

ST JOHN AMBULANCE — CONTRACT

**55. Mrs L.A. MUNDAY to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's initiatives to address ambulance ramping in Western Australia. Can the minister please update the house on this government's reforms to the delivery of ambulance services in WA, including the new St John Ambulance contract?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

I thank the member for Dawesville for her question and her deep interest in this issue. As we all know, before her parliamentary career, she was a professional paramedic for many, many years serving our community.

I also want to commend the unanimous report of the Standing Committee on Public Administration, with cross-party representation from the opposition as well as the government. In December last year, the government signed a new five-year contract with St John Ambulance WA. This marks the biggest changes in ambulance services in decades. It is really a new era for our ambulance services. The contract commenced on 1 January this year. It includes funding for an extra 10 ambulance crews in the metropolitan area and 31 extra paramedics in regional areas, bringing the uplift under this government for regional paid paramedics to 25 per cent since we came to government. This well and truly exceeds our commitment of an extra 18 paramedics in the regions. Importantly, the contract will also have enhanced KPIs, which will be enforceable through financial penalties, including response time targets of 90 per cent for priority 1, 2 and 3 call-outs. As consistent with the committee's recommendations, extended transfer of care payments will cease and new KPIs will be introduced to reduce unnecessary emergency department presentations. There will be greater powers to inspect services and step in to ensure performance following success of the multiagency response that we established in May last year.

We know that the Liberal Party, in particular, has peddled shameless and misleading information about that multiagency response, which is a great disservice to our very highly skilled emergency responders. It has been claimed by both Liberal members in this place that the multiagency response has failed but, in fact, the figures show that it boosted St John's priority 1 response to 84 per cent from 75 per cent. The members claimed there were no issues other than ramping, ignoring the fact that crew numbers were actually 40 per cent below establishment levels in May. I also note that the cross-party Standing Committee on Public Administration unanimously identified these same issues. There are opposition members on that committee. They made claims that somehow we are trying to gag St John Ambulance. Ramping data is still freely available under this contract. We are the only state that actually publishes this ramping data.

**Mr S.A. Millman:** We're about transparency.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** We are transparent about our health system.

In June, Hon Martin Aldridge claimed that St John Ambulance was living on year-to-year contracts, had received no significant increase in funding and was only as good as the funding agreement provided by the state government. In fact, St John received a 16 per cent funding uplift in the 2021 financial year. It was a two-year contract extension, and we have now signed a five-year contract extension. I am genuinely looking forward to working with the new CEO, Kevin Brown, and the chair, Sally Carbon. I hold both of them in very high regard in this new era of delivering our ambulance services.