

History and Evolution of Paramedic Practice in Australia

Posted on September 22, 2018

Understand this essay, one question at a time. [Chat with this paper](#) ↗

History of Australian Ambulance Services – Where and Why Did Ambulance Services Start in Australia?

An ambulance is a service provided by the state, a private system, a country, or any society ("Ambulance Facts," 2018). It refers to a response that is needed in emergency cases such as accidents. It has two main functions: it provides assistance in the event of an accident or any emergency requiring a paramedical response, and it provides transport services to patients who need to reach hospitals or be transported from one place to another. There are several ambulance services working in Australia, of which Ambulance Service Australia is a prominent one. Ambulance Service Australia provides services for patient transfers and is also available for certain events such as motorsports, festivals, and equestrian events ("Ambulance Service Australia," 2018). It provides onsite first response and pre-hospital care at every level, including intensive care paramedics. Pre-hospital care is required when patients need immediate care after an accident or in an emergency situation. Ambulance services are undoubtedly important and significant for countries, but in the past there were not many such services available, and different options were required. In this paper, the past, present, and future perspectives of ambulance care services are discussed and explored in detail.

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF PARAMEDIC PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA

FROM STRETCHER BEARERS TO MODERN PROFESSIONAL PARAMEDICS

1 WHAT AMBULANCE SERVICES DO

Provide emergency response and patient transport to hospitals.
Assist in accidents and emergency cases.



2 EARLY ORIGINS

Ambulance development was linked to wartime need, when wounded soldiers needed rapid aid.
Dominique-Jean Larrey designed a horse-driven cart with medical doctors to provide quick assistance.



3 BEFORE FORMAL AMBULANCE SERVICES

The lack of ambulance support meant many wounded people died before receiving help.



4 ROLE OF THE STRETCHER BEARER

Carried stretchers, often with another person.
Used in wars and disasters.
Physically strong and trained to give quick first aid.



5 EVOLUTION OF THE PARAMEDIC ROLE

Evolved from providing simple first aid and transport to becoming trained professionals who stabilize patients and provide quick emergency care.



6 WHY PRACTICE EVOLVED

- Better training
- Vocational qualifications
- Education
- Healthcare integration
- Advanced technology



7 EXPANDED SKILLS

Paramedics developed advanced clinical skills including airway management and a range of invasive procedures.



8 MAJOR MILESTONES IN AUSTRALIA

- ✓ Achievement of professional paramedic status.
- ✓ Degree requirements established as a milestone.
- ✓ Introduction of Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MiCA) services.
- ✓ Highly trained and skilled staff.
- ✓ New South Wales ambulance services equipped with rescue trucks, rapid response vehicles, over-snow vehicles, mega lift trucks, and command/communication vehicles.



9 THE FUTURE

Paramedic practice will continue to advance, delivering more accurate and professional care driven by education, globalization, and advanced technology.



A JOURNEY OF CARE AND COMMITMENT

From the bravery of early stretcher bearers to today's highly trained professionals, the paramedic journey in Australia reflects a commitment to saving lives and supporting communities—yesterday, today, and into the future.



What Services Were There for People Who Were Sick and Injured Before the Introduction of Ambulance Services?

In ancient times, when ambulance services had not been introduced, people used different methods and techniques in emergency situations. In ancient times, people used carts to transport patients from one place to hospitals or medical care centers. Ambulance services started in 1487 during the Siege of Malaga. It was the time when Spanish forces acted against the Emirate of Granada. With the passage of time and technological advancements, modern ambulance services were introduced in the 19th and 20th centuries ("Ambulance Service," 2012).

Historically, people used carts to transfer patients. These were two-wheeled carts, which were also used to transfer goods from one place to another. They required human effort, and humans moved the carts with their hands. Later, humans started to use animals with their carts for quicker services so that patients could be transferred from one place to another in less time. The first ambulance was developed in France in the late 18th century. It was developed by Dominique-Jean Larrey, who was a surgeon and worked in Napoleon's army. The reason behind it was that wounded soldiers fighting in war needed medical assistance, but due to the lack of ambulance services, most of them died on the way to get assistance. The purpose of ambulance creation was to provide quick assistance and immediate aid so that no one would lose his life due to a lack of services. Larrey designed a cart that was a horse-driven carriage, and it included medical doctors who provided immediate care to patients.

