

New South Wales Ambulance

Rotary wing review

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ORH'S APPROACH

An integrated analysis and modelling approach was taken, alongside wide-ranging consultation. ORH's Rotary Wing Model was validated against the current service profile, and then used to run options for operational and control changes, taking into account the interrelationships with fixed wing and land-based ambulance provision. Consultation with helicopter operators, the ambulance service and NSW Health also enabled ORH to identify options for future service standards and incorporate them into the modelling.

RESULTS

An optimum operational and control structure was identified, with a four-year plan for implementation. The improved service involved changes in helicopter types and crewing arrangements, as well as higher service standards for primary and secondary calls agreed with clinicians. Working with the service, ORH also helped to develop a tendering process and contracting structure to provide a more integrated and robust framework for future rotary wing provision.

THE CHALLENGE

ORH was commissioned to undertake a review of rotary wing operations across New South Wales on behalf of the NSW Health Department and New South Wales Ambulance (NSWA). The study involved identifying options for improving cost-effectiveness, taking account of helicopter type, hours of coverage, tasking protocols, crewing and service standards. ORH also advised NSWA on the optimum configuration for future provision and made recommendations for changes to service delivery arrangements.



KEY BENEFITS

- A proven evidence-based approach which withstood internal and external scrutiny
- Results were presented in a clear and transparent manner, allowing effective engagement with stakeholders
- Study also informed related strategy development for state-wide trauma and medical retrieval services
- Implementation of the study's recommendations has brought significant improvements to aeromedical and retrieval services in NSW



The review of rotary wing services undertaken formed the blueprint for the 10-year strategic development of rotary wing retrieval services in NSW. A performance audit undertaken by the NSW Auditor-General in 2010 found that the new arrangements had improved the ability of the ambulance service to transport patients to the right hospital in the right time.

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