



Australasian College of

**Paramedic
Practitioners**

Submission to Inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia

Presented by	Australasian College of Paramedic Practitioners Inc
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1. Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this submission from the Australasian College of Paramedic Practitioners (ACPP) to the *“Inquiry into the delivery of ambulance services in Western Australia”*.

2. Terms of Reference

The Australasian College of Paramedic Practitioners will be responding to the terms of reference point C) *“whether alternative service delivery models in other jurisdictions would better meet the needs of the community”*.

3. Synopsis

- 3.1. Contemporary paramedics are Ahpra registered and tertiary qualified. Some Paramedics have qualifications in both emergency and primary health care. ACPP recommends that the WA Ambulance Service employ full time and paid Paramedics, with both emergency and primary healthcare skills. An experienced Paramedic, with both an emergency and primary health care skill set, will be a versatile and valuable addition to the WA health workforce.
- 3.2. Paramedics, with both emergency and primary health care skills, could provide efficiencies in metropolitan locations: reduce ED presentations; keep people in the community care systems; redirect patients to primary health care.
- 3.3. Paramedics, with both emergency and primary health care skills, could provide not only Ambulance services but also support rural doctors by providing collaborative front-line primary health care in rural surgeries and clinics.

4. Background - Australian Paramedics

- 4.1. Paramedics are established health professionals who currently practice in a range of operational environments including very remote, remote, rural, urban and metropolitan environments.
- 4.2. Traditionally, Paramedics have been employed to attend to the acutely sick and injured.

- 4.3. Paramedics, like all Australian healthcare providers, are now attending to a growing and aging population who are presenting with increasingly complex and chronic conditions.
- 4.4. Paramedics are expanding their basic generalist skillset and developing primary care skills through continuing professional development and postgraduate studies.
- 4.5. When encountering non-emergency patients, Paramedics are increasingly expected to implement community-based treatment plans or alternative treatment pathway decisions. This is a significant departure from the traditional practice of treat and transport to an Emergency Department.
- 4.6. Paralleling this change in patient demographic and patient disposition expectation is the educational and practice standards of Paramedics.
- 4.7. All Australian Paramedics are Tertiary Qualified and Ahpra registered.
- 4.8. Paramedicine is a high sort after undergraduate course with over 2000 new Paramedics graduating each year.
- 4.9. There are currently over 21,000 registered Paramedics in Australia. Almost 1,400 registered Paramedics work in WA.
- 4.10. Contemporary Paramedics seek greater career progression and diversification. Many are undertaking postgraduate qualifications to advance their clinical practice.
- 4.11. Traditionally advanced practice within Paramedicine has been focused on high-acuity, pre-hospital care.
- 4.12. There is an increasing national and international trend towards advanced paramedic practice that focuses on low-acuity, community-based care and primary health care skills.
- 4.13. The ACPP was created to advocate for Paramedics, developing primary health care skills, into Australian healthcare systems.

5. The Australasian College of Paramedic Practitioners (ACPP)

- 5.1. The ACPP is the peak body representing Paramedic Practitioners and all Paramedics with primary health care skills across Australia and New Zealand.
- 5.2. ACPP has developed four tiers of specialist Paramedics with primary health care skills:
 1. **Extended Care Paramedic**
 2. **Community Care Paramedic**
 3. **Primary Care Paramedic**
 4. **Paramedic Practitioner**

See the table below for Definitions and Function for each tier.
- 5.3. An experienced Paramedic, with both an emergency and primary health care skill set, will be a versatile and valuable addition to the Australian health workforce, not only within Ambulance Services but all areas of the Australian health care systems.

