

**Ambulance
Victoria**



Ambulance Victoria Consumer and Community Engagement Plan:

Working together with our community
2017–2019





▶ Front Cover & Inside Cover Photo Credit:
Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal Health in
East Gippsland - Camp Marook & Dala Mala
Mullung Program 2016

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

Ambulance Victoria respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land throughout Victoria and pays respect to their ancestors and elders, both past and present.



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Message

from Chair Community Advisory Committee, and
Ambulance Victoria Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to Ambulance Victoria's first Consumer and Community Engagement Plan – Working together with our community 2017-19.

Ambulance Victoria has a proud history that spans more than 130 years, and today provides both emergency care and non-emergency patient transport to

more 900,000 Victorians each year.

Of course, communities and their needs continue to change and evolve over time. Our challenge is to ensure that Ambulance Victoria continues to grow and innovate, to help shape contemporary emergency health care for the benefit of all Victorians.

We know that greater engagement and participation by consumers and the community in their own health care decisions, and in the shape and delivery of health care services more broadly, improves people's experiences of care and ultimately their outcomes.

We have established a Community Advisory Committee to better reflect the views of patients, carers and the community in the way we plan, design, deliver and evaluate our service, and to work with us to ensure these views are embedded across Ambulance Victoria in a sustainable way.

Our paramedics are recognised for the high quality clinical care they provide and for their professionalism in caring for our patients. But, we know that we have not yet met community expectations about the timeliness of our service. We are working hard to improve this and also to continuously improve the quality of care we provide, and the way we provide services in our 'most hard to reach' communities.



We will work closely with our Community Advisory Committee, encouraging the diverse voices of our patients, carers and community in broader engagement opportunities, listening to our patient's views and experiences of care, and taking action to improve our service.

This Plan has the full support of the Board, the leadership team of Ambulance Victoria and the Community Advisory Committee and we look forward to working together to put it into action.

Sue Clarke, Chair, Community Advisory Committee

Assoc Prof Tony Walker ASM, Chief Executive Officer



Community Hero Award recipients

Community Hero Awards recognise that in a medical emergency it is often what people do before paramedics arrive that can make a real difference. The 18 Victorians who received an award in 2016 made a lasting difference. They stepped in to help a friend, family member or stranger in a time of need. Their actions have led to lives being saved and more positive health outcomes being achieved.

About us

Ambulance Victoria provides a vital service that contributes to improving the health of the Victorian community delivering high quality pre-hospital emergency health care and response to six million people in an area of more than 227,000 square kilometres.

We are uniquely placed as the statewide emergency health responder, in engaging and partnering with people and communities, to respond to the emergency health needs of Victoria's diverse population.

Changes such as the ageing of the population; population growth around the metropolitan fringe and regional areas; demographic changes in many rural communities; increasing community expectations of health services more broadly and growing complexity of health and social issues including substance misuse and family violence, mean that our ambulance service needs to change and adapt to continue to meet community expectations.

Today we have more than 4100 highly skilled frontline health professionals who, together with more than 1000 community volunteers and our key health and emergency service partners, are playing a vital role in providing emergency health care and response, and contributing towards improving patient outcomes for Victorians in need. We also provide a major emergency and disaster management response in partnership with other key emergency and health services

Increasingly with the growth in people experiencing long term health conditions and where the health need may not be as urgent, the ambulance service is changing, to better connect people to the most appropriate health provider to match their health need.

In rural communities Ambulance Community Officers and our volunteer Community Emergency Response Teams are strongly embedded within local communities providing that initial first response in an emergency. They are an integral part of the statewide ambulance system.

Additionally we value our close community connections to 70 auxiliaries across the state. For many decades, these community groups, made up of more than 800 auxiliary volunteers, have played a pivotal support role engaging with the community and supporting and fundraising for the service.

We also contribute to skilling the community as first responders in medical emergencies and have taught approximately one million Victorians to perform life-saving cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) through our 4 Steps for Life program. We also deliver first aid and safety education programs tailored to lower and middle school-level children.

As a result, Victoria has high rates of bystander CPR and strong survival rates for cardiac arrest.

Together we are seeing the benefits of working in partnership with local communities, particularly in rural and regional areas and for example with Aboriginal communities. This is a strong foundation to extend that engagement, locally with individual communities and across the State to design and plan for local needs to support people in a health emergency.

The 2016 Ambulance Victoria Community Hero Awards were presented at a ceremony at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, on 1 December. Award recipients were aged as young as ten and came from both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

They stepped in to help a friend, family member or stranger in a time of need. Their actions led to lives being saved and more positive health outcomes being achieved.



