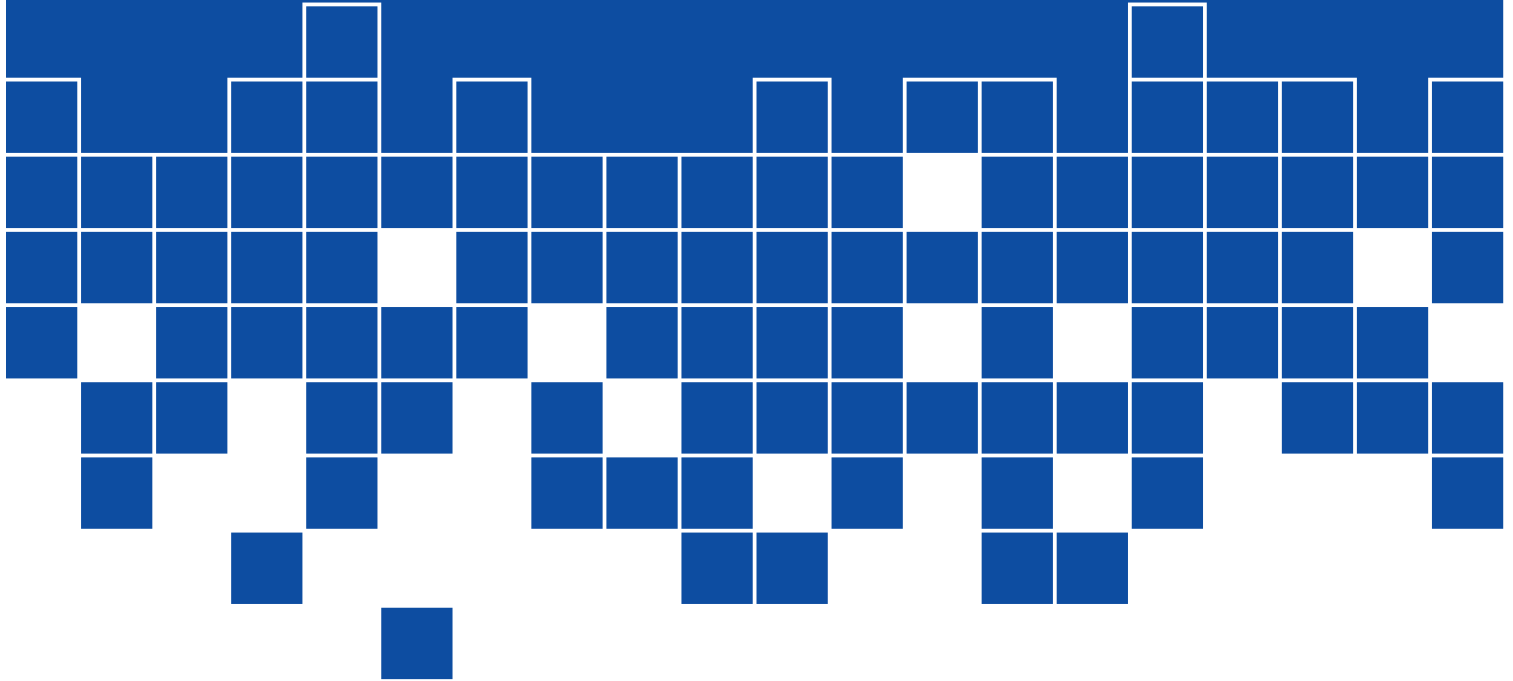




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## **Council of Ambulance Authorities Patient Satisfaction Survey 2013**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the results of the Patient Satisfaction Survey 2013. The data was collected by the Council of Ambulance Authorities and analysed and interpreted by the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute. This research investigated the service quality and satisfaction ratings of ambulance services across Australia (states/territories based) and in New Zealand (Wellington Free Ambulance) in 2013. The purpose of this research was to measure the quality of ambulance services, as perceived by its customers (patients or carers). The ratings were compared over time as this study has been running since 2002 in Australia and since 2012 for Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand.

Patients were asked to evaluate their experience of using ambulance services on a number of dimensions: timeliness, telephone assistance, treatment received, Paramedics' care, journey quality and the overall satisfaction using the ambulance service.

## States/territories

Eight Australian states/territories were investigated: Australian Capital Territory (n=383), New South Wales (n=384), Northern Territory (n=189), Queensland (n=396), South Australia (n=546), Tasmania (n=591), Western Australia (n=364) and Victoria (n=430).

