

**Ambulance
Victoria**



Strategic Plan 2017-2022

Outstanding emergency health care every time



Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

Ambulance Victoria would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land throughout Victoria and acknowledge their ancestors and elders, both past and present.



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Forewords

Message from the Chair



Ambulance Victoria has undergone significant reform over the past two years, driven by the comprehensive work of the Ambulance Performance and Policy Consultative Committee.

This has informed a renewed focus on our role as an emergency ambulance service, and positioned us to successfully complete a raft of reforms through

a comprehensive Action Plan, including the rollout of a new clinical response model.

The Government's recent investment of more than \$500 million for ambulance services will allow us to deliver a comprehensive and more effective response to communities across the state. I am certain it will position us well for the future.

This Strategic Plan provides the blueprint for how we will approach ambulance service delivery over the next five years, and the actions we will take to achieve our outcomes. We expect to be held accountable by the Government and the community for achieving these outcomes.

As a Board, we are proud of what Ambulance Victoria delivers on a daily basis, and we believe that this Plan will provide us with the right foundation to confidently face the opportunities ahead of us. The Board is looking forward to working with a newly formed executive team, and the broader organisation, in ensuring a world-class ambulance service.

These are exciting times, and on behalf of the Board, I commend this plan to you.

Ken Lay AO APM, Board Chair

Message from the CEO



This is a Strategic Plan with bold ambitions and is designed to clearly reflect our commitment to our community, our patients and our people. The world around us is constantly changing. We are not immune to these changes and need to continue to adapt and transform to meet our challenges and opportunities.

The plan outlines how we will continue to provide world-class patient care in the face of ever-increasing demand, high community expectations, changing demographic profiles and more patients with complex chronic health conditions.

Over the life of the plan we will look at new and more efficient ways to run our business and investigate how emerging technologies can help us be more effective.

Importantly we will continue to focus on patient outcomes, especially in those patients who can benefit from our rapid and effective intervention, such as those experiencing a stroke, cardiac arrest or heart attack. Our search for continually improved patient outcomes will come through identifying innovative ways to deliver our services, using research and data to improve our performance, and then implementing the changes we need.

We will also continue to work diligently to keep our people safe and well through continued investment in their health and wellbeing, as our people are our greatest asset.

This is a time of great opportunity for Ambulance Victoria, and I'm looking forward to working to create the next evolution of our great organisation.

Tony Walker ASM, Chief Executive Officer





AmbulanceVictoria

**Outstanding
emergency
health care
every time**



Our Values | **Being respectful** |

Patient Care Commitment

We save and improve lives by providing outstanding care for our patients. Our Patient Care Commitment is our promise to every patient and sits at the heart of everything we do:

Caring

We care about our patients as individuals and treat them with dignity. We respect their unique needs and circumstances, and their right to contribute to decisions about their care wherever possible.

Strategic Plan Summary

Outcome 1 An exceptional patient experience

- Providing safe, high quality, timely and expert patient care every time
- Helping people to make informed decisions about their emergency health care
- Connecting people with the care they need
- Using research and evidence to continuously learn and improve our services

Outcome 2 Partnerships that make a difference

- Working with communities to deliver local emergency health care solutions
- Collaborating with our partners to improve health outcomes
- Planning for and responding to major events and emergencies
- Sharing knowledge, experience and data

Outcome 3 A great place to work and volunteer

- Keeping our people safe, and physically and psychologically well
- Providing an inclusive and flexible workplace
- Developing a culture of continual learning and development
- Embedding an ethical, just and respectful culture

Outcome 4 A high performing organisation

- Embracing innovative ideas, systems and technology
- Being accountable for our actions and outcomes
- Improving our integrated service model
- Operating in a financially and environmentally sustainable way

Working together | Openly communicating | Being accountable | Driving innovation

Safe

Our patients are safe in our hands and experience no harm. Our systems and practices protect our patients and our people to deliver better patient outcomes. We are committed to life-long learning and if we see something wrong, we speak up.

Effective

Our patients receive great care, informed by the best available evidence and research. Our people have the expertise and support to ensure every patient receives the right care, at the right time, every time.

Connected

We are a front door to the emergency health system and connect patients to the care they need. Our patients experience coordinated transition between services, including effective and appropriate sharing of information for excellent continuity of care.