Map and Overview of our Community and Services Profile



Ambulance Victoria

- MICA Unit
- MICA Single Responder Unit (SRU)
- Professional Branch
- Ambulance Community Officer Branch (ACO)
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Remote Area Nurse
- HEMS
- Locations with Auxiliaries





Our Charter

- ▶ Respond rapidly to requests for help in a medical emergency
- ▶ Provide specialised medical skills to maintain life and reduce injuries in emergency situations and while transporting patients
- ▶ Provide specialist transport facilities to move people requiring emergency medical treatment
- ▶ Provide services for which specialised medical or transport skills are necessary
- ▶ Foster public education in first aid

Our Values

- ▶ Being Respectful
- ▶ Working Together
- ▶ Being Accountable
- ▶ Openly Communicating
- ▶ Driving Innovation





Consumer Engagement at Ambulance Victoria

As Ambulance Victoria enters a new phase of community engagement, we are committed to working together to improve our services so that they meet local needs and continue to improve the outcomes and experience for patients.

In establishing the Community Advisory Committee and developing this Consumer and Community Engagement Plan, we have been guided by those who have gone before us. Across Australia, the importance of community engagement is supported by the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights¹, the Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care², the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards³, as well as through national and state policies.

The framework provided by the Victorian Government's policy on consumer, carer and community participation in the health care system known as '*Doing it with us not for us*' (currently being refreshed) also underpins the Ambulance Victoria plan. The policy aims to improve health policy and planning and improve the care, treatment and experience of patients through enhanced consumer engagement.

To achieve this aim, there are seven objectives which outline what health services need to do in order to make participation happen:

1. To take participation seriously – '*Doing it with us not for us*'
2. To share information to create consumer and carer friendly access to services
3. To improve communication between all stakeholders
4. To build the capacity of all stakeholders to undertake participation

5. To integrate participation into the quality and safety program
6. To learn from experiences and the evidence on participation
7. To ensure participation resources are available to all stakeholders

In addition, '*Doing it with us not for us*'⁴ outlines five specific participation standards that health services should monitor and report against:

1. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to consumer, carer and community participation appropriate to its diverse community
2. Consumers, and, where appropriate, carers are involved in informed decision-making about their treatment and care and wellbeing at all stages and with appropriate support
3. Consumers, and, where appropriate, carers are provided with evidence-based, accessible information to support key decision-making along the continuum of care
4. Consumers, carers and community members are active participants in the planning, improvement, and evaluation of services and programs on an ongoing basis
5. The organisation actively contributes to building the capacity of consumers, carers and community members to participate fully and effectively.

¹ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, 2008, Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

² Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, 2010, Australian Safety and Quality Framework for HealthCare

³ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, 2012, National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards

⁴ Department of Health, 2011, '*Doing it with us not for us*'.



Ambulance Victoria recognises that building a diverse and inclusive workplace for people from different backgrounds, whether diverse by gender, geography, culture, religion or sexual orientation, assists in creating a safe environment for staff. In turn this supports a diversity of ideas and improved understanding and helps us deliver better responses and improved outcomes for patients and communities. We are strengthening our approach to an inclusive workplace through a range of initiatives including the development of a Diversity Strategy.

For example, over the past five years with the support of the Department of Health & Human Services (Koolin Balit initiatives) and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Indigenous Cadetship Support), Ambulance Victoria has been working to develop sustainable models to increase the Aboriginal paramedic workforce and strengthen community engagement. We now have ten Aboriginal cadets across Victoria completing their paramedicine qualification or who have recently

commenced employment with Ambulance Victoria as a Graduate Ambulance Paramedic. These highly motivated and community-minded cadets will be delivering quality emergency health services and contributing to their local communities across many rural parts of Victoria, stretching from Warrnambool to Boort to Bairnsdale.

The East Gippsland Experience

Across Gippsland, Ambulance Victoria management and staff have been working with their local Aboriginal communities to develop innovative strategies for Aboriginal employment.

We have a number of young, talented Aboriginal cadets that now a part of our front line workforce and we know their community are as proud as we are of all that these young people have achieved, when they stand in our uniform.

Over the past four years, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff have been working with the Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal Health East Gippsland (CEAHEG) and other local Aboriginal organisations to improve Aboriginal health outcomes.