Overall, the majority of patients were *satisfied or very satisfied* for all service dimensions, only with minor variations between years and ambulance services. Below is a summary of the key changes in scores for each state/territory from 2012 to 2013.

- New South Wales, Northern Territory and Queensland: Stable for all service dimensions.
- Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Western Australia: Stable for most service dimensions measured, with an increase for *Paramedics' care*.
- South Australia: Slight increases for *Communication staff assistance, Ambulance response time* and *Overall satisfaction*.
- Tasmania: Decreases for *Call response time* and *Trip/ride satisfaction*.

# Australia

The overall Australia (n=3,283) results were also incorporated into the report.

Table 1 presents Australia's results across all the service dimensions measured. The results for Australia were weighted to match the total road and air patient population in 2011/2012 in each state/territory. The results are presented as the proportion of customers who, in 2013, were: *very dissatisfied or dissatisfied* (column 2), *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* (column 3), and *satisfied or very satisfied* (column 4). The table shows a comparison to the proportion of *satisfied or very satisfied* customers in 2012 (column 5) and indicates statistically significant changes over time (column 6).

**Table 1: Service dimensions – Australia**

Service dimensions	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012 - 2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
Paramedics' care (I)	0	1	99	98	↑
Treatment satisfaction (I)	1	0	99	98	↑
Call response time (II)	1	1	98 #	98	↔
Communication staff assistance (II)	1	1	98 #	98	↔
Overall satisfaction (II)	1	1	98 #	98	↔
Ambulance paramedics (III)	1	3	96 ##	97	↓
Ambulance response time (IV)	3	2	95 ###	95	↔
Trip/ride satisfaction (IV)	2	4	94 ####	94	↔

*Service dimensions are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate service dimensions that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013 (statistically significant  $p<0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - These signs indicate the rank each service dimension achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p<0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - These signs indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p<0.05$ ).*

Satisfaction scores across Australia were high and mostly consistent over time. The *Overall satisfaction* score was 98%, which was consistent with previous years. However, there were some small statistically significant changes for *satisfied or very satisfied* scores between 2012 and 2013:

- *Paramedics' care* increased from 98% in 2012 to 99% in 2013, going back to the same level it was in 2011;
- *Treatment satisfaction* increased from 98% in 2012 to 99% in 2013, going back to the same level it was in 2010; and
- *Ambulance paramedics* decreased from 97% in 2012 to 96% in 2013, going back to the same level it was in 2011.

Similar to scores in previous years, *Ambulance response time* and *Trip/ride satisfaction* scored lower than all other service dimensions.

## New Zealand – Wellington Free Ambulance

Results across all service dimensions measured in New Zealand (n=2,400) are presented in Table 2. This year, for the first time, St John New Zealand results were not collected. Hence, only results for Wellington Free Ambulance are presented. Comparisons were made between Wellington Free Ambulance scores for 2013 and 2012 (column 6) and with the scores for Australia in 2013 (column 7).

**Table 2: Service dimensions – New Zealand (Wellington Free Ambulance)**

Service dimensions	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012 - 2013	Compared to Australia
			2013 %	2012 %		
Overall satisfaction (I)	1	0	99	99	↔	↑
Call response time (II)	1	1	98 #	99	↔	↔
Communication staff assistance (II)	1	1	98 #	99	↔	↔
Paramedics' care (II)	1	1	98 #	99	↔	↓
Treatment satisfaction (II)	1	1	98 #	99	↔	↓
Ambulance paramedics (III)	1	2	97 ##	98	↔	↑
Trip/ride satisfaction (III)	1	3	96 ##	97	↔	↑
Ambulance response time (IV)	2	3	95 ###	93	↔	↔

*Service dimensions are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate service dimensions that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013 (statistically significant  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - These signs indicate the rank each service dimension achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - These signs indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers between 2012 and 2013, and also differences in the service dimensions in New Zealand in 2013 compared to Australia in the same period (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

All satisfaction scores for Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand were high and consistent compared to 2012. Also, similar to last year, *Ambulance response time* scored the lowest compared to the other service dimensions.