What Was the Role and Scope of Practice (Abilities) of the "Stretcher Bearer" in the Early Years of Paramedic Practice?

In the past, the stretcher bearer was the person who carried the stretcher. A stretcher was used to move patients from one place to another. The stretcher bearer carried the stretcher and mostly needed the assistance of another person during the process. In past centuries, stretcher bearers were used in wars and emergency situations when patients were in serious and critical condition after a disaster. Stretcher bearers had several qualities; for example, physically strong men were used as stretcher bearers so that they could easily carry or move stretchers with patients on them. Moreover, during wars and military campaigns, stretcher bearers were trained in a specified way so that they were at least able to provide quick first-aid assistance to patients. The abilities of stretcher bearers included training in first aid, and on the battlefield they quickly approached patients who needed their assistance.

Evolution of Paramedic Practice – How and Why Has Paramedic Practice Evolved in Australia?

A paramedic is a person who is appropriately trained to provide medical assistance in any medical emergency situation. A paramedic is responsible for providing quick care to patients who need to get to the hospital as soon as possible and need stabilization before the ambulance transports them to the hospital. The role of any paramedic is linked with the role of ambulance services. The abilities and capabilities of paramedics include their training and their ability to provide quick care to patients. The paramedic role is evolving in the modern world due to advanced technological machinery and systems (Batt et al., 2015; Batt, 2018). Paramedics are trained in a specified way, and they are linked with healthcare services. Paramedics belong to public safety as well as the [healthcare system](#) because they provide services to save people and provide them with needed assistance during emergency situations.

In the past, the training of paramedics was linked only with the health sector, where doctors provided first-aid training and other related patient-care safety training to paramedics. But with the passage of time, on-the-job training for paramedics shifted into vocational qualifications, which provide proper training and certification to paramedics. Now a range of different qualifications is available for paramedic services. Vocational qualifications include Certificate II in Emergency Medical Service First Response, Certificate III in Basic Health Care, Certificate III in Non-Emergency Client Transport, Certificate IV in Health Care (Ambulance), Diploma of Paramedical Science (Ambulance), and Advanced Diploma of Paramedical Science (Ambulance). These are certainly important certifications that now provide opportunities for paramedics to obtain proper training in the areas of their choice. Also, many universities provide assistance in the certification of paramedics, as it is now an important role in any country.

How and Why Did We Go From Simple First Aiders to Paramedics Who Can Perform a Range of Invasive Procedures?

First-aid providers are people who can easily get training in first aid and start their work. Now it is not difficult to get first-aid training, as online courses and video tutorials make it easier for people who want to be properly trained in first-aid services. But there is a major difference between a first-aid provider and a paramedic.

First aid is simply the help provided by any person until an injured, sick, or ill person gets complete medical attention. The services of first-aid providers include providing CPR, applying plaster to an injury, helping to stop bleeding, or helping to provide oxygen to patients in urgent situations. First aid is simple and can be easily learned by anyone in a few days or even a few hours. However, a

paramedic is someone who is professionally trained to provide appropriate care to patients in need. A basic ambulance technician is called an emergency medical technician, who is also part of the ambulance system. But a paramedic is more highly trained than an EMT (Brouhard, 2017). The major difference between an EMT and a paramedic is the scope of practice and the actions they are allowed to perform with patients. An EMT needs 120 to 150 hours of training before being fully trained for the job. But paramedics need more than 1,500 hours of training, and they are more professional and trained in a more specialized way to conduct their duties. Moreover, paramedics now receive more than a one-year degree, mostly two years, and they are trained to become paramedics. Paramedics are allowed to break the skin of patients and also provide breathing treatment to save patients' lives. They are trained properly in airway management systems, in which they help patients support their breathing. Simply, paramedics are allowed to perform a range of invasive procedures.

What and When Were Some of the Major Milestones of Paramedic Practice in Australia? For Example, When and Why Were Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) Paramedics Introduced to Victoria or Extended Care Paramedics (ECP) in NSW?

