



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Friday, 31 May 2013

#### **CRACK DOWN ON PRANK CALLERS**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today said diverting the life-saving care of paramedics is a disgraceful act, which comes with serious consequences.

Mrs Skinner said on more than 150 occasions this year, the precious time of paramedics has been wasted on triple zero prank calls.

“It’s important for the community to understand that NSW Ambulance takes all triple zero calls seriously,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Paramedics have no choice but to respond to triple zero calls even if they suspect a hoax. For them patient care comes first.

“NSW Ambulance has the technology to track calls, so if you’re dialling triple zero to prank, NSW Police will investigate.”

Under the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995, it is an offence to improperly use emergency call services. The maximum penalty is three years’ imprisonment, with fines of up to \$30,600.

“More than 100 people have been found guilty of making a false call to an emergency service number since 2010,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Prank callers may think it funny to send paramedics on a wild goose chase but there are serious consequences for diverting their emergency care.

“Paramedics do an extraordinary job in what can be difficult circumstances and it is shameful their work is being hindered by hoax callers.

“I have the utmost respect for our paramedics and it is absolutely unacceptable for prank callers to be diverting care away from genuine patients.”

NSW Ambulance Chief Executive Ray Creen called on the public to think again before pranking triple zero.

“Calls can be traced so hoaxers need to think twice before making false reports.

“Hoax or non-genuine calls are a drain on our resources, especially when we require multiple ambulance responses,” Mr Creen said.