*Overall satisfaction* was 99%. This was slightly higher than the result for Australia (98%). Moreover, there were other small differences for *satisfied or very satisfied* scores between Australia and Wellington Free Ambulance in 2013. It also scored higher than Australia for *Ambulance paramedics* and *Trip/ride satisfaction*. However, it scored lower for *Paramedics' care* and *Treatment satisfaction*.

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# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

The key purpose of the Patient Satisfaction Survey was to track perceived service quality and satisfaction across patient segments in Australia (states/territories based) and New Zealand (Wellington Free Ambulance). Previous studies, conducted in Australia annually since 2002, and for Wellington Free Ambulance since 2012, provided benchmarks for comparison with the 2013 results.

## The sample

In 2013, eight Australian states/territories based patient segments were investigated and the total result for Australia was incorporated. This year, for the first time, Victoria's results were not split into rural and metropolitan. Hence, only the overall Victoria results were included. Also, the New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance patient segment was included in the research. However, St John New Zealand was not part of this year's study. Therefore, the ten segments were:

1. Australian Capital Territory
2. New South Wales
3. Northern Territory
4. Queensland
5. South Australia
6. Tasmania
7. Western Australia
8. Victoria
9. Total Australia
10. New Zealand – Wellington Free Ambulance

The data was collected by each ambulance service, using the same core questionnaire. Each state/territory was responsible for the mailing, collection and data entry of its patient survey. The individual service providers sent the data to the Council of Ambulance Authorities. The results were combined and reported by the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute. The Institute, as an independent research body, analysed the data, drew together this report, and discussed any differences between patient segments as well as comparisons with previous year's results.

A randomly selected sample of 1300 (Code 1 & 2) patients who were transported within two months of the sampling date was used in this study.<sup>1</sup> Code 1 relates to an emergency event requiring one or more immediate ambulance responses under light and sirens where the incident is potentially life threatening. Code 2 relates to urgent incidents requiring an undelayed response by one or more ambulances without warning devices, with arrival desirable within thirty minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> Wellington Free Ambulance surveys were collected over four months period, through weekly surveys.

## The instrument

The Council of Ambulance Authorities, in consultation with the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, developed a universal service quality and satisfaction measurement instrument.

Across all patient segments, three service and five satisfaction (including overall satisfaction) ratings were obtained, as well as four patient demographic profile questions. All service quality rating questions used a 5-point Likert scale, where a higher number indicates better-perceived performance. A full version of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix section.<sup>2</sup>

## Approach to analysis

The data was collected, entered and cleaned by each patient segment and then pooled and converted to SPSS, software utilised for analysis by the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute. For each patient segment, descriptive statistics were used to uncover the proportion of people who were *very dissatisfied or dissatisfied*, *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and *satisfied or very satisfied* for the various satisfaction and service quality attributes. *Unsure* and *not applicable* responses were not included in the analysis due to the very low incidence and low managerial implications from them.

To match the total road and air patient population in 2011/2012 of each state/territory, the analysis included a weight for total Australia. In doing that, the results of some states/territories were weighted up and others weighted down to match the population in the analysed period. This was the same process employed in previous reports. The following example explains the process:

*The 2011/2012 road and air population for New South Wales was 536,176. This corresponds to 31% of the total road and air population in Australia.*

*In 2013, there were 384 respondents in the sample from New South Wales. This accounts for 12% of the total sample in Australia.*

*Therefore, to match up the sample with the population, New South Wales was weighted up in the combined Australia result. In doing that the results were based on the population figure instead of the sample size.*

In all the tables, state/territory ambulance services were listed in a descending order according to the proportion of patients who said that they were *satisfied or very satisfied* with a certain element or service. In some cases differences in scores between states/territories were not statistically significant (i.e. arose from random sampling fluctuations), which means that, regardless of the order, all states/territories can be considered equal in performance.

Additional analysis was conducted to test whether variations between states/territories were statistically significant (at  $p < 0.05$ ). Where there were differences, the score was marked with the sign #. In front of each state/territory there is a rank that the ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013. (I) indicates a better result than (II), (II) is better than (III) and so on.

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire for Wellington Free Ambulance did not include questions related to the gender and age of patients.

Comparison with 2012 results was provided for all patient segments based on the percentage of respondents who were *satisfied or very satisfied* with each of the service dimensions. The last column in each table indicates changes over time (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ). The sign  $\leftrightarrow$  shows a stable result,  $\uparrow$  shows an increase and  $\downarrow$  shows a decrease. In some cases while no significant differences were observed on state/territory level (due to restricted sample sizes), the overall score produced statistically significant differences, as the aggregated sample has higher statistical power.

