



# Ambulance Employees Association of Western Australia



## The South West Pilot Membership Survey Results

This report was compiled by the AEAWA Committee after multiple members contacted the association regarding poor community response times in the South West region. The South West Pilot had been initiated by the organisation without consultation from the AEAWA. If a meeting would have occurred, the Committee would have raised concerns over reducing the organisations ability to respond to the people of those regions appropriately. St John Ambulance WA (inc) established the South West Pilot as a direct result of feedback from the recent cultural survey. That result was; 'we do not feel supported by management'. The findings of the recent AEAWA survey identify that employee perceptions of managerial and organisational support has deteriorated dramatically. The survey was completed by 75 members of the AEAWA, 47 of those participants were directly involved in the South West Pilot; either by being a part of the pilot, or working alongside it. This represented approximately half of the employees within the Pilot program.

The AEAWA submit these responses to the Executive of SJA and the membership in a hope that SJA will 'listen' to the views of their employees. The overwhelming comments throughout the survey (most are included at the end of this report) has been;

*'we need a supportive management structure, not to remove crews off the road in order to establish micromanagers in depots, especially at the detriment of those in the community'.*

Questions for the survey were created in order to ascertain the direct effects the South West Trial on our members and as a response to the organisations statement of;

'Delivering Metropolitan Ambulance services in an environment of increasing demand is placing significant pressure on the organisation's resource base'. Continued provision of a quality service requires the implementation of initiatives that build capability, support efficient application of resources, enable growth of the management structure as the workforce grows and support collaborative partnerships between the organisation, stakeholders and the community.

Our members are currently witnessing the worst response times and the lowest stand by capacity in the history of the organisation. The statement above refers to establishing growth in the management structure as the workforce grows. In fact the only growth the organisation has seen is in management. There is no emphasis on were the 'on road' or 'in the SOC' growth is coming from. When is this intake of personnel occurring? What is the establishment of employee numbers going to be in the Communications Centre and on the road?

The organisation has also presented (on the intranet) the goals of the South West Pilot. The AEAWA Committee placed questions into the survey around these goals in order to present a 'voice' from the membership.

**The AEAWA Committee**

## Part One

The first goal of the South West Pilot was;

### UNITING OUR TEAMS

- Uniting our teams through a shared purpose of connection and support



Questions were placed into the membership survey to ascertain how members feel in relation to 'connection' and 'support';

- Do you feel more supported by Senior Management since the introduction of the South West Pilot?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 2         | 7.14%       | Yes                               | 7         | 14.89%      | Yes                       | 9         | 12.00%      |
| No              | 21        | 75.01%      | No                                | 40        | 85.11%      | No                        | 61        | 81.34%      |
| Unsure          | 5         | 17.85%      | Unsure                            | -         | -           | Unsure                    | 5         | 6.66%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

- Do you feel more connected with the organisation since the pilot has been initiated?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 2         | 7.14%       | Yes                               | 3         | 6.38%       | Yes                       | 5         | 6.67%       |
| No              | 26        | 92.86%      | No                                | 42        | 89.37%      | No                        | 68        | 90.67%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | 2         | 4.25%       | Unsure                    | 2         | 2.67%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

- Do you believe the South West Pilot will improve your working environment?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 2         | 7.14%       | Yes                               | 5         | 10.63%      | Yes                       | 7         | 9.33%       |
| No              | 26        | 92.86%      | No                                | 37        | 78.47%      | No                        | 63        | 84.00%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | 5         | 10.63%      | Unsure                    | 5         | 6.67%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

- On a scale of 1-10 (1 being extremely negative and 10 being extremely positive) how likely do you believe the South West Pilot will be for morale?

The survey was completed by 75 participants; the average score was 2.24 out of 10. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole believing the Pilot will be significantly negative for the morale of employees.

Of those 75 participants 47 were directly involved with the South West Pilot, the average score was 1.24. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole believing that the Pilot will be extremely negative for the morale of employees.

The rest of the participants (n=28) were made up of a sample of the general membership, the average score of was 2.97. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole believing that the Pilot will be quite negative for the morale of employees.

The results show the majority of surveyed members believing in the following;

- a) The introduction of the South West Pilot will have a detrimental impact of staff morale.
- b) The participants working within the Pilot feel unsupported.
- c) The participants do not feel anymore connected to the organisation since the introduction of the Pilot.
- d) The participants do not believe the Pilot has established 'connection' between SJA and its employees.
- e) The participants do not feel that the South West Pilot will improve our workplace.