Ambulance Victoria today

Ambulance Victoria has a proud history of providing world-class emergency health care.

This Strategic Plan outlines a commitment to work with our partners and the community to build on significant reforms achieved over the past two years as we continue to transform our services, further improve our performance and deliver even better care to our patients.

Our services

Ambulance Victoria services a population of over 6 million people, 4.6 million of whom live in the greater Melbourne area.

Our services are based across 260 different locations to provide response in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas, and we work with local communities and partners right across Victoria.

We work at the intersection of health and emergency management and value our unique and important role in serving communities.

Our paramedics and volunteers draw on their clinical expertise and experience to deliver high quality care every time they touch lives. We provide emergency pre-hospital treatment, ambulance and air ambulance transport for people facing medical emergencies, important non-emergency patient transport and critical care adult retrieval services between hospitals.

Every day we attend around 1,600 emergency incidents, travelling over 95,000 km on the road.

Services at a glance*

843,051

emergency and non-emergency cases responded to across our road and air fleet

589,847

emergency incidents responded to by on-road paramedics

59,992

triple zero callers referred to a service better aligned to their health needs

225,425

planned non-emergency cases, enabling patients to access health service appointments

96,087

people treated by our paramedics, with no need to be transferred to hospital

6,969

incidents responded to by air ambulance in one of our five helicopters and four planes

2,551

patients transported between hospitals through Adult Retrieval Victoria

35.4 million

kilometres travelled by road in our 677 vehicles

* Based on 2015/16 annual data.



Our accountability

We operate under the Ambulance Services Act (1986) and hold ourselves accountable to delivery of the Victorian Government's commitments to health and emergency services in Victoria and our agreed Statement of Priorities.

Our patients

In 2015/16 we treated over 500,000 emergency patients. 30% of our patients were over the age of 75 and 8% were under the age of 15. The remaining 62% were adults (between 15 and 74 years old).

Victoria's population is both growing and ageing, and over the next five years the proportion of people we treat over the age of 75 will continue to increase.

In 67% of cases we responded to patients at a private residence, and when we enter homes we engage with an extraordinarily diverse range of cultures and ethnicities. Over 260 languages and dialects are now spoken in Victoria.

While metropolitan growth is rapid and 71% of our patients need help in metropolitan Melbourne, people living or working in rural and remote areas represent 29% of our work.

Just over half of our patients (56%) required general medical treatment. A range of other specialist patient needs were met with 9% requiring treatment for respiratory issues, 8% for mental health, 7% for trauma and 6% for cardiac complaints.

Our people

Our people make us great. We have more than 3,400 paramedics supported by more than 1,000 Community Emergency Response Team volunteers and Ambulance Community Officers, and a dedicated team of frontline and support workers.

Nearly 800 Ambulance Victoria auxiliary volunteers also support our work across 70 locations. Together with our local partners and communities, they help to make sure that we are the best that we can be.

We are proud of the fact that 44% of our paramedics are female, with this number continuing to increase. And while many of our paramedics bring decades of experience, 50% of our paramedics are under 35 years of age.

Our work is challenging, and keeping people safe is important. Unfortunately every month we can expect to see 131 paramedics unable to work due to injury or ill-health arising from their work. This is unacceptable to us and something that we are tackling head on.

Our values

We live by our values in all that we do:

- ▶ Being respectful
- ▶ Working together
- ▶ Openly communicating
- ▶ Being accountable
- ▶ Driving innovation



Strategic context

Our operating environment is continuously changing and increasingly complex. Over the next five years we know that our services will be in ever greater demand and that we will be called upon in many different ways.

More than ever, we need to be flexible to adapt and respond to community needs. An exploration of both opportunities and challenges has shaped our Strategic Plan.



Increasing demand

With continued population growth in Victoria of 110,000 people per annum, demand for Ambulance Victoria's services continues to grow. This coupled with an ageing population, and more complex health needs means that calls to attend health emergencies are forecast to outpace population growth by 3% per annum over the next five years.

To meet this demand we need to design and provide innovative, high quality services that help us to respond in different and effective ways.



Emerging technology and better use of data

Communities increasingly receive their information, request services, and transact with governments and businesses online, in a highly mobile form.

