



Australasian College of Paramedicine

# Pre Budget Submission

2024-2025



Australasian College of  
**Paramedicine**®

[www.paramedics.org](http://www.paramedics.org)

# About the College

## Advancing paramedicine

The Australasian College of Paramedics (the College) is the peak professional body representing and supporting paramedics and student paramedics across Australasia since 1973. The College champions the unique capabilities of paramedics in emergency, urgent and primary care, driving a connected, and multidisciplinary approach to high-quality healthcare in all communities.

The College is future-focused and committed to enhancing person-centred care through sustainable initiatives, sound policy and legislation, and models of care that utilise and empower paramedics to work to their optimal capabilities driving professional growth and opportunity.

Not only is paramedicine one of the most trusted health professions, it is also the fastest growing health profession at 9%<sup>1</sup> year on year highlighting that now is the time to build the foundations for tomorrow's workforce. Paramedics are integral to the future success of the Australian health system, and as the peak body, we advocate for professional recognition.

### **Collaboration: Together we make an impact**

The College services paramedicine across Australasia and over its 50-year history has developed strong working relationships with the Ahpra-Paramedicine Board, the Council of Ambulance Authorities, all jurisdictional ambulance services, Australasian Council of Paramedicine Deans, government health departments, other health profession colleges, and private healthcare providers. At present, the College is partnering with several institutes on the first-ever Australasian Paramedicine Workforce Survey, and several pilot initiatives that see paramedics engaged in team-based models in hospital and primary care settings.

### **Acknowledgement**

The College acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land and sea in which we live and work, we recognise their continuing connection to land, sea and culture and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

The College acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1. Department of Health and Aged Care. [Place unknown]: Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care; 2021. Allied Health Professionals: ATSI Health Practitioners; 2021 [Date cited 2023 Jul 31]. Available from: Allied Health fact sheets

# Executive summary

## Backing Federal initiatives

The College has identified high-impact short-term projects that support a sustainable long-term vision for improved healthcare across Australia and the Pacific region. These projects require minimal Federal funding yet have the potential to make a powerful long-term impact on health system planning and resourcing, health outcomes and health equity. All proposed projects are designed to support the Australian Government's vision.

A recurring theme across all our conversations with paramedics, stakeholders, and the wider health sector, is the dire need to vastly improve health literacy across health professions. By improving health literacy environment<sup>2</sup> through projects - like that which we are proposing - it is likely to open a more collaborative dialogue across professions which will in turn support the healthcare system as it transitions from outdated models to contemporary team-based ones.

Another key issue important to the paramedic profession is improving health equity, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and rural and remote communities. In paramedicine, only 2%<sup>3</sup> of paramedics identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Research and frontline experience indicates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel more comfortable seeking healthcare from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals, and this is something we need to continue to develop and build on.

Australia's relationship with our Pacific neighbours has never been more important. Empowering the healthcare workforce with knowledge and training will strengthen our regional relationship and improve person-centred care for their respective populations.

With these issues in mind, our proposed projects address the overarching question: "What can paramedics do to improve and support healthcare access, equity, and outcomes?"

Our proposed projects aim to deliver tangible outcomes that will inform decision makers, benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and support our neighbours in the Pacific.

*Person-centred care is why Australian students enrol in paramedicine.*

*Person-centred care is at the heart of all College activities.*

*Improving person-centered care drives our advocacy priorities.*

**"Short term thinking is  
the greatest enemy of  
good government"**

**ANTHONY ALBANESE**

2. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare; 2023. [Date cited: 2023 Dec 5]. Available from: Health literacy | Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

3. Paramedicine Board of Australia. Statistics [Internet]. [Place unknown]: Paramedicine Board Ahpra; 2023 [cited 2023 26/07]. Available from: <https://www.paramedicineboard.gov.au/News/Statistics.aspx>.

# Proposal

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# Proposal 1

## Strengthening healthcare: Let's build strong foundations for healthcare success

<b>Timeframe</b>	18 months – 2 years
<b>Total project cost</b>	\$200K over 2 years (inclusive part A and part B)
<b>High impact</b>	Empower healthcare providers to better understand paramedic capabilities and to confidently, and appropriately, utilise the paramedic workforce across the Australian health system to improve health outcomes for all Australians.
<b>Government alignment</b>	This proposal supports the government's healthcare initiatives relating to multidisciplinary team-based models of care.

This proposed project encompasses the development of two practice standards for paramedicine that will be developed concurrently.

