

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



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REFORMS UNDERWAY FOR NON-EMERGENCY PATIENT TRANSPORT

The Allan Labor Government will introduce a range of reforms and improvements to Victoria's non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) sector – ensuring it can continue to meet patient needs and deliver for the community.

This work follows an extensive review of the sector undertaken by Member for Melton and former paramedic, Steve McGhie, with the review reporting that service demand has increased significantly since 2019 – averaging 400,000 individual transports each year.

The review also highlighted that while the current system has many strengths, improvements are necessary to boost access, increase efficiency, and better meet patient needs and workforce expectations.

In response to the review, the Labor Government will implement improvements to the existing model, with licensed private providers to continue delivering services.

These include better integration and coordination of NEPT within the wider health system, strengthening monitoring of performance and patient experience, and improving staff conditions, governance and oversight.

To be considered for future contracts, private providers will be required to address the casualisation of the workforce through the implementation of permanent employment targets by 2027-28.

Dedicated strategies will also be developed to support the attraction, retention and ongoing development of the workforce.

This will include ensuring NEPT workers can respond to patients within their scope of practice, as well as career pathways to support transitions between the NEPT, broader health and emergency sectors.

Work will also get underway to improve timeliness and reliability of services, so planned transports aren't delayed by crews being diverted to a Triple Zero caller.

To support this, HealthShare Victoria (HSV) – which is already responsible for the procurement of NEPT for health services – will assume responsibility for the procurement of NEPT for Ambulance Victoria.

Contract arrangements will be revised to minimise NEPT responses to Triple Zero callers that, in turn, disrupt planned responses to patients who require clinical monitoring to return home or access health care.

The centralised procurement of NEPT services by HSV, for both health services and Ambulance Victoria, will reduce the duplication that currently exists, enable more timely services across the state and keep paramedics free to respond to patients experiencing time critical medical emergencies.

These changes will also focus on giving NEPT providers sufficient transport volumes to support viability and improve access to services particularly in rural and regional areas where demand for NEPT is lower.

Additional policy changes in response to the NEPT Review remain under active consideration and are subject to further decisions by the Government.

NEPT services are available to Victorians who require clinical monitoring and supervision during transport to, from and between health care service.

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These reforms are just one way the Government is working to ensure both NEPT and emergency ambulance resources are operating effectively and efficiently and, most importantly, are available to Victorians when and where they need them.

The extensive review undertaken by Steve McGhie included an early discussion paper, public submissions from stakeholders and face-to-face consultation via a series of roundtables and 1:1 meetings.

Every year, the Labor Government provides \$173 million to health services and Ambulance Victoria for NEPT services.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas

“NEPT services play a fundamental role in supporting the health needs of Victorians – that is why we are strengthening its delivery, to improve access, patient experience and support the highly skilled workforce.”

“Demand for both ambulances and NEPT services remain high across our state, making Steve’s recommendations all the more important – I thank him for his time and dedication in compiling this review.”

Quote attributable to Member for Melton Steve McGhie

“It was an honour to lead this review and consult with the entire sector and health services, to learn what works well and where we can make improvements, so we can ensure Victorians have the high-quality, well-resourced NEPT service they deserve.”