In this era of advancement, we can expect communities to want to interact with us more online, to seek to access their patient data, or to receive real-time support or advice during an emergency.

We need to embrace the opportunity to innovate, to work intelligently with data across the sector, and to deliver better health outcomes with smart use of technology.



More complex needs

By 2022, 70% of Australia's health care costs are expected to be associated with the management of chronic and complex health conditions. This demands that health services and systems work together to provide coordinated, quality care.

Ambulance Victoria has an important role to play here, to forge partnerships that deliver the right care and to better share and use knowledge and data for optimal patient outcomes.



Changing community expectations

Community expectations and needs continue to change. There are increasing expectations for us to tailor our services to meet different needs across local communities, and to help our patients and their families to be active participants in their health care decisions.

In rural and remote communities we need to think particularly innovatively to meet challenges and build upon local strengths.

We also know that communities want to interact with us more online to receive real-time support or advice during an emergency, or to access their patient data following an emergency.

Finally, our performance matters. We know that communities expect transparency and accountability for the effectiveness and quality of our services.



More major incidents and extreme weather events

Ambulance Victoria plays a critical role in planning for and responding to an increasingly wide range and frequency of major incidents.

We have responded to a 300% increase in medium to major incidents over the past three years including unprecedented emergencies that have tested our services.

As a result of climate change, Victoria can expect to experience an increase in the occurrence and severity of extreme natural events, including heatwave and storms.

Our specialist skills and capabilities to respond well in a major emergency are essential to Victoria.

Increasing safety risks

Our people experience high levels of occupational violence when responding to people in need. Unfortunately, alcohol and drug fuelled violence is increasing.

We have seen a 63% increase in emergency calls for alcohol related incidents over the past six years and a 45% increase in the incidents related to use of the drug ice over a recent single twelve month period.

We have a responsibility to do everything we can to keep our people safe, and to support our partners to reduce the impact of alcohol and drugs in the community.

Policies, strategies and reviews that have informed this Strategic Plan

Ambulance Victoria plays a unique role at the intersection of the health and emergency management sectors.

The policies and strategies of our health and emergency services partners are of more importance now than ever as we all face increasing demand for our services, increasingly complex health needs and more frequent major emergency events.

The development of this Strategic Plan has considered a broad number of relevant policies, strategies and reviews. A short list (only) of important perspectives includes:

- ▶ the Ambulance Performance and Policy Consultative Committee's Ambulance Action Plan: Improving services, saving lives (2015);
- ▶ Health 2040: Advancing health, access and care (2016);
- ▶ Better, Safer Care: Delivering a world-leading health system (2016);
- ▶ the Department of Health and Human Services Strategic Plan (2016);
- ▶ Targeting Zero - Report of the review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria (2016);
- ▶ Digitising Health (2016);
- ▶ the Inspector General of Emergency Management's Review of the 2016 thunderstorm asthma emergency response (2017);
- ▶ the 10-year Mental Health Plan (2015); and
- ▶ the 10-year plan in response to the Royal Commission into family violence (2016).



Outcome 1



An exceptional patient experience

Every time a patient comes into contact with us, they receive the highest quality care. We continually improve our knowledge, our clinical expertise, our services and our systems to achieve the safest, best possible experience and outcome for our patients.

We know that the best health outcomes are achieved when we can shape our services to meet the needs of every patient. Every day we do much more than respond to emergency calls to take patients to the nearest hospital. We triage and assess, respond and treat, transport, care, educate, support and advise our patients and their families, all with a focus on the best possible experience in difficult circumstances.

To achieve an exceptional patient experience every time, we must continually learn and challenge ourselves to improve. We will advance our practice and implement a safety and quality framework that drives and sustains service excellence.

Our priorities

- 1 Providing safe, high quality, timely and expert patient care every time**

Ambulance Victoria's paramedics, volunteers and support staff aim to provide the best possible care. We will implement our patient care commitment and monitor our progress and success with further improvement to our performance and quality systems.
- 2 Connecting people with the care they need**

Every day we refer hundreds of patients to the right care for their needs, and provide transport services for critically ill and unwell people. This is an important part of ensuring that we are available to respond to those in life-threatening situations. We will continue to explore innovative ways to provide these valuable services within an integrated health system.
- 3 Helping people to make informed decisions about their emergency health care**

We want to do more within local communities and with local health services to educate and support people to engage in decisions about their emergency health care options. When we respond, we will provide practical advice and wherever feasible, present clear options for care.
- 4 Using research and evidence to continuously learn and improve our services**

We aim for zero harm and we learn every day to improve our work. We listen to the experience of our patients and their families and we use this to deliver better care. We are committed to extending our research programs even further to continuously improve our service quality and expertise.