**The AEWAW believe that the first goal of the organisation for the South West Pilot has not been achieved.**

The second goal of the South West Pilot was;

### CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY

- Finding ways to purposefully connect with our community & stakeholders



Questions were placed into the membership survey to ascertain how members feel in relation to 'connection with our community and stakeholders';

#### 5. Do you feel more supported by the organisation since the South West Pilot was introduced?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | -         | -           | Yes                               | 4         | 8.51%       | Yes                       | 4         | 5.33%       |
| No              | 27        | 96.43%      | No                                | 42        | 89.37%      | No                        | 69        | 92.00%      |
| Unsure          | 1         | 3.57%       | Unsure                            | 1         | 2.12%       | Unsure                    | 2         | 2.67%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

#### 6. Do you feel more connected to external stakeholders since the South west Pilot was introduced?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 1         | 3.57%       | Yes                               | 5         | 10.63%      | Yes                       | 6         | 8.00%       |
| No              | 26        | 92.86%      | No                                | 41        | 87.25%      | No                        | 67        | 89.33%      |
| Unsure          | 1         | 3.57%       | Unsure                            | 1         | 2.12%       | Unsure                    | 2         | 2.67%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The results show the majority of surveyed members believe the following;

- f) That they are no more supported by the organisation now than they were before the pilot began.
- g) That there is no more connection to external stakeholders now than before the South West Pilot commenced.

**The AEWAW believe that the second goal of the organisation for the South West Pilot has not been achieved.**

The third goal of the South West Pilot was;



### STRENGTHENING OUR FRONTLINE

- Strengthening our patient care through operational best practice

Questions were placed into the membership survey to ascertain how members feel in relation to 'strengthening patient care and operational best practice';

#### 7. Do you believe the South West Pilot has strengthened the patient care you deliver?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | -         | -           | Yes                               | 2         | 4.25%       | Yes                       | 2         | 2.66%       |
| No              | 28        | 100%        | No                                | 44        | 93.63%      | No                        | 72        | 96.01%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | 1         | 2.12%       | Unsure                    | 1         | 1.33%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

#### 8. Do you believe the movement of ambulance personnel from the road and into the South West Pilot will have a detrimental effect (due to a reduced amount of staff working in ambulance) on the health of the people of WA? Meaning there will be less crews to respond to emergencies and extended response times will occur due to less staff working on the road?

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 28        | 100%        | Yes                               | 41        | 87.24%      | Yes                       | 69        | 92.00%      |
| No              | -         | -           | No                                | 6         | 12.76%      | No                        | 6         | 8.00%       |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | -         | -           | Unsure                    | -         | -           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The results show the majority of surveyed members believe the following;

- h) That the South West Pilot does not strengthen patient care in anyway.
- i) That the pilot is actually detrimental to the general community, and is of no way beneficial to patient care.

**The AEAWA believe that the third goal of the organisation for the South West Pilot has not been achieved.**

The fourth goal of the South West Pilot was;



### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Assisting our people to define and implement their personal development road map

Questions were placed into the membership survey to ascertain how members feel in relation to 'professional development';

**9. Do you believe the South West Pilot has been able to implement and develop your professional development?**

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | -         | -           | Yes                               | 6         | 12.76%      | Yes                       | 6         | 8.00%       |
| No              | 28        | 100%        | No                                | 41        | 87.24%      | No                        | 69        | 92.00%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | -         | -           | Unsure                    | -         | -           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**10. Since the introduction of the South West Pilot, have you felt comfortable going back to your depot/station to rest and recharge, knowing a manager will likely be present?**

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 4         | 14.28%      | Yes                               | 14        | 29.78%      | Yes                       | 18        | 24.00%      |
| No              | 24        | 85.72%      | No                                | 23        | 49.00%      | No                        | 47        | 62.67%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | 10        | 21.22%      | Unsure                    | 10        | 13.33%      |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The results show the majority of surveyed members believe the following;

- j) That the South West Pilot does not give them the ability to develop their professional development.
- k) That they do not feel comfortable with a manager being at the depot.

**The AEAWA believe that the third goal of the organisation for the South West Pilot has not been achieved.**

## Part Two

### Generalised Questions;

Five other questions were placed into the survey for the membership, these questions related to; increasing the SJA management structure, the effectiveness of the Pilot in reducing staff sick leave, and how likely SJA operational employees are likely to support the South West Pilot.