In 2016 we worked with CEAHEG to provide education, leadership and mentoring at Aboriginal health camps for youth between the ages of nine to 18. We also had active engagement in health activities in five schools in the local area focusing on improving Aboriginal health literacy and encouraging career aspirations in health care. As a result, over 60 young people from the local community can now perform effective CPR and many are able to use public access defibrillation and recognise signs and symptoms of a heart attack, so they can call Triple zero (000) early.

Programs like this bring us closer to the Aboriginal community and are celebrated by parents, Aunts, Uncles and Elders. They are beneficial for both the local Aboriginal community and Ambulance Victoria, establishing relationships of trust and a partnership improving our Aboriginal communities' emergency health care.



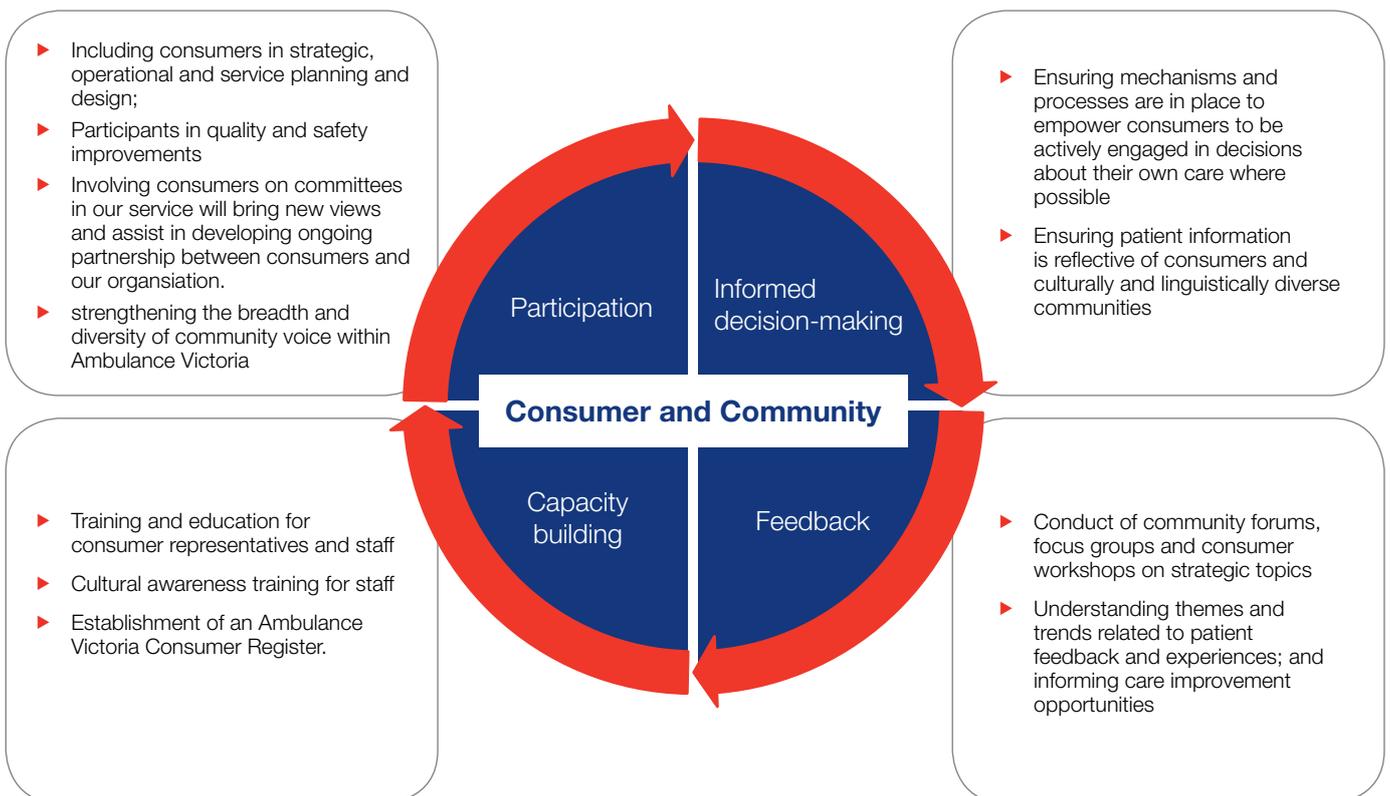
Engaging with Consumers and Community at Ambulance Victoria

Ambulance Victoria's Corporate Plan sets out the direction and agenda for the organisation. A new Strategic Plan is being developed and will further embed the work underway.