Project	Timeframe	Items	Estimated cost
<b>Part a)</b> Advanced Practice Standards for Paramedicine	18 months – 2 years	Project development team	\$90,000.00
		Administration costs	\$10,000.00
<b>Part b)</b> Urgent and Primary Care Practice Standards for Paramedicine	18 months – 2 years	Project development team	\$90,000.00
		Administration costs	\$10,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$200,000.00*</b>

### Background and need

The College has worked in close collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care on Prof. Mark Cormack's *Unleashing the potential of our primary care workforce: scope of practice review* as well as state governments, federally funded Primary Health Networks (PHNs), other services and private providers regarding opportunities to utilise paramedics in urgent and primary care settings for the benefit of improving healthcare access, workforce sustainability and person-centred care.

Consistent across all conversations is the need for decision-makers and health service providers to have a better understanding of paramedic capabilities so that they can build successful and sustainable multidisciplinary teams.

To support the broader utilisation of paramedics in team-based care, and to enhance health access and patient outcomes, key supporting documentation needs to be developed to ensure national standards of care, workforce wellbeing and professional growth, and health literacy. While the College, as the profession's leader, is presently developing the Paramedicine Career Framework for Australasia, supporting standards must also be developed alongside the framework for the profession and for the broader health system to empower urgent and primary care providers to utilise the paramedic workforce to their full capabilities (scope of practice).

\* Estimates only



### **Part a)**

Advanced Practice Standards for Paramedicine

The Advanced Practice Standards would be focused on paramedics in team-based critical care settings e.g.: hospitals, emergency departments.

### **Part b)**

Urgent / Primary Care Standards for Paramedicine

The Urgent / Primary Care Standards would be focused on paramedics in team-based urgent and primary care settings e.g.: Medicare Urgent Care Centres, private primary health care clinics.

### **Project impact**

- Decision makers will be informed of advanced and urgent/primary paramedic standards
- Decision makers can codesign multidisciplinary teams comprising paramedics
- Standards will ensure best practice patient-centred care.

### **Implementation**

Alongside the development of the Advanced Practice Standards for Paramedicine and Urgent/Primary Care Standards for Paramedicine, the College will produce an implementation strategy for which these standards would be adapted across Australian health settings.

### **Why the College?**

The College, as the peak body for paramedicine, is best placed to develop and implement these standards in partnership with key stakeholders from clinical and tertiary settings, and contractors (consultancy/agency). The College is seeking Federal funding as the project deliverables will impact national healthcare.

# Proposal 2

## Paramedics in urgent care: Setting up multidisciplinary teams

<b>Timeframe</b>	2 years
<b>Total project cost</b>	2 year investment
<b>High impact</b>	Cross sector collaboration, with tertiary sector and urgent care clinic provider/s to develop and design and evaluate paramedics in urgent care pilot programs
<b>Government alignment</b>	This proposal supports the government's health reform vision.

### Background and need

The Department of Health and Aged Care has established 58 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (MUCCs) across Australia to help address primary healthcare access and affordability issues crippling the country. Currently, however, paramedics are not being utilised in the MUCC model (limited to the core funded model of a doctor, nurse and receptionist), limiting the capacity of existing clinics, the long-term sustainability of this model, and the potential for expansion and growth. A dedicated paramedicine pilot program, informed by the current Federally funded scope of practice review, will leverage an underutilised health workforce to address critical shortages within primary care. The pilot, in collaboration with the tertiary sector and UCCs would ensure the program was inclusive of the capabilities required to meet patient healthcare needs. The project would be evaluated over a 12 month period against a robust quality, safety and patient outcome framework. This would inform future strategies to improve workforce sustainability and quality assurance targets, and underpin a competency framework that supports paramedicine integration into the urgent care sector. Additionally the project would determine core professional criteria and appropriate credentialling for extended scope of practice within paramedicine.

### Why the College

The College has strong working relationships with the tertiary sector and private providers allowing for a cross sector collaboration on pilot programs such as paramedics in Federally funded urgent care clinics. As the peak body of paramedicine in Australasia, it is imperative that we represent the profession in the development of education and credentialling for a sustainable healthcare workforce. We are well positioned to deliver this proposal with the view that the results would support decision makers in creating education and credentialing programs, utilising paramedics in urgent care clinics and health literacy environment.

\* Estimates only



# Proposal 3

## Investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities: Improving health equity through career pathways

### Timeframe

2 years

### Total project cost

2 year seed funding

### High impact

Empower healthcare providers to confidently, and appropriately, utilise the paramedic workforce across the Australian health system to improve health outcomes for all.

### Government alignment

This proposal supports the government's health equity vision.