Also, differences in performance may be attributable to demographic biases rather than real differences between two equivalent populations. For example, compared to other states/territories, Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who have been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations. This could partly explain the lower performance of the Northern Territory for some service dimensions. These differences were reported in the *Respondents' profile* section as well as throughout the report.

## Response rate

The overall 2011/2012 road and air patient population for the different patient segments was:

New South Wales = 536,176

Tasmania = 44,911

Victoria = 489,415

Northern Territory = 26,343

Queensland = 340,809

Australian Capital Territory = 21,212

Western Australia = 122,441

Total Australia = 1,722,332

South Australia = 141,025

New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance  
= 28,430



The response rates were calculated based on the number of surveys sent and received.

**Table 3: Response rates**

<b>Ambulance services</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Response rate %</b>
TAS	1,300	591	45
SA	1,300	546	42
VIC	1,300	430	33
QLD	1,300	396	30
NSW	1,300	384	30
ACT	1,300	383	29
WA	1,300	364	28
NT	1,300	189	15
<b>Australia</b>	<b>10,400</b>	<b>3,283</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>8,846</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>27</b>

*States/territories are listed in descending order according to the response rate.*

The response rate achieved in Australia was 32%. This was slightly lower than in 2012, when it achieved 35%. The response rate for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance was 27%, which was consistent with 2012.

Northern Territory had the lowest response rate at 15%. This was consistent with the results from previous studies. A low response rate leads to the likelihood of non-response bias in their results and less accuracy when comparing with the other states/territories and over different time periods.

# FINDINGS

## Call response time

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the time taken to answer their emergency call.

**Table 4: Call response time satisfaction ratings (Q2)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
SA (I)	0	2	98	98	↔
ACT (I)	1	1	98	99	↔
NSW (I)	1	1	98	99	↔
VIC (I)	1	1	98	98	↔
QLD (I)	1	2	97	97	↔
TAS (I)	1	2	97	99	↓
WA (I)	1	2	97	98	↔
NT (I)	2	2	96	97	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>↔</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>↔</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

Results for *Call response time* for all states/territories were high and consistent with 2012. However, Tasmania scored slightly lower over time (change from 99% in 2012 to 97% in 2013). There were no demographic changes over time to explain this variation. Also, this decrease did not impact the Australia result at the aggregate level. On average, for Australia, 98% of the respondents were *satisfied or very satisfied* with the time taken to answer their emergency call. This was consistent with the result in 2012. New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance also achieved 98% satisfaction.

## Communication staff assistance

Respondents were then asked about their level of satisfaction with the operator they spoke to when their emergency phone call was answered.

**Table 5: Communication staff assistance satisfaction ratings (Q3)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
ACT (I)	0	1	99	98	↔
SA (I)	1	0	99	97	↑
WA (I)	0	2	98	97	↔
NSW (I)	1	1	98	98	↔
TAS (I)	1	1	98	99	↔
VIC (I)	1	1	98	98	↔
QLD (II)	1	2	97 #	97	↔
NT (II)	2	3	95 #	97	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>	↔
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99</b>	↔

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The majority of states/territories performed equally well for *Communication staff assistance*. The exceptions were Queensland and Northern Territory, which achieved a significantly lower result than all other ambulance services. The lower results for both states/territories were consistent with 2012. Also, Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who had been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations. There were no demographic differences in the Queensland sample to explain the lower scores.

Most ambulance services achieved stable results compared to 2012. However, South Australia had an increase over time (from 97% in 2012 to 99% in 2013). In 2013, South Australia had a higher proportion of patients (and fewer carers) completing the survey. Patients tend to provide less critical evaluations; hence this demographic change could explain the increase for South Australia. This increase did not impact the Australia result at aggregate level. Across Australia, the overall score of respondents who were *satisfied or very satisfied* with the operator they spoke to when their emergency phone call was answered was high at 98%. This was consistent with previous studies. New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance achieved the same result.

## Ambulance response time

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the time the ambulance took to arrive.