The Consumer and Community Engagement Plan is a key feature of the year ahead and will embed engagement in the way we work, throughout the organisation through to 2019.

The 2017–2019 Consumer and Community Engagement Plan reports against five key result areas:

1. **Engaging our community** – how the needs of the diverse communities and population groups served by Ambulance Victoria are considered in all services, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse communities; people with disabilities or those who may who experience disadvantage;
2. **Participation** – how consumers are active participants in the planning, improvement and evaluation of Ambulance Victoria's services and programs on an ongoing basis;
3. **Informed decision making** – how patients and their family and/or carers are involved in informed decision-making about their treatment, care and wellbeing at all stages and with appropriate support; and
4. **Provision of information** – how consumers are provided with evidence based, accessible information to support key decision-making.
5. **Capacity building** – how Ambulance Victoria contributes to building the capacity of staff and consumers to participate fully and effectively.





First Ramadan Community Iftar Dinner with the Australian Intercultural Society, Benevolence Australia and the United Muslim Migrants Association (UMMA Centre) hosted by Ambulance Victoria June 10 2016.

Paramedics help Victorians from all walks of life, and our involvement reflects our commitment to sharing, learning and celebrating being part of the culturally diverse community we serve.

Key principles

- Leadership:** We are committed from the Board to the frontline to building relationships with our consumers and community members and will provide support to achieve this
- Openness:** We are open and value the contribution consumers and the community can make to improving the quality of our services; and are willing to change
- Respect:** We are respectful of consumers and community members as equal partners and will support them to meaningfully engage
- Active participation:** We listen to the voice of consumers and the community in all parts of our organisation and involve them in planning, design and evaluation of our services

Community Advisory Committee

A key strategy to ensure the development of effective and meaningful consumer engagement at Ambulance Victoria is through the establishment of the Community Advisory Committee.

The Committee is an advisory committee to the Board comprising 8-10 members of the community who reflect the voice of patients, carers and families, and the cultural (including from the Aboriginal community), gender and geographic diversity of the Victorian community.

The committee is an integral part of strengthening the consumer and community voice within Ambulance Victoria and enhancing the design and delivery of our services and the experience of consumers who receive them.

The Ambulance Victoria Community Advisory Committee will be pivotal in monitoring the success of this Consumer and Community Engagement Plan.



Ambulance Victoria Consumer and Community Engagement Plan

- Working together with our community

Key Result Area	Objective	Action	Year
1. Engaging our diverse community	1.1 To develop and maintain links with community groups	1.1.1 Identify key Ambulance Victoria community groups and engage with them to develop appropriate relationships and consumer engagement referral mechanisms	2017
		1.1.2 Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan as a foundation to strengthening our cultural understanding and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in a commitment that will foster wider participation and improve the outcomes and experience of services for these communities.	2017
		1.1.3 Develop a Diversity Strategy	2017
	1.2 To improve communication mechanisms with our linguistically diverse community	1.2.1 Explore opportunities to better support communication with linguistically diverse consumers e.g. translation of key patient information material, use of smart devices for translation purposes	2017-18
	1.3 To enhance the diversity of consumers on the Community Advisory Committee and Consumer Register	1.3.1 Implement strategies to increase the number and diversity of consumers on the Ambulance Victoria Consumer Register	2017-18
	2. Informed decision making	2.1 To strengthen informed decision making processes	2.1.1 Explore opportunities and mechanisms for patients to be more active participants in decision making about their care
2.1.2 Develop the Ambulance Victoria Charter of Healthcare Rights and Responsibilities in collaboration with consumers and strengthen the mechanisms for informing staff and consumers of the charter			2016-17
3. Participation in planning, improvement and evaluation	3.1 To enhance consumer engagement in feedback	3.1.1 Explore additional ways for consumers to provide feedback about their experience with Ambulance Victoria	2017-18
		3.1.2 Develop mechanisms for consumer involvement in the review of themes and trends related to feedback and complaints	2017
		3.1.3 Commence surveying patients' experiences of the ambulance service and report on outcomes at the Community Advisory Committee. Identify priority areas for improvement from the new patient experience survey results.	2016-19
		3.1.4 Develop formal processes for reporting on feedback data to the Ambulance Victoria Community Advisory Committee	2016-17
	3.2 To enhance consumer engagement in quality and safety	3.2.1 Enhance consumer representation on key governance committees	2016-17
		3.2.2 Provide consumers with opportunities to directly contribute to quality and safety improvement initiatives at Ambulance Victoria	2018-19
		3.2.3 Enhance the monitoring of key Ambulance Victoria quality and safety activities by the Community Advisory Committee	2017
		3.2.4 Explore opportunities for board and other quality committees to hear patient stories and experience	2016-17
	3.3 To enhance consumer involvement in planning	3.3.1 Consult with consumers about new developments, service expansion and changes to service delivery model	2017-19
		3.3.2 Develop the Ambulance Victoria 2018 Consumer and Community Engagement Plan with direct input from consumers	2017

