

# Ambulance Employees' Association of South Australia

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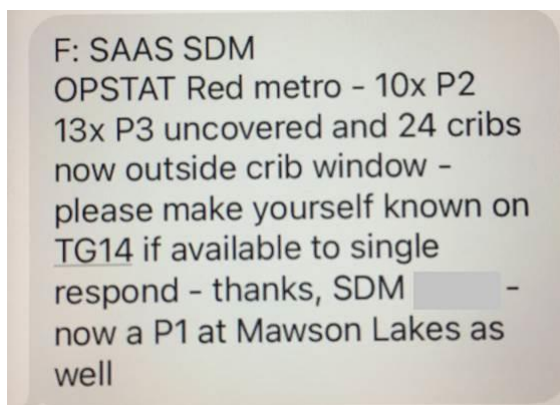
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## MEDIA RELEASE

### YET ANOTHER DANGEROUS WEEKEND FOR THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

The South Australian community, and your ambos, continue to be put at risk by an under resourced and under funded ambulance service. Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> of December saw significant ambulance delays. The below message was sent in the early hours of Sunday morning showing what is now becoming an almost daily occurrence.



*Page from SA Ambulance Service State Duty Manager Sunday Morning 13<sup>th</sup> December*

The message demonstrates a state of disaster declared as OPSTAT Red with 10 x Priority 2 (P2) cases not covered by an ambulance, these are life threatening cases such as chest pain, shortness of breath or vehicle accidents. OpStat Red is defined by SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) as “**levels of demand are having a sustained impact on SAAS ability to deliver safe, quality patient services**”.

In the early hours of Monday morning **an emergency pregnancy call was left uncovered without an ambulance for over 50-minutes** in Adelaide’s northern suburbs. The family out of desperation started driving to hospital themselves and met ambulance on the way.

There were also 13x Priority 3 (P3) cases not covered by an ambulance, these are urgent medical emergencies such as acute abdominal pain.

Our crews continue to work dangerously long hours working 12 hour shifts without a single meal break. As shown in the message 24 breaks were now late on this night. Paramedics and Ambulance Officers are at breaking point.

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December ambulance crews experienced significant ramping, further restricting their ability to respond to emergencies in the community. At approximately 3pm there were 19 ambulances ramped at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and 6 ramped at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

*“These 25 ambulances should have been freed up to respond to other emergency and urgent cases.”* Ambulance Union Secretary Phil Palmer said today, *“but even in times of no ramping, SAAS struggles to meet demand, like on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> for example. However ramping on top of this high workload, exacerbates the issue.”*



*19 Ambulances Ramped outside the Royal Adelaide Hospital Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December.*

Our regional communities are also affected by SAAS' inability to respond to emergencies. Last Thursday afternoon 10<sup>th</sup> December, a patient suffered a cardiac arrest in Strathalbyn. SAAS had no resources close-by, and requested urgent assistance from SA Police and SA Fire to assist with CPR. It was 18 long minutes before a single Paramedic response arrived. Our concerns and thoughts are with this patient and their family.

*“SA Ambulance and Government’s relentless refusal to provide safe staffing, then blaming ambos’ conditions is reprehensible, and an attempt to deflect from their failure to act”* Palmer

said *“This failure to act, and blaming ambulance workers for that failure, is a kick in the guts for a workforce whose mission in life is to care for South Australians.”*

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The AEA will hold a media conference at 1130 am at the union’s offices, 13 Hindmarsh Place, Hindmarsh

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**AUTHORISED BY PHIL PALMER, AEA SECRETARY 0419 815 830 OR 8340 3511**