When we achieve this outcome our patients will...

- Experience safe, high quality, expert care every time, regardless of who they are or where they live
- Receive expert referral to the right service provider for their immediate care and ongoing treatment
- Feel a sense of empowerment to make informed decisions about their health care
- Have confidence responding in a health emergency and know when to call for an ambulance



Our Strategy in action

The Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry is maintained by Ambulance Victoria to monitor patient outcomes and drive improvements in care. It shows Victorians are more likely than ever to survive cardiac arrest and that bystander intervention has almost doubled in the past decade.

Senudin Porcic is living proof. Security cameras at a suburban gym recorded Senudin collapsing in cardiac arrest and the bystanders and paramedics who rushed to help.

Advanced Life Support paramedics arrived within minutes of the Triple Zero (000) call to find bystanders giving effective cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Paramedics used a mechanical device to continue the chest compressions and a defibrillator to shock his heart back into a normal function before Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) paramedics provided advanced care.

Senudin was home from hospital within days and weeks later reunited with some of the people who saved his life.

‘When I saw the footage, that’s when I realised how helpful the people were around me. I have to thank them firstly for saving my life and also the ambulance arrived in a really short amount of time and continued to give me the chance to live my life,’ Senudin said.



Outcome 2



Partnerships that make a difference

We are part of an integrated health and emergency services system that works to achieve the best health outcomes for our patients and communities. We work closely with local communities to design and deliver emergency health care that works for them.

Ambulance Victoria plays a critical role within Victoria's health system. We are an essential connector between General Practitioners, community health services, specialist services, mental health services and hospitals across the state. We also work at the intersection of health and emergency management and play a critical role in responding to major incidents and emergencies. We have a unique responsibility to respond to calls for assistance in every rural, regional and metropolitan community, and we know each of our communities well. But we can do more. We can be more proactive in fostering partnerships and supporting the Government's commitment to a more integrated Victorian health system and emergency management sector. We must also better engage with our communities to inform our work.

Our priorities

- 1 Working with communities to deliver local emergency health care solutions**

Every community has different strengths, challenges and services. Our communities are diverse and have different needs. We will actively engage with local communities, especially those in rural and regional Victoria to design tailored local plans and arrangements that best support people in a health emergency.
- 2 Collaborating with our partners to improve health outcomes**

Health and emergency services along with our community partners play a critical role in building healthy, capable communities. Together, we work to prevent health problems from becoming a life-threatening emergency situation. We will develop more extensive, effective and collaborative partnerships to help our patients get the care that they need.
- 3 Planning for, and responding to, major events and emergencies**

We have a unique role to work with our emergency management partners in critical events and emergencies. We will share our knowledge and expertise and learn from reviews, to contribute to planning for major emergencies, and build our capability to respond well.
- 4 Sharing knowledge, experience and data**

We will grow our collaborative partnerships to better share knowledge and experience, and nurture a culture of transparency and shared learning. More effective exchange and shared use of critical data and information across our services will help us all to provide better care.



When we achieve this outcome we will...

- Have active and diverse partnerships across Victoria's health and community services, focused on providing the right services every time to improve health outcomes
- Have clearly developed and implemented emergency response plans that articulate our roles and responsibilities
- Be engaged with local communities to better understand, inform, and tailor our local response to critical health care needs and emergencies



Our Strategy in action

As Cardiology Medical Advisor to Ambulance Victoria, Dr Dion Stub is helping create a world-class system of care in Victoria for patients in cardiac emergencies, especially those experiencing acute myocardial infarction (or heart attack).

'The overarching ambulance philosophy of managing patients with pre-hospital myocardial infarction is that every patient deserves the best care regardless of where the patient has their infarct,' Dr Stub said.

'If you infarct in the middle of the CBD compared to a patient who infarcts in remote rural Victoria - they should still have the best system of care.'

