

## Public Administration Committee

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**From:** Neil Ewart <ceo.yungngora@bigpond.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, 2 May 2014 2:17 PM  
**To:** Public Administration Committee  
**Subject:** PATS

Hello Lauren,

I am pleased to submit concerns re the PAT scheme on behalf of Yungngora Association.

- For many years now this Association has carried the risk and the cost of transporting patients either to meet an Ambulance from Fitzroy Crossing hospital at the junction of our access road and the great Northern Highway, or go the 160 kms to the FC hospital. The majority of this travel is at night.
- I came to Yungngora in May last year. I have spent many years in remote indigenous locations so am accustomed to emergency situations at night. However I was amazed that whenever anyone came to my door feeling unwell or with a feverish child it was expected they would be taken to the hospital by either of the above methods.
- The community is 75kms of rough gravel road from the highway with cattle roaming about and kangaroos on the loose I am amazed that there has not been a serious incident which could have resulted in injury or death to a child or adult being transported to the highway or FC. This whole business represents (we are still doing it) a huge risk to the community. If such an event occurred who is responsible for the inevitable insurance claim. If we are responding to a request to meet the ambulance will WA health be held responsible?
- To a lesser degree there is a risk to the community if the vehicle we supply is damaged or written off. Can there be a claim against WA health insurance? Fuel costs. Wear and Tear. These are costs it has been assumed by WA health that we can afford to pay. The reality is we can't.
- The accepted process for granting PAT is flawed when we have people coming with genuine need for medical attention, usually at night, and a stressed parent or injured person has to relay to a nurse that they need to get to hospital. If someone comes to my house and says they are really sick how do I know what that means?
- At present the qualification for PAT is a visit to a doctor or specialist by appointment or by recommendation by the visiting nurse. But as can be seen by the above the majority of need is not to visit a doctor by appointment so the individual or Association has to bear the cost. Grossly unfair.

These questions confronted me when I arrived and I have gently weaned people off the immediate reaction to get to hospital, but the need has not gone away.

A common response from nurses at FC hospital is "Why didn't such and such come into the hospital with the visiting nurses on the aircraft" (we do not have a full time nursing presence here) the answer many people are terrified of flying.

RFDS has and continues to refuse to do emergency evacs at night saying the fence is too close to the runway? I have opinions regarding that. We are currently extending our fence so perhaps that may resolve that problem.

So Lauren you can gather we have a major problem with PATS. It does not serve this community much, if at all.

I trust your inquiry will improve the current method of PATS

Yours truly on Behalf of Yungngora Association

Neil Ewart.

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