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CASE FOR CHANGE

NSW Ambulance dispatchers are responsible for identifying the fastest and most clinically appropriate ambulance to send to someone in need. In a 12-hour shift, dispatchers often send help to more than 150 people in the community. Dispatchers are also responsible for managing the shifts of more than 60 paramedics over a 12-hour period.

This administrative responsibility includes:

- ensuring all paramedics have reported for the start of their shift
- managing the allocation and recording of paramedic meal breaks (the timing of which is determined by complex industrial award rules)
- ensuring paramedics sign-off on time and allocating shift overtime when operationally required.

In order to do their job effectively, a dispatcher is often required to manage the competing priorities of sending timely and appropriate care to people in the community, while ensuring paramedics have access to meal breaks and minimal exposure to excessive overtime. They use a tool called the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to dispatch ambulances, which uses clinical algorithms and GPS tracking to help them prioritise patient urgency, ambulance availability and location.

To manage their administrative duties, dispatchers are provided with a paper-based roster system. This does not integrate with the CAD system, which means the dispatcher has to constantly cross reference between the computer-based CAD system and the paper-based roster system. In addition, NSW Ambulance has recently undertaken significant rostering reform, which means paramedic shifts have been changed from a model where they start and finish at the same time, to one where shifts are staggered throughout the day.



This reform has allowed the organisation to better match resourcing to demand, but it has also dramatically increased the administrative duties of dispatchers. They now need to manage complex industrial award rules within a staggered roster system, while cross referencing availability to send timely care to people in the community, relying on a paper and pen to do this effectively and fairly.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

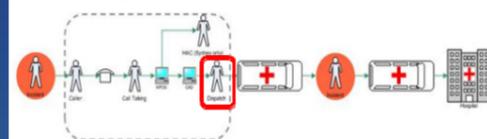
Replace the current paper based processes for Dispatcher administrative tasks with streamlined and integrated system based solutions.

Objectives

- ✓ To reduce the amount of time that dispatchers spend on administrative tasks, by 50 per cent by March 2019.
- ✓ To increase the effectiveness of dispatcher decision making related to award rules by 30% by March 2019.



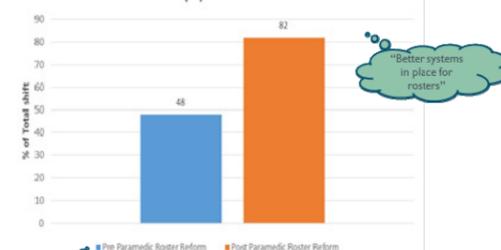
DIAGNOSTICS



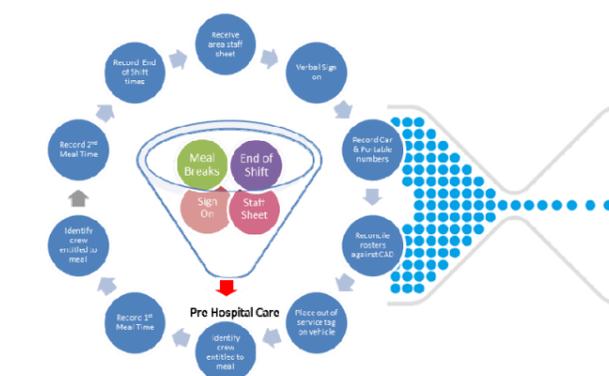
During the diagnostic phase, the project team worked closely with dispatchers to clearly define all tasks and functions performed in their role, which were then grouped into 'core' and 'administrative' categories. Activities undertaken during the diagnostic phase included:

- extensive workshoping with dispatchers and supervisors
- process mapping of tasks
- time in motion studies
- reviewing issue logs
- theming potential bottlenecks in dispatcher workflows
- surveying dispatchers to identify potential frustrations.

Proportion of shift where a dispatcher is required to review the paper area staff sheet



"Fair too much time is spent by the CCO on Area staff sheets"



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 Redesign Lead- Melissa Willis
 Management & Staff of Control Division
 Ryan Lovett – Zone Manager

SOLUTIONS

The team identified a need to develop a solution which replaces the current paper-based roster system. The key functional and technical requirements of this solution were discussed with dispatchers, to ensure they feel equipped with the appropriate tools to perform their role.

It was determined that they proposed solution must:

- replace and eliminate the requirement for dispatchers to refer to a paper-based roster system
- integrate with the CAD system to streamline and automate the paramedic sign-on and sign-off process
- provide support and advice for dispatchers managing complex industrial award rules for meal breaks.



It was determined that a business case was required, which would detail the potential costs and implications associated with engaging a vendor to develop a solution that delivered on the key requirements while integrating with existing platforms. The project team was required to extend their consultation with NSW Ambulance Finance and ICT directorates, to identify a potential funding source and financial governance for the project.

RESULTS & NEXT STEPS

As of April 2018, the business case and functional requirements have been finalised and approved by the NSW Ambulance executive leadership team. The project team has:

- ✓ Secured a capital budget
- ✓ Identified a vendor
- ✓ Commenced design of operational scenarios and user experience

SUSTAINING CHANGE

To ensure the proposed solution achieves buy in and the change is sustained, the business case was aligned to the following:

- ✓ NSW State Health Plan: Towards 2021
- ✓ NSW Ambulance Strategic Priorities
- ✓ NSW Audit Office - 'Report on Health 2017'
- ✓ NSW Audit Office - 'Managing demand for Ambulance services'

