to me that I could be of real assistance if I became an Ambulance volunteer.'



What it means to be a Volunteer Ambulance Officer or a Community First Responder

and making it work with your lifestyle ...



What it means to be a volunteer

Your interest in joining Ambulance means you care about your community and the people who live in it. As a volunteer, you really do have the opportunity to make a difference to the lives of others.

Your training will provide you with life-long skills, both personally and professionally. These skills will not only benefit you, but they will potentially benefit your family and your local community.

As a volunteer with Ambulance, you not only bring a sense of security to your community, but you are likely to build added personal confidence as you will be challenged to make sound judgements in pressurised situations. Experience shows that our volunteers are reassured by their trained skills when faced with these pressurised situations, with their natural aptitude rising to meet the challenge.

This is a unique role that stretches beyond the boundaries of words on a page. The rewards of this role have to be experienced first-hand to be fully appreciated. These rewards are limitless, and in some instances, quite profound. But don't take our word for it, read on to see what other volunteers have said about their roles.

Volunteering and your lifestyle

We appreciate that you may have a job, family commitments and other responsibilities to juggle. To assist you, we like to keep volunteering as easy as possible.

While we do try to be flexible, you should be aware that volunteering does require you to be on-call at times, and to be available to attend training.

The nature of the role is of course, focussed on emergencies. Emergency situations can happen anywhere – from a private home, to a workplace, inside a school, through to rural settings and busy highways.

Once you have been contacted and dispatched, you are likely to be called to a wide variety of incidents. These will include medical emergencies and possibly traumatic accidents. Rest assured you will be thoroughly trained and equipped to treat patients in a professional manner. We also have a comprehensive range of support services in place to provide emotional support and advice to you. These are free, confidential and accessible by phone 24-hours a day.

Living the life of an Ambulance Volunteer

Meet some of our volunteers...

Barbara Bignell

Volunteer Ambulance Officer, Gilgandra

'I was asked to become a volunteer by the Station Officer at Narromine. I was already heavily involved with St John Ambulance and this was the icing on the cake for me. I looked forward to the chance to put the skills I already had learned into practice. I suppose, at the heart of all this was a strong desire to help out in my community.

'I love that I'm there for people in need, often when there is no one else around to help them. It's

challenging, but incredibly rewarding to be placed in such a pivotal role. I also work as a Registered Nurse at the local hospital and I have great respect for all of the paramedics, so I'm more than happy to assist them when I can.

'If someone were considering becoming a Volunteer Ambulance Officer, I would simply say "go for it". Seize every



opportunity to learn, because clinical knowledge is not a burden – instead, it empowers you with the confidence to get out there and help others within

Suzanne Daly

Community First Responder, Mount Wilson



'I've always been moved to help people and now I'm in a fortunate position where I can help myself and my own community. Being a Community First Responder is a really fulfilling experience – people are so appreciative of the support and reassurance we bring. Our team is very caring and this goes a long way.

'If I had to sum up this role I would say the love you put in is what comes back to you through giving. Volunteering with Ambulance is definitely suited to people who are inspired to help others from their hearts, rather than out of obligation.'

Malcolm Lambshed

Volunteer Ambulance Officer, Menindee

'I was initially interested in becoming a volunteer with Ambulance as there seem to be so many "takers" in today's society and I wanted to be one of the "givers".

'I get an enormous sense of satisfaction from helping others in need and also from working with the community, which is at the heart of everything we do.

'I'd urge others to consider volunteering for Ambulance, just give it a try – most of the people you volunteer with are top people all working together to try and create a safer community.'



'I get an enormous sense of satisfaction from helping others in need and also from working with the community, which is at the heart of everything we do.'

Mia Degoumois

Volunteer Ambulance Officer,
Tibooburra



'Living in a remote location, I would attend to accidents and it occurred to me that could be of real assistance if I

became an Ambulance volunteer – not only would I receive training, but I would also receive medical equipment that could help out my community in a crisis. The fact I might save someone's life while waiting for additional help was also a big consideration for me.