**11. Do you believe the organisation needs more managerial staff in order to better serve the community, have an appropriate standby capacity and meet response times?**

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 1         | 3.57%       | Yes                               | 3         | 6.38%       | Yes                       | 4         | 5.34%       |
| No              | 27        | 96.43%      | No                                | 44        | 93.62%      | No                        | 71        | 94.66%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | -         | -           | Unsure                    | -         | -           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**12. Do you believe the South West Pilot has reduced staff booking off in your area?**

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 1         | 3.57%       | Yes                               | 3         | 6.38%       | Yes                       | 4         | 5.33%       |
| No              | 27        | 96.43%      | No                                | 34        | 72.35%      | No                        | 61        | 81.34%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | 10        | 21.27%      | Unsure                    | 10        | 13.33%      |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**13. Do you trust the organisation will develop the South West Pilot for the good of the greater community?**

| Membership Data |           |             | South West Pilot Participant Data |           |             | Combined Participant Data |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Answer          | n         | %           | Answer                            | n         | %           | Answer                    | n         | %           |
| Yes             | 1         | 3.57%       | Yes                               | 3         | 6.38%       | Yes                       | 4         | 5.33%       |
| No              | 27        | 96.43%      | No                                | 34        | 78.73%      | No                        | 64        | 85.33%      |
| Unsure          | -         | -           | Unsure                            | 7         | 14.89%      | Unsure                    | 7         | 9.33%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>28</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>47</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>              | <b>75</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**14. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being extremely unlikely and 10 being extremely likely) how likely do you believe the South West Pilot will only benefit management?**

The survey was completed by 75 participants who scored an average of 7.74 out of 10. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole believing the Pilot will only benefit management. Of those 75 participants 47 were directly involved with the South West Pilot, the average score of this population's results were 8.12. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole believing the Pilot will only benefit management. The rest of the participants (n=28) were made up of a sample of the general membership, the average score of this population's results were 7.10. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole believing the Pilot will only benefit management.

**15. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being extremely unlikely and 10 being extremely likely) how likely are you to support the South West Trial?**

The survey was completed by 75 participants who scored an average of 2.11 out of 10. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole stating they are unlikely to support the trial. Of those 75 participants 47 were directly involved with the South West Pilot, the average score of this population's results were 1.71.

This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole stating they are unlikely to support the trial. The rest of the participants (n=28) were made up of a sample of the general membership, the average score of this population's results were 2.70. This result aligned with the surveyed participants as a whole stating they are unlikely to support the trial.

The results show the majority of surveyed members believe the following;

- l) That the organisation does not need more managerial roles.
- m) That the pilot has very little, if any, effect on reducing sick leave.
- n) That the participants have no trust in the organisation developing the South West Trial for the greater good of the community.
- o) That the South West Pilot will only benefit management.
- p) That the participants believe they are very unlikely to support the South West Trial.

## Part Three

### Participant Comments;

The question 'please feel free to comment about your thoughts regarding the South West Pilot...' was included for the participants to personalise their opinions of the Pilot. A total of 32% (n=24) left a comment, of which 91.66% (n=22) were negative towards the Pilot, with 8.34% (n=2) being left by participants that were positive towards the Pilot.

#### The negative comments towards the pilot included;

No initiative such as the SW Pilot program appears to be designed to assist Ambulance Crews. Rather, initiative's such as this appear to make middle management's jobs easier by pushing more and more focus on on-road crews.

It's a flawed idea, that St John will keep telling everyone it's working great but in reality is flawed. The reality is we need more crews (no ifs no buts we need operational staff) not more managers.

Difficult to buy into when you don't understand its purpose or direction. Waste of time.

We need more road crews not managers.

We have more managers but less support. They are always in 'meetings' or in their office. They seem to avoid talking to staff. I haven't seen our supposed manager. On road management now has less to offer as well since they seem to be just tasked with jobs and trying to force us to double up on the ramp. No support just more pressure to risk clinical deterioration of our patients at our expense.

Unsure on cost of the pilot but more on road resources e.g. more ELKs would be preferable to SW pilot.

The lack of crews available is impacting surrounding areas apart from the pilot area. Mandurah is regularly crews down and country crews are being pulled in to cover the shortfall.

It's had a negative impact on the service we provide to the community and the moral and workload of on road staff. With such a management heavy organisation there should less emphasis on employing more managers and greater emphasis on increasing on road staff and creating more permanent crews to cope with ever increasing workload.

Have not had any direct involvement with the Pilot, but have seen increasing staff shortages, increasing staff burnout, decreasing morale, and increasing response times over the past few months.