- 5.4. ACP's mission is to create standards, employment pathways and ongoing professional development for these specialist Paramedics.
- 5.5. ACP believes that these specialist Paramedics are largely ignored as potential members of the wider health workforce. ACP attributes this to a lack of understanding by policymakers and workforce planners.
- 5.6. ACP also notes that legislation and regulations do not enable these specialist Paramedics to practice outside of Ambulance Services.
- 5.7. These specialist Paramedics focus on health prevention, keeping people safe and well in their homes/community, supporting General Practice and working as an integral member of a multiciliary health workforce.
- 5.8. These specialist Paramedics should be enabled to practice in a range of clinical settings including ambulance services, GP surgeries, hospitals, metropolitan, rural and remote communities and clinics.
- 5.9. Paramedics with advanced primary healthcare skill sets can provide efficiencies in both the metropolitan (reduce ED presentations, keep people in the community care systems, redirect patients to primary health care) and rural/remote locations (provide front line primary care capabilities, support rural Doctors and other health services).

6. Recommendations

ACP recommends that the Inquiry consider that Paramedics, with both emergency and primary health care skills, be enabled to provide clinical services concurrently within both Ambulance Services and wider health care systems. To achieve this ACP recommends that the WA Ambulance:

- 6.1. Identify experienced and registered Paramedics with both emergency and primary health care skills and enable them to practice each skill set at the top of their scope.
- 6.2. Identify experienced and registered Paramedics who have an interest in acquiring both an emergency and primary health care skills and support them to undertake an ACP-accredited educational program.
- 6.3. Integrate Paramedics, with both emergency and primary health care skills, into strategic locations throughout WA and change policy, legislation and regulation to allow them to provide clinical care in a variety of settings.
- 6.4. Change State legislation and/or regulations to allow Paramedics, with both emergency and primary health care skills, to possess, carry and administer medication and immunisations outside of employment within the WA Ambulance Service.
- 6.5. Change State legislation and/or regulations to allow Paramedic Practitioners to prescribe, order pathology and radiology and develop treatment plans in the same manner as Medical Practitioners and Nurse Practitioners.
- 6.6. Change State legislation and/or regulations to allow Paramedic Practitioners to declare death, sign off workers compensation documentation, witness statutory declarations, order and administer blood products, sign medical certificates and complete any documentation in the same manner as Medical Practitioners and Nurse Practitioners.

- 6.7. Persuade the Federal Government to implement changes to Federal law to allow these specialist Paramedics access to the MBS and PBS.

Paramedic Greg Reaburn

Vice-President

Australasian College of Paramedic Practitioners

Web: <https://www.acpp.net.au/>

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Definition	Extended Care Paramedic (ECP)	Community Paramedic (CP)	Primary Care Paramedic (PCP)	Paramedic Practitioner (PP)
1.1 Registration and ACPP Membership	Is an AHPRA/PCNZ registered paramedic and Member of ACPP.	Is an AHPRA/PCNZ registered and experienced paramedic and General Member of ACPP.	Is an AHPRA/PCNZ registered and experienced paramedic and Associate Fellow of ACPP.	Is an AHPRA/PCNZ registered and experienced paramedic and Fellow of ACPP.
1.2 Education	Has completed basic primary health care education in an ACPP accredited training program.	Has a Graduate Certificate (AQF8/NZQF8) in an ACPP accredited training program.	Has a Graduate Diploma (AQF8/NZQF8) in an ACPP accredited training program.	Has a Masters/Doctorate (AQF-9/NZQF-9/10) in an ACPP accredited training program.
1.3 Clinical reasoning	Can take a comprehensive history, perform physical examinations, apply clinical reasoning, assess risk and make evidence-based decisions.	Can take a comprehensive history, perform physical examinations, apply clinical reasoning, assess risk and make evidence-based decisions.	Can take a comprehensive history, perform advanced physical examinations, apply clinical reasoning, assess risk and make evidence-based decisions.	Can take a comprehensive history, perform advanced physical examinations, apply clinical reasoning, assess risk and make evidenced-based decisions.
1.4 Patient-Centred	Practices patient-centred care and work collaboratively and within a multidisciplinary team to safely monitor, treat and refer patients on an individualised health care plan.	Practices patient-centred care and work collaboratively and within a multidisciplinary team to safely monitor, treat and refer patients on individualised health care plan.	Practices patient-centred care and works collaboratively and within a multidisciplinary team to safely monitor, treat and refer patients on individualised health care plans.	Practices patient-centred care, works collaboratively, and at times leads a multidisciplinary team to safely monitor, treat and refer patients on individualised health care plans.
1.5 Pathology and Imaging		Can perform and interpret basic (point of care) pathology tests.	Can perform and interpret basic pathology and imaging.	Can order and interpret pathology and imaging.
1.6 Medication administration/prescription	Administers medication in accordance with clinical guidelines.	Administers medication following clinical guidelines. Consults for addition or alterations for prescriptions.	Administers medication in accordance with clinical guidelines. Consults for addition or alterations for prescriptions.	Administers and/or prescribes medication in accordance with Therapeutic Guidelines and within the scope of professional practice.
1.7 Apply treatment plans	Can safely provide care for, contribute to and, with consultation, adjust treatment plans within their professional practice capabilities.	Can safely provide care for, contribute to and temporality adjust treatment plans within their professional practice capabilities. Permanent alterations to treatment plans require consultation.	Can safely provide care for, contribute to and temporality adjust treatment plans within their professional practice capabilities. Permanent alterations to treatment plans require consultation.	Can safely apply, modify, create, or delegate, treatment plans within their professional practice capabilities. Alterations to treatment plans outside of practice capabilities require consultation.