In Australia, the ambulance system is advanced and uses the latest technological advancements in healthcare systems. The evolution of the ambulance system in Australia developed through changes in education and culture. Culture needs to change when educational understanding develops. Similarly, paramedics now work as professionals rather than as the first-aid providers of the past due to cultural changes and improvements in educational understanding. The profession of paramedicine is now based on the skills and abilities of trained professionals (Eburn & Bendall, 2010). Paramedics now work in a professional environment in Australia and have become valued healthcare professionals in their respective fields. A degree is now required for paramedics, and this is considered a milestone.

In Australia, paramedics earn more than in many developed nations such as the United States of America (Escott, 2016). However, the salary issue of paramedics is still an arguable point in Australia. Similarly, the EMS education system is still an issue in the country, but the country is consistently trying to cope with all related issues of the ambulance system. A major contribution to the healthcare system in Australia is the invention and development of Australian Mobile Intensive Care Ambulances. The system provides the services of highly professional staff and highly trained paramedics who are available in every situation and deal with workloads efficiently. MICA services in Australia provide highly professional services, and the paramedics are qualified degree holders and allowed to practice their skills. They have an advanced diploma in health sciences and other related bachelor's degrees

that allow them to practice. Paramedics are also trained in emergency healthcare systems, and the healthcare system requires their services after they have two years of experience as students.

Ambulance services in the New South Wales area are exceptional and work professionally within the healthcare system. The service operates from different perspectives, and its vehicles are registered and designed properly to deliver exceptional services. It has rescue trucks and rapid-response vehicles that show its advanced use of medical equipment for the benefit of the country. The system also includes over-snow vehicles and mega-lift trucks that work effectively in their respective areas of concern. Moreover, command and communication vehicles also provide quick assistance at major events and within different event management systems.

What Does the Future Look Like? Where Is the Profession Going? What Is Driving the Evolution of Paramedic Practice?

According to the new systems and the use of advanced technology in paramedic care and ambulance facilities, it is predictable that in the coming years, more appropriate systems will be designed and more technological advancements could occur. Change will happen, and it will be a positive change that will bring more prosperity and ease to societies. In the future, paramedic care will be more accurate and more professional and will aim to provide more appropriate care to patients and societies. The modern and future paramedic system will enhance the professional healthcare system and improve future medical care. Educational understanding, globalization, and more advanced technology will drive the evolution of paramedic practice in the future. Paramedics now work in a professional environment in Australia and have become valued healthcare professionals in their respective fields. A degree is now required for paramedics and is considered a milestone, and in the future, degree requirements will be applied in more countries.

In the future, paramedic care will advance more accurately and quickly in many other areas of the world due to its evolution and growing need in many countries (Thind et al., n.d.).

References

- Ambulance facts, information, pictures / Encyclopedia.com articles about Ambulance.* (2018). *Encyclopedia.com*. Retrieved 12 March 2018, from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/divisions-diagnostics-and-procedures/medicine/ambulance>
- Ambulance Service Australia / Paramedic and ambulance services for special events.* (2018). *Ambulanceaustralia.com*. Retrieved 12 March 2018, from <https://www.ambulanceaustralia.com/>
- Ambulance Service.* (2012). *politics.co.uk*. Retrieved 12 March 2018, from

<https://www.politics.co.uk/reference/ambulance-service>

Batt, Alan & Morton, Jessica & Kloepping, Klint & Buick, Jason & Todd, Jamie. (2015). The evolution of the paramedic. *Canadian Paramedicine*. 38. 22-25.

Brouhard, R. (2017). *How to Differentiate Between Paramedics and EMTs*. *Verywell Health*. Retrieved 12 March 2018, from <https://www.verywell.com/the-difference-between-an-emt-and-a-paramedic-1298493>

M Batt, A. (2018). *The evolution of the paramedic*. *Research Gate*. Retrieved 12 March 2018, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281720003_The_evolution_of_the_paramedic

Thind, A., Hsia, R., Mabweijano, J., Hicks, E., Zakariah, A., & Mock, C. *Prehospital and Emergency Care*. Retrieved 12 March 2018, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK333513/>