In a time of such significantly low morale on road, such significant numbers of crews down, unprecedented ramping, massively delayed response times to the community, and unacceptable levels of shift extensions occurring, the south west pilot has done nothing but further perpetuate the issues by removing operational staff from on road. The staffing issue is felt by members metro-wide who are routinely sent to the south west to fill unstaffed crews. This has a flow on effect to the rest of the community who wait longer for crews.

Exhausted staff are sent huge distances from Home Depots, are flogged all shift, finish late and are then expected to drive huge distances in traffic home. It seems as though this pilot was developed solely to create more managers, increase micromanagement opportunities, and provide roles for certain managers who would otherwise have no justifiable reason to be retained in a managerial capacity.

SJA management have never nor ever will care about on road personnel. Moral is at an all time low. Way too many chief's and never enough Indians.

With the ambulance model we have in WA where we are actively encouraged to take people to hospital, reducing the number of crews by pulling "managers" off the road is not going to help with this. Having worked in a UK ambulance service before St John, I can tell you that more managers and less crews never improves patient care or response times and always has a detrimental effect on staff morale, who feel they are constantly under the microscope and having to work harder than ever because of the staff deficit created by all the new "managers". In my opinion, morale has plummeted since it's inception and there is a growing distrust of management in general. Huge waste of money which could have been used to put more crews on the road which would actually help with response times.

Total waste of money.

Snr management keep saying it's what employees wanted as we didn't know who our line manager was. I believe what people meant is they didn't know who the person was from day to day which is totally different not know who my line manager is. The pilot is no different with staff constantly moving up and down, left and right. At the end of the day if I need a manager I simply dial the phone and one will answer.

No strategies, nil measures and nil accountability of project. Falsely projecting positive outcomes when all feedback given is negative.

We don't need more managers, we need more ambulances. It's the public that are suffering with terrible response times. Also, an area manager doesn't make any sense at busy depots like Melville and O'Connor. We are never there so we rarely see the managers. Would be much better placing these managers at the hospital while we're all ramped!

I am not opposed to change but so far the pilot has had zero effect. Pulling SMs off road 1 day a week and filling with OT is costing thousands and for what purpose? The AM times don't coincide with both shift patterns so the night crew never see them! And we the on road staff work full time 7 days a week, why should management work flexi hours for a significant extra payment and not deal with us during Saturday and Sunday. The multiple extra positions would have been better spent filling our multiple vacant seats in ambulances when crew morale and staffing is at an all time low.

I fail to see any benefits! The "big picture" is beyond me! No depots just zones? Dynamic deployment is the end goal? Terrible for on road staff!

SW pilot makes zero improvement to operational staff. Waste of time and money.

Minimal support for on road staff as demonstrated by not manning particular Ambulances in the SW district for whole rosters and an absolute disregard for any parity.

Waste of time/resources/dollars. Too many layers of management and increased level of micromanagement at a local/zonal level.

### **The positive comments towards the pilot included;**

I think the AM structure can provide some really positive benefits in having a local manager who understands the local staff and the challenges the area faces. Like many I'm concerned that in this time of such staff shortages that in road paramedics are being taken off road. It creates a perpetual cycle. We all are more fatigued due to increased work volume, so are less resilient and morale is at an all time low. Comments being fed to on road staff blaming the staff for booking off is creating a divide with upper management.

Removing paramedics for the SM day, extra AMs and the HLMs all in this time may only have limited effect on ambulance Manning but it is hard to see the benefit as operational staff. That management don't know exactly what each role will end up being and it's all a dynamic and experimental process may be all well and good for those in upper management, but it really doesn't create a culture of support, communicate to us road staff the intention or show any real value in the system. In saying that there's a real opportunity for some positive change here, it just needs the right implementation.

Can only speak for Cockburn depot, has been very informative with new boards for information and station manager present more often which means problems get fixed quicker.

The Senior Executive of the AEAWA have sent this report to the Senior Management of SJA in the hope that they take on board this valuable feedback from the membership. The previous cultural surveys have identified that there is a huge gap between Executive Managers and on road personnel.

The AEAWA would like to see that gap reduced significantly. This however, can only be achieved when feedback such as this is collected and presented, and most importantly taken on board by the organisation.

In an effort to reduce member stress, the saturation of managers into the workforce and to ensure our organisation can respond effectively to the general community the AEAWA will make this a top priority for its members.

Thank you

**The AEAWA**



### **Contact Us**

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