Project	Timeframe	Items	Estimated cost
Phase 1 – development and consultation	12 months	Project development and consultation team	\$150,000.00
Phase 2 – implementation	12 months	Project delivery costs including travel, administration, resource hire, training staff)	\$150,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$300,000.00*</b>

### Background and need

According to the Ahpra 2022/2023 annual report, at present just 2% of the paramedicine workforce identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. With the continued under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia's health workforce, the College is proposing to develop a flexible national program in collaboration and codesign with the tertiary sector, jurisdictional ambulance services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and communities, that aims to increase representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the paramedicine workforce to improve health equity, health outcomes and health literacy consumer.

### Why the College

The College has strong working relationships with providers who deliver healthcare in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. We also collaborate with other professions on continued professional development educational programs that are designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through healthcare scenarios e.g.: maternity. We are well positioned to deliver this proposal with the view that the results yield a culturally stronger, more broadly represented, paramedic workforce.

*“If you invest in education and training of young people, what you do is you increase the future economic capacity of the nation.”*

ANTHONY ALBANESE

\* Estimates only

# Proposal 4

## Pacific: Empowering our neighbours with an EMT training program

<b>Timeframe</b>	2 years
<b>Total project cost</b>	\$500K over 2 years
<b>High impact</b>	Upskill, train, and empower Pacific healthcare workers to deliver improved healthcare to their communities.
<b>Government alignment</b>	This proposal supports the government's efforts in the Pacific region.

Year	Item	Budget
1	College employed Educator – 1.0 FTE	\$100,000
	Pacific Training Team – all inclusive	\$80,000
	Administration costs (including travel, administration, resource hire, training staff)	\$20,000
2	College employed Educator – 1.0 FTE	\$100,000
	Pacific Training Team	\$80,000
	Administration costs (including travel, administration, resource hire, training staff)	\$20,000
3	Handover year	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$500,000*</b>

### Background and need

The College supports and represents pre-hospital paramedic and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in the Pacific region. To support our Pacific neighbours, we are proposing a robust and sustainable education and credentialing structure to ensure out of hospital clinicians are suitably trained to meet the current and future needs of the community.

This year, the College collaborated with St Johns PNG and Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority to advance their respective out of hospital workforce by extending – without fee – our paramedicine and pre-hospital education and training resources which was warmly welcomed.

### Why the College

One of the College's key activities is developing and presenting high-quality continued professional development education to Australasian paramedics to ensure they maintain their registration through Ahpra and Te Kaunihera Manapou | NZ Paramedic Council. As an organisation, the College is well positioned to deliver this project with the vision of training and upskilling a local EMT cohort, across Pacific nations, thus eliminating the need for ongoing funding. It is also worth noting that the College is highly regarded as a professional organisation in Samoa.

Through this program it is predicted that the out of hospital workforce will increase which has the potential to significantly improve health outcomes.

\* Estimates only

# Proposal 5

## Why do we need paramedics?

### National paramedicine health literacy campaign

#### Timeframe

2 years

#### Total project cost

\$300K over 2 years

#### High impact

Improve health literacy of paramedic capabilities across healthcare sector.

#### Government alignment

This proposal supports the government's agenda to reform healthcare.

Year	Item	Budget
1	Development of campaign in consultation with key (including resourcing)	\$150,000
2	Implementation costs	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$300,000*</b>

#### Background and need

Health literacy environment (professional) in Australia is holding back the paramedic profession, sustainable workforce models, and person-centered care.

Health literacy research points to developing clear communications. The need for improved health literacy environment is critical to the delivery of the governments' health reform initiatives as traditional thinking comprises healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

Several government departments across the country have admirably undertaken consultations that investigate health literacy enablers and barriers and prepared strategies, of which the College has supported, and now is the time to action health literacy programs to align with the government's health reform vision to impact change.

#### Why the College

The College is the peak professional body representing and supporting paramedics across Australasia. We have developed strong working relationships with other Colleges, government departments, universities, and stakeholders, and are best placed to collaboratively develop and design an implementation strategy for a national paramedicine health literacy campaign.



\* Estimates only

# Conclusion

## Tapping into an untapped resource

The College would like to thank the Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services for their consideration of this pre-budget 2024/25 submission.

Paramedicine, as a registered health profession, is standing up ready to support the government as it overhauls the Australian health system. Now is the time for the Australian Government to support paramedicine by building the foundations that will see its long-term visions achieved.

The College looks forward to elaborating on the proposed projects outlined in this submission and would relish an opportunity to discuss further with the Australian Government, The Treasury.

The proposals have the power to make a significant impact on healthcare across our region.



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