

Ambulance Employees' Association of South Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE

AMBOS' UNION SLAM GOVERNMENT BEAT UP OVER PUBLIC HOLIDAY 'PATIENT SAFETY' RISKS

The Ambulance Employees' Association has attacked the Treasurer for public comments claiming that due to a number of ambos preferring not to come to work on their days off there is some risk to patient safety.

"The Government, through Mr Lucas, is trying to mis-lead the public into thinking there will be a dangerous shortage of ambulance crews on the coming public holiday" Association Secretary Phil Palmer said today, "his claims are spurious; the reality is that on every day of every week there is a dangerous shortage of ambulance crews and Communications staff all over the state, a shortage that Mr Lucas has ignored since coming to office."

"The facts are that ambulance crewing is traditionally less on most public holidays as a matter of course, and this one is no different" Mr Palmer said "The only shortage is the one created by Government refusal to fund SA Ambulance properly, and the reality is that SAAS has more than enough 'spare' officers to cover any unexpected vacancy that might occur. Mr Lucas must be aware of these facts but has chosen, for reasons of his own, not to let on."

Palmer said *"Ambos are furious at Government duplicity and their failure to give a damn about people who work for the ambulance service, and the community they so magnificently serve against the odds"* he also reiterated his rejection of the Government allegation: *"the AEA has categorically not instigated, or orchestrated, any industrial action about overtime."*

"We have been advising our members that voluntary overtime is not mandatory, that is our role." Palmer said *"We are very concerned about the Government's over-reliance on our members to come in on days off. One of our members has been charged with 'death by dangerous driving', an offence that could attract a 15-year jail sentence, and the Crown is relying on the fact that this member worked on days off which contributed to fatigue."*

"This beat up is simply a disgraceful attempt by the Government to impugn SA ambos integrity and commitment, which will simply contribute to the already rock-bottom low morale and will likely motivate more folk to stay away on days off" Palmer said *"If only the Government would put as much effort in fixing the problem as they are to attacking people have dedicated their careers to caring."*

For interested media colleagues, the Association will conduct a media conference today at 1200 at the union offices 13 Hindmarsh Place Hindmarsh. There will be uniformed ambos there as well.

Authorised by Phil Palmer, AEA Secretary 0419 815830 or 8340 3511