Function	Extended Care Paramedic (ECP)	Community Paramedic (CP)	Primary Care Paramedic (PCP)	Paramedic Practitioner (PP)
2.1 Practice location	Practice in a variety of clinical settings. This includes, but is not limited to, home based care, aged care facilities, community clinics, hospitals, GP surgeries, remote and isolated environments and ambulance services.	Practice in a variety of clinical settings. This includes, but is not limited to, home-based care, aged care facilities, community clinics, hospitals, GP surgeries, remote and isolated environments and ambulance services.	Practice in a variety of clinical settings. This includes, but is not limited to, home based care, aged care facilities, community clinics, hospitals, GP surgeries, remote and isolated environments and ambulance services.	Practice in a variety of clinical settings. This includes, but is not limited to, home based care, aged care facilities, community clinics, Hospitals, GP surgeries, remote and isolated environments and ambulance services.
2.2 Domain of care	Perform care that is preventive, proactive and/or reactive.	Perform care that is preventive, proactive and/or reactive.	Perform care that is preventive, proactive and/or reactive.	Perform care that is preventive, proactive and/or reactive.
2.3 Scope	Provide emergency and generalist primary health care, ethically and to a broad range of patients within their professional practice capabilities.	Provide emergency and generalist primary health care, ethically and to a broad range of patients within their professional practice capabilities.	Provide emergency and generalist primary health care, ethically and to a broad range of patients within their professional practice capabilities.	Provide emergency and generalist primary health care, ethically and to a broad range of patients within their professional practice capabilities.
2.4 Health care plans	Adjusts, or creates, health care plans in consultation with more senior members of the health care team.	Adjusts, or creates, health care plans in consultation with more senior members of the health care team.	Adjusts, or creates, health care plans within their professional practice capabilities. Alterations to treatment plans outside of practice capabilities require consultation.	Adjusts, or creates, health care plans within their professional practice capabilities. Alterations to treatment plans outside of practice capabilities requires consultation.
2.5 Evidence-based	Provide care that is evidenced-based practice and consistent professional practice capabilities.	Provide care that is evidenced-based practice and consistent professional practice capabilities.	Provide care that is evidenced-based practice and consistent professional practice capabilities.	Provide care that is evidenced-based practice and consistent professional practice capabilities.
2.6 Collaborate	Support the wider health system by working collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.	Support the wider health system by working collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.	Support the wider health system by working collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.	Support the wider health system by working within and leading multidisciplinary teams.
2.7 Reflective	Participate in reflective practice, continual professional development and quality improvement systems.	Participate in reflective practice, continual professional development and quality improvement systems.	Participate in reflective practice, continual professional development and quality improvement systems.	Participate in reflective practice, continual professional development and quality improvement systems.