




Ambulance Response to Heatwave

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What Impact does Adverse Weather Events Have On Ambulance Services?



Heatwave

- > SAAS were one of the first agencies to develop a stand alone Heatwave Plan.
- > Heatwave alone increased calls to the ambulance service by up to 75%
- > At its peak the number of calls went from an average of 900 per day to 1800 requests
- > It is important to note that paramedics are also humans, so therefore can be affected by heat



Heatwave

- > SAAS' plan was twofold
- > Firstly to provide welfare to its staff to enable them to remain on shift in order to cope with the increased workload
- > This was achieved by providing relief stations at major hospitals, where cold water was available
- > This extended to managers being mobilised to do the same at extended cases



Heatwave

- > Secondly to provide a service to the public and avoid overloading hospital ED's
- > Additional crews were also rostered, but the focus became on avoiding transport to hospital if alternate solutions could be sought.
- > Upskilling some paramedics to provide in home treatment, with a virtual ward created to ensure follow up
- > Work with Dept Health and media to reinforce good health advice to the public.



Heatwave

- > In the latter part of the heatwave hospitals struggled to cope with the demands on them
- > SAAS invoked a plan aimed again at providing more in home treatments, using the services of GP's working within the Emergency Operations Centre
- > Clinical tests were conducted and results forwarded back through GP's



Heatwave

- > What does the future hold?
- > Closer cooperation between the agencies in seeking alternate solutions to primary health care
- > Development of a national plan
- > Further research into the long term effects of adverse weather events on primary health