

Ambulance Employees' Association of South Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE

GOVERNMENT FORCED TO BACK OFF ON TRIBUNAL ORDERS

Last week Treasurer Lucas was gloating that his Government had succeeded in getting orders against the Ambulance Employees' Association (AEA) about the issue of ambos putting their name on a list of those possibly willing to work on some days-off.

This week the AEA successfully appealed against the original orders and had them amended, but Mr Lucas is nowhere to be seen.

The original orders were based almost entirely on a "draft" tendered by the Dept of Treasury and Finance (DTF) lawyers to "assist" SAET.

The original orders changed, at the stroke of a keyboard, a normal long-standing nomination practice into industrial action.

AEA Secretary Phil Palmer said today "*the result of the orders as they stood was that members would be reluctant to put their hand up to help, only to find they were then locked in regardless of circumstances.*"

"The problems the Orders created were the reasons behind the AEA appeal, and why they were amended." Palmer said *"The AEA and its legal team spent hours in SAET yesterday arguing the point. The results of that appeal were circulated to all SA Ambulance staff yesterday in the form of amended orders"*

"In short" said Palmer *"the Government had no choice but to back off from their original absurd position."*

"The AEA does not believe orders were warranted in the first place, but can live with the new ones as:

- *We have now an order on us to stop what we weren't doing, and to not do what we had no intention of doing anyway;*
- *Members can now withdraw their overtime nomination as they always had before."*

"The whole exercise was a waste of taxpayers' money and everyone's time" Palmer said, "and it has soured relations between this state's hard-working ambulance staff and the Government. There was absolutely no attempt by DTF to talk to the AEA about the issue."

"Members are hoping for an apology from Treasury, but not holding their breath" Palmer said.

Whilst the Government were expressing concern for public safety on the public holiday Monday when there were actually 4 crews over-compliment, the public are at risk every single day:

A snapshot of some the crewing shortages over the past week, which are typical of many, many other days has been provided by AEA Industrial Officer Leah Watkins.

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- **Saturday Night Shift 5/10/19:**
 - Seaford, Aldinga, McLaren Vale crews dropped
 - Emergency at case Normanville, crew from FMC – 64km

- **Sunday Day Shift 6/10/19:**
 - 8 crews dropped
 - At one point, 5 x emergency jobs waiting, some waited 20 mins just to be dispatched
 - Operation Status (Opstat) White. SA Ambulance define this as:
 - Demand means SAAS cannot achieve KPI's - **patient safety is directly affected**
 - Resources are insufficient to maintain service delivery
 - **Unable to meet demand**
 - Despite contingency plans, **service delivery adversely affected**
 - SAAS, SA Health and/or Government reputation likely to be impacted.

- **Sunday Night Shift 6/10/19:**
 - Victor Harbor crew cleared RAH, emergency back up for a crew at Norwood – who's covering Victor?
 - Cardiac Arrest at North Haven. Crew on scene waited 28 mins before ICP could get there (from Torrensville)
 - Emergency Rapid Bay, crew from Noarlunga (73 kms)

- **Tuesday 8/10/19**
 - Emergency Cudlee Creek, crew from North Adelaide”

“If the Government really cared, they would not be allowing this never-ending risk to patient safety” Ms Watkins said

CLOSING BEDS IN THE CENTRAL ADELAIDE LOCAL HEALTH NETWORK UNDERMINING THE SAFETY OF ALL SOUTH AUSTRALIANS

Meanwhile, CALHN are closing beds which will seriously impact on ramping and therefore ambulance availability. “It is a disaster in the making” Mr Palmer said. “yet another example of the Government caring more about cost than care.”

For interested media colleagues, the Association will conduct a media conference today at 1230 at the union offices 13 Hindmarsh Place Hindmarsh. SA Salaried Medical Officers' Association Senior Industrial Officer Bernadette Mulholland will also be there.

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