Key Result Area	Objective	Action	Year
4. Provision of information	4.1 To provide consumers with the right tools to enable informed decision making	4.1.1 Enhance the accessibility of patient information material on the Ambulance Victoria Internet, in collaboration with consumers and review annually	2017
		4.1.2 Enhance the consumer voice in all Ambulance Victoria patient information and published material by developing in consultation with consumers that are reflective of culturally and linguistically diverse communities	2017-18
		4.1.3 Explore opportunities to improve the information provided to patients prior to and during transport	2017-18
5. Capacity building	5.1 To strengthen the supports provided to staff and consumers who participate	5.1.1 Develop and implement a recognition program for consumers who participate at Ambulance Victoria	2017
		5.1.2 Develop and implement a recognition program for staff activities involving consumer engagement	2017
		5.1.3 Provide internal training and education opportunities for staff to improve skills related to consumer engagement	2016 - 19
		5.1.4 Build capabilities of consumer representatives involved in engagement in Ambulance Victoria about effective advocacy and engagement	2016-18
		5.1.5 Explore alternative mechanisms for promoting consumer engagement at Ambulance Victoria e.g. social media	2016 -19
	5.2 To strengthen internal and external communication regarding consumer engagement at Ambulance Victoria	5.2.1 Develop and implement a system to centrally record and capture consumer groups across Ambulance Victoria	2017
		5.2.2 Promote and communicate the Consumer and Community Engagement Plan to Ambulance Victoria staff and the wider community	2016-17
		5.2.3 Develop formal feedback and communication mechanisms between the Community Advisory Committee and consumers who participate on other governance committees across Ambulance Victoria and with broader health system	2017

Measuring and tracking our success

Within Ambulance Victoria, monitoring of the implementation of the plan will occur regularly through the Ambulance Victoria Community Advisory Committee, the Executive and the Board.

Quarterly progress reports will also be provided to the Executive and the Board.

Implementation will also be monitored via the Ambulance Performance and Policy Consultative Committee Implementation Advisory Group.

The wider community will be kept informed of the implementation of the plan via the Ambulance Victoria Annual Report and through regular updates provided on the Ambulance Victoria website.





Appendices

Definitions

Carer refers a person who provides care to another person with whom they are in a care relationship.

A person is in a **care relationship** if they provide another person, or receive from another person, care because one of the persons in the relationship has a disability, is older, has a mental illness or has an ongoing medical condition.

Community members are groups of people who have an interest in the development of an accessible, effective and efficient ambulance service that best meets their needs.

Consumer Engagement refers to the wide range of strategies in which consumers are involved in the planning, service delivery and evaluation of health care. It covers partnerships between patients and health professionals when care is provided at an individual level, as well as partnerships with consumers at a health service level.

Consumers of healthcare refers to patients, potential patients, carers and community members.

A patient is a person receiving healthcare, with synonyms including consumer and client.

Person Centered Care is an approach to treatment and care whereby:

- ▶ the treatment and care provided is adapted according to the patient's values, preferences, expressed needs, beliefs, cultural needs, family situation and lifestyle;
- ▶ the patient and their family and/or carer are treated with dignity and respect;
- ▶ there is open communication and sharing of information between the patient and their family and/or carer and health care professionals;
- ▶ patients, their families and carers are active partners in decision-making about their care.

About the Aboriginal Artwork

This artwork represents the link between education, employment and health outcomes, with employment being central to the design.

The design around the circles represents a meeting/gathering of people and, in this case, a gathering of community members and the Ambulance Victoria workforce.

The lines which flow through each of the circles and connect them represent the communication lines of information and sharing.

These lines show the need to be inclusive when undertaking programs and strategies between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and non-Indigenous organisations.

The circles represent education, employment and health and they have many circles within them to demonstrate the deep connection between each.

Like the rings in a tree trunk, the circles show strength and wisdom, and as long as they are developed and nurtured, the connection and strength will remain.

Ambulance Victoria



In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)

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