'I've benefited a lot since becoming a volunteer, particularly in my confidence to help people. The sense of team work is incredible and very satisfying. I've also learnt a lot since coming into this role – as they say, "to learn something is not a burden to carry" – this definitely rings true as a volunteer. My experiences as an Ambulance volunteer have definitely inspired a personal thirst for learning.'

Warren Hill

Community First Responder, Sofala



'Originally I became a volunteer as I wanted to help the existing two Community First Responder(CFR) volunteers in Sofala. I could see the need for additional volunteers and so my wife and I thought we could help.

'I hadn't expected to make such a difference through a simple word of reassurance. The look of relief – not just on the patient's face, but often from the whole family - is remarkably moving.

'Don't hesitate for a moment if you are contemplating becoming a CFR volunteer – it's the most rewarding thing my wife and I have ever undertaken.'

A Station Managers perspective

Glen Flanagan

Station Officer, Wellington Ambulance Station

'We have a volunteer attached to both our station and the parent station for Yeoval, where there are four volunteers. Our volunteer, Terry Melhuish, has been assisting us for approximately 20 years and in that time he has provided us with invaluable assistance.

'Terry rides along with us every Tuesday night, to respond to cases. He also backs us up when permanent staff are not available.

Over the years he's responded to thousands of cases.

'The volunteer officers at Yeoval respond to approximately 45 cases a year and provide excellent pre-hospital care until our permanent staff arrive. Like Terry, these officers are very dedicated and display remarkable community spirit.

'I cannot speak highly enough of our volunteers and I know that our organisation is very fortunate to



have such dedicated people who carry out their duties for the sole reason of wanting to help their fellow community members in their time of need.'

Ambulance Volunteer models

Types of Ambulance Volunteers



There are two types of Ambulance Volunteer models within our organisation, and each type is specifically selected to suit the requirements of each community.

1. Volunteer Ambulance Officers

Volunteer Ambulance Officers (VAOs) are accredited, trained and administered under the jurisdiction of Ambulance. Volunteers may be attached to a station, a Health Service, or operate through an established volunteer station – with assistance from neighbouring paramedic stations. VAOs respond in an Ambulance vehicle and can transport patients.

Your responsibilities as a Volunteer Ambulance Officer will include:

- > Completing training (initial course and monthly skills maintenance).
- > Participating in an on-call roster.
- > Providing emergency patient care and transport with back-up support from paramedics when required.
- > Administration duties as required.
- > Maintaining the vehicle and ambulance equipment.

2. Community First Responders

Community First Responders (CFRs) are accredited and operate under Ambulance governance and training. The majority of volunteers respond under a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the SES, Rural Fire Service or Fire and Rescue NSW. CFRs do not operate from an Ambulance or a health facility, they do not have an ambulance vehicle and they do not transport patients. The core role of the CFR is to respond to an emergency and provide vital first-aid care prior to the arrival of paramedics.

Your responsibilities as a Community First Responder will include:

- > Completing training (initial course and monthly skills maintenance).
- > Responding to emergency cases.
- > Initiating patient care at the scene until a paramedic crew arrives.
- > Administration duties as required.
- > Maintaining ambulance equipment.

Being a Volunteer Ambulance Officer or a Community First Responder

Ambulance Volunteer requirements



Volunteer requirements

Volunteer Ambulance Officer recruitment and selection is a structured process involving the completion of:

- > an application form
- > a Declaration of Health and Continued Fitness form
- > an interview if required
- > completed referee checks
- > 100 Point ID check
- > National criminal record check and Working with Children check (Probity Screening)*
- > immunisation as required by NSW Health

You will also need to hold and retain a current NSW driver's licence.

