



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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NON-EMERGENCY PATIENT TRANSPORT FLEET TRANSITION

Minister for Health Jillian Skinner today announced a new plan to free up ambulances and improve non-emergency patient transport in greater metropolitan Sydney.

Non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) is a service for low-risk patients who do not require emergency transport but must travel between different facilities for health care, such as renal dialysis and x-ray, or to their home after being discharged from hospital.

Under the strategy released today, nine existing NEPT fleets will be consolidated into a single, standardised fleet to improve efficiency, better align resources with patient needs and provide value for money.

Transition from the nine fleets, which include NSW Ambulance's 'green fleet' and eight Local Health Districts (LHDs) - Illawarra Shoalhaven, Nepean Blue Mountains, Sydney, South Western Sydney, Western Sydney, Northern Sydney, Central Coast and the Hunter component of Hunter New England - will commence next month. The final rollout will be complete before next year's winter peak.

"This is about ensuring emergency ambulances are available for life-saving and critical incidents," Mrs Skinner said.

"It will also create a flexible, coordinated fleet that can be deployed faster and used more efficiently."

NEPT has been subject to many reviews since 2008, including the Garling Inquiry and the NSW Ambulance Reform Plan, and each has consistently supported the separation of emergency from non-emergency services.

In June 2014, NSW Health established a centralised booking hub for NEPT, resulting in NSW Ambulance's non-emergency work reducing from 15.7 per cent to 3.7 per cent.

Barriers have remained in providing an efficient and effective NEPT service, including inconsistencies across vehicle types and limited flexibility to transfer NEPT vehicles and staff between LHDs to assist with peaks in demand.

Under the strategy, all patient transport officers (PTOs) will be brought under the management of HealthShare NSW and current motor vehicle drivers given the option to retrain as PTOs. NSW Health will work with staff to ensure a smooth transition to the new model and industrial associations will be consulted.

For more information visit: www.health.nsw.gov.au/nept