In recent years MICA paramedics have been able to diagnose heart attacks and, when definitive cardiac care is some distance away, provide potentially life-saving medication to dissolve blood clots.

These skills, equipment and medication are now being rolled out to Advanced Life Support paramedics in rural areas. A 24-hour telephone consultation service featuring interventional cardiologists from major public hospitals has also been established to give paramedics 24-hour expert support and advice.

'For the best outcomes for patients with cardiac emergencies you need the best care both pre-hospital and in-hospital to minimise delay to definitive treatment, and maximise chances of full recovery,' Dr Stub said.

'The only way for this to occur is with very close collaboration, and the system of care in Victoria has been designed with very close integration between pre-hospital and in-hospital care providers.'



Outcome 3



A great place to work and volunteer

Ambulance Victoria's outstanding emergency health care is provided by our great people. Our staff and volunteers are safe and well because we have the systems and services to support them in all that they do. Our culture of continual learning and respect for all drives excellence, and we value and develop our people.

Our vision of 'Outstanding emergency health care every time' cannot be achieved without an outstanding team. We need to support our people to deliver great care. We must continue to improve on how we keep our people safe, engaged, and physically and psychologically well, and focus on attracting, developing and retaining great people.

With the planned arrival of over 450 additional paramedics in the next five years, we need the right systems, policies, services, supervision models, and confident, capable leaders to support the delivery of outstanding ambulance and emergency health care services across Victoria. The right culture is also critical, along with a strong connection to our organisation's vision and purpose. We will invest in embedding our values and behaviours to positively impact all that we do.

Our priorities

1 Keeping our people safe, and physically and psychologically well

Every year there are too many incidents impacting the safety and wellbeing of our people. We will reduce the rate and impact of incidents. We will implement practical solutions and provide outstanding services to keep our people safe and well.

2 Providing an inclusive and flexible workplace

Our workforce is growing and changing. We must put in place contemporary flexible working arrangements to best support and utilise our people. We will focus on better integrating and valuing the work of our volunteers. And we will build upon our growing diversity to champion an inclusive culture for all.

3 Developing a culture of continual learning and development

In the years ahead we will significantly increase our paramedic numbers, however many of our most experienced people will also reach retirement. Now more than ever we must invest in developing our leaders and nurture a culture that drives collaboration and the sharing of knowledge.

4 Embedding an ethical, just and respectful culture

To deliver outstanding emergency health care, and to provide a great place to work, requires our commitment to building a positive and engaged culture where we speak up for the safety of our patients, our peers and ourselves. We will embed and live our values every day, develop expected behaviours to guide us all, and ensure that our leaders set the best example for what is important to us.



When we achieve this outcome we will...

- Have reduced the rate of preventable workplace injury
- See strong utilisation, retention and wellbeing of our people and teams
- See our people proactively sharing knowledge, collaborating and driving their professional development to improve patient care
- Experience and live our values of respect, working together, accountability, communication, and innovation every day



Our Strategy in action

Ambulance Victoria has embarked on a journey of building a sustainable and diverse workforce that reflects and represents the communities we serve.

This includes increasing the representation of Victoria's indigenous community with the establishment in 2014 of an Aboriginal Cadetship Program.

The program was updated in 2017 to support the employment of more paramedic cadets across the state.

Keyanna Hood, a proud Kurnai woman from Bairnsdale, became Ambulance Victoria's first Aboriginal Paramedic Cadet in 2014.

The Aboriginal Cadet Program is helping Keyanna transition from high school student to paramedic through financial support, clinical supervision, mentoring and work experience as she completes her university studies.

'It has created strong connections between the healthcare system and the indigenous population and has broken down a lot of stigma that indigenous people sometimes face,' Keyanna said.

Keyanna said it was satisfying to help people in their hard times and make a difference. 'That is why I love what I do, because it means that the path has been paved for other young indigenous people wanting to follow in my footsteps and do what I have done,' she said.



Outcome 4



A high performing organisation

Our organisation is designed to deliver great patient care and performance excellence. We challenge ourselves to improve and continuously review our services, approach and performance. Our services are underpinned by strong, sustainable and agile operating systems and service models.

The needs of communities continue to evolve, with more complex health issues to address and continued increase in demand for our services. We must be agile and responsive to these changing requirements.

