

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

*Thirty-seventh Report — Delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia: Critical condition —
Government Response — Statement by Minister for Health*

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [1.16 pm]: I rise today to table the government's response to the final report of the Standing Committee on Public Administration's inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in WA. It is titled *A new century for ambulance services*. All 74 findings and 48 recommendations from the committee's report were unanimously endorsed by members spanning representation from government, the Liberal-National coalition and the crossbench.

St John Ambulance has been the subject of 12 reports and 122 recommendations since 2009. Despite this, the committee's findings indicate substantial issues persist with its performance, staffing levels, governance, transparency and workforce culture. There is a clear need to fundamentally shift the relationship between the Department of Health and St John Ambulance, starting with a more contemporary contract embedding a more active role for government, with much stronger performance management and clinical collaboration. WA Health also needs to re-examine how it partners and works with St John Ambulance to deliver better outcomes for our community. The success of a recent initiative to embed senior WA Health and WA police officials in St John Ambulance headquarters demonstrates the value of integrating ambulance services with the wider health and emergency management systems.

Of the 48 recommendations, 46 received support or in-principle support and will be implemented through 28 actions across five themes. The first theme is working together to improve emergency access. This will review triage accuracy, improve the coordination of ambulance dispatch, divert patients to more clinically appropriate alternative care pathways, and enhance competition in inter-hospital patient transfers. The second theme is a more contemporary contract. This will introduce new performance management measures, strengthen clinical oversight, and improve transparency of how public funds are spent. The third theme is a new service delivery model for country ambulance. It will move away from the "best endeavours" model, trial innovative new workforce models, and do more to upskill volunteers and support paramedics. The fourth theme is improving access and equity. It will explore options to address the financial impost of ambulance fees for vulnerable members of the community, enhance Aboriginal communities' access to services, and ensure that services are culturally safe. The fifth theme is strengthening governance, transparency and accountability. This will ensure that St John Ambulance meets best practice in board governance and improve public oversight of St John Ambulance's performance.

Government will report annually to Parliament on the status of each action and the performance of St John Ambulance against key performance indicators set out in the new contract for emergency ambulance services currently being negotiated between WA Health and St John Ambulance. To ensure that these 28 actions translate into meaningful and enduring change, the government will conduct an evaluation in late 2025 to assess whether St John Ambulance is delivering against its new KPIs. Consistent with recommendation 48, this evaluation will also consider whether the contract delivers sufficient value for WA to continue engaging St John Ambulance for emergency ambulance services or whether an alternative model should be considered.

I table the government's response to the report.

[See paper [1320](#).]