*Applicants are required to undergo probity screening, before they can be considered in the final stages of the application process. This involves consenting to undertake a National Criminal Record check and a Working with Children check. Having a criminal history may not necessarily result in disqualification from selection, it will depend on the nature of the offence.

Who are we looking for?

If you are a team-player, enthusiastic about living an active life, and passionate about contributing to your community, then we are looking for you.

Knowledge of first aid is not essential at this early point in your application process. Once you are a volunteer, you will undertake ongoing first aid training.

Ideally you are also:

- > a good communicator (both verbal and written)
- > able to work out solutions to problems and quickly make sound decisions
- > able to manage your time, with good organisational skills
- > adaptable
- > patient and tolerant
- > able to learn and develop clinical confidence and practical skills
- > wanting to make a meaningful difference to your community.

Benefits of volunteering

What do we offer our volunteers?

We've outlined the personal benefits available to volunteers – the sense of satisfaction that comes from supporting your community, the added confidence that new skills will bring and the rewarding relationships that you will build with your colleagues. There are also many practical benefits available to volunteers, these are:

Training opportunities

The quality training you receive as an Ambulance Volunteer will develop your clinical confidence, skills, general knowledge and ability to manage increasingly complex emergency situations.

This training is based on a combination of practical and tutorial learning.

The initial training includes:

- > An orientation and induction program.
- > Advanced first aid.
- > Advanced resuscitation with oxygen therapy; and
- > Automatic external defibrillation.

Ambulance Volunteers are required to undertake monthly skills maintenance training on an ongoing basis, to ensure their skills remain at an optimum level. You will also be required to attend ten, two-hour structured training sessions each year. There is flexibility to catch up on training when the need arises.

Ambulance Volunteers must complete the initial training and be deemed competent before undertaking any operational duties.

Ambulance cover

As a volunteer, you will receive free Ambulance cover – for both yourself and your immediate family. This covers you, your spouse or cohabiting partner, your children (under the age of 16 years), or legal dependents.

Uniforms

Ambulance Volunteers are supplied with uniforms and/or vests and protective equipment.

The uniform design is safe, functional and comfortable, to meet the varying needs of service delivery and workplace health and safety requirements.

In wearing this uniform, you adhere to a common dress standard that is maintained by all operational staff in our organisation. This uniform proudly reflects our public image, and the exemplary individual standards of Ambulance Volunteers.

Insurance

Ambulance Volunteers are covered for all medical and related expenses as a result of injury, together with any professional indemnity and public liability caused by Ambulance activity.

Reimbursement of costs

We can reimburse you for expenses associated with volunteering which may include travel, accommodation and meals.

Staff support services

We have a wide range of confidential support programs available to help you through any professional or personal challenges you may face. We strongly encourage you to use them. Our integrated staff support programs include:

- > Peer Support Officers
- > Chaplains
- > Grievance Contact Officers
- > Employee Assistance Program (an independent and confidential counselling service, available by phone 24/7)

The next steps

The Volunteer recruitment process

It can help to become familiar with the below steps that lie ahead of you as you undergo the recruitment process. If you have any questions along the way, please contact your Divisional HR Manager (see contact numbers on back cover).

The recruitment process

1. Familiarise yourself with all the details in this information kit and ensure that you meet the requirements for a suitable application.
2. Submit your application form, along with your supporting documents.
3. Processed applications may then require an interview to potentially progress the application process to the next stage. You will be contacted and advised of this step.
4. If the final checks are satisfactory (including referee checks), a letter of acceptance will be sent to you, with relevant details included.
5. Then you are ready to begin training and to make a meaningful difference to your community.





Ambulance Service of New South Wales

*Thank you for your
interest in supporting
your community as an
Ambulance Volunteer.*

For further information please visit the Ambulance website at: www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au or telephone the Divisional Human Resources Manager for your area:

Northern Division: (02) 4921 7506

Southern Division: (02) 4855 1724

Sydney Division: (02) 8752 0420

Western Division: (02) 5804 6706