We need to explore and embrace exciting and challenging ideas that will improve our systems and technology in ways we might not have thought of yet. We want to be known for our innovative services that improve patient experience and deliver better health outcomes. And we want to develop our organisation to be an exemplar for corporate responsibility.

We are accountable and committed to addressing known risks and challenges to our community, our patients and to Government, however we won't lose sight of the things that already make us a great organisation.

Our priorities

1 Embracing innovative ideas, systems and technology

We will implement our information technology strategy to improve our operating systems, explore the best use of innovations such as telehealth, and introduce practical tools that better assist our paramedics and help improve our services to the community.

2 Being accountable for our actions and outcomes

We will improve our framework for performance and transparency, introduce new real-time reporting capabilities, and promote a culture of accountability. We will focus on exceptional governance and leadership to guide our work and to continuously improve our care and performance.

3 Improving our integrated service model

Our services are provided within an extensive health and emergency services model. Our service design will be supported by our effective partnerships and informed by performance analysis, and we will focus on communities experiencing poorer health outcomes.

4 Operating in a financially and environmentally sustainable way

Changes to the demands on our service are impacting upon the sustainability of our organisation. We will establish a sustainable financial and operating model and will continue to build on our role as a good corporate citizen, including formalising our commitment to environmental sustainability with a clear action plan for improvement.



When we achieve this outcome we will...

- Be a recognised leader in embracing new approaches to deliver emergency health care services more efficiently and effectively
- Have improved our performance and more confidently understand the impact we have made on patient health outcomes
- Have improved our environmental sustainability, and have an ongoing program of work to implement
- Have capitalised upon technology that helps us to deliver outstanding service in all communities
- Manage our organisation well against agreed indicators, including evidence that we are meeting community expectations.



Our Strategy in action

When 10-year-old Jordan was accidentally run over by a four-wheel-drive in a remote part of the state, Ambulance Victoria's emergency response system and world-class patient care came to the fore.

Paramedics battled for five hours to keep young Jordan alive after he suffered critical injuries including internal bleeding and severely damaged lungs on a property 350km from Melbourne.

Jordan underwent several lifesaving interventions and his entire circulating blood supply was replaced with blood carried on Ambulance Victoria helicopters. MICA flight paramedic Darren Hodge said it was the most challenging case of his 30-year career.

'When someone has a cardiac arrest you often hear people talking about the chain of survival,' Darren said. 'It was similar in Jordan's case, with every decision made that day critical to his survival.'

'A combination of the call to triple zero; the work by the first paramedics at the scene; the efforts by an intensive care flight paramedic back in Melbourne who was liaising with a doctor at Royal Children's Hospital regarding some of the treatment; our flight coordinators who managed the

logistics of the flight; the helicopter crewman who assisted me with treatment; and the pilot who had to fly at low altitude with night vision goggles because of the critical nature of Jordan's condition.

'For us to be able to deliver that level of care to Jordan and get the result we did makes me proud to be a paramedic.'



Implementation

The outcomes and priorities presented in this Strategic Plan are supported by an Implementation Plan to drive success. The Implementation Plan establishes program management and governance arrangements, details specific actions and responsibilities, and identifies connecting programs of work.

There are three implementation horizons within this approach.





Performance and success

Ambulance Victoria reports on its performance using a detailed and agreed set of indicators aligned to our legislative obligations and related Statement of Priorities.

Measuring our progress on delivery of this Strategic Plan will, in part, be undertaken by regular monitoring against our standing performance indicators.

In addition, this Strategic Plan presents a number of success statements for each of the four outcomes outlined. To track our progress against these statements we will:

- ▶ Allocate clear accountability and responsibility for achievement of outcomes and priorities
- ▶ Identify relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators and establish an annual review process
- ▶ Baseline our current performance using this process
- ▶ Utilise a variety of sources to gather data on our progress, including performance data, patient experience surveys and engagement, workforce surveys, and targeted research or evaluation
- ▶ Report annually on our progress, celebrate and learn from our success, and hold ourselves accountable for delays or inhibited results.







In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)

Ambulance Membership 1800 64 84 84

Ambulance Victoria
PO Box 2000
Doncaster VIC 3108

T 03 9840 3500

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