**Table 6: Ambulance response time satisfaction ratings (Q4)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
SA (I)	1	1	98	96	↑
WA (I)	1	3	96	96	↔
ACT (II)	2	3	95 #	94	↔
QLD (II)	2	3	95 #	96	↔
NSW (II)	3	2	95 #	96	↔
TAS (II)	3	2	95 #	97	↔
VIC (II)	4	3	93 #	92	↔
NT (III)	6	5	89 ##	90	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	↔
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	↔

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

South Australia and Western Australia were the ambulance services that scored higher on *Ambulance response time*, 98% and 96% respectively. Compared to the other states, South Australia had a higher proportion of older patients, which tend to provide less critical evaluations. There were no demographic differences to explain this variation for Western Australia. In fact, the opposite would be expected based on Western Australia having more carers who tend to be more critical. On the other hand, Northern Territory scored the lowest on this service dimension. This was consistent with 2012. Also, Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who had been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations.

Compared to 2012, the only change over time was for South Australia, which achieved higher results this year (from 96% in 2012 to 98% in 2013). In 2013, South Australia had a higher proportion of patients (and fewer carers) completing the survey. Patients tend to provide less critical evaluations. The increase for South Australia did not impact the Australia result at aggregate level. Consistent with 2012, in 2013, Australia scored 95% for respondents *satisfied or very satisfied* with the time the ambulance took to arrive. New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance achieved the same result for *Ambulance response time*.

## Paramedics' care

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the care the ambulance paramedics took when attending them.

**Table 7: Paramedics' care satisfaction ratings (Q5)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
NSW (I)	0	1	99	99	↔
SA (I)	0	1	99	98	↔
VIC (I)	0	1	99	97	↑
WA (I)	0	1	99	97	↑
ACT (I)	1	0	99	96	↑
TAS (I)	1	0	99	99	↔
QLD (I)	1	1	98	98	↔
NT (II)	2	3	95 #	98	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>↑</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>↔</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The 2013 rating related to the care the ambulance paramedics took when attending to the patients was high at 99% for Australia. Australia's score increased slightly over time going back to the same level as in 2011 (from 99% in 2011, to 98% in 2012 to 99% in 2013). The result for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance was slightly lower at 98%.

In 2013, Northern Territory achieved the lowest score compared to the leading patient segments. Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who have been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations.

Over time, Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory had an increase. There were a few demographic changes that could explain these variations. In 2013, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had a higher proportion of older patients. Also, the Australian Capital Territory had a higher proportion of patients versus carers. These patients tend to provide less critical evaluations. There were no demographic changes over time to explain the variation for Western Australia, thus it was a true change.

## Treatment satisfaction

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the standard of treatment they received from the ambulance paramedics.

**Table 8: Treatment satisfaction ratings (Q6)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
NSW (I)	0	1	99	99	↔
TAS (I)	0	1	99	98	↔
WA (I)	0	1	99	98	↔
SA (I)	1	0	99	98	↔
VIC (I)	1	0	99	98	↔
ACT (I)	1	1	98	97	↔
QLD (I)	1	1	98	98	↔
NT (II)	1	3	96 #	97	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>98</b>	↑
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99</b>	↔

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The overall rating for respondents *satisfied or very satisfied* with the treatment received from the ambulance paramedics was 99% for Australia. This was slightly higher than in 2012 and 2011, when it achieved 98%. There were no other statistically significant changes over time.<sup>3</sup> The result for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance was slightly lower at 98%.

Northern Territory scored significantly lower than the remainder patient segments. Still, it remained on the same level as in 2012. Compared to other states/territories, Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who have been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations.

<sup>3</sup> Although there were no statistical significant increases in *Treatment satisfaction* for any of the ambulance services, at the aggregate level (which had a much larger sample and, hence, lower error margin) there was a statistical significant increase for Australia.

## Ambulance paramedics

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with explanations given by the ambulance paramedics about what was happening to them and why.

**Table 9: Ambulance paramedics satisfaction ratings (Q7)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
NSW (I)	0	3	97	98	↔
TAS (I)	1	2	97	97	↔
WA (I)	1	2	97	96	↔
ACT (I)	0	4	96	95	↔
QLD (I)	1	3	96	96	↔
SA (I)	1	3	96	97	↔
VIC (I)	1	4	95	96	↔
NT (II)	2	5	93 #	94	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>97</b>	↓
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>	↔

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III) etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The overall proportion of *satisfied or very satisfied* respondents with the explanation given to them by the ambulance paramedics was 96% for Australia. This result in was slightly lower than in 2012, going back to the same level of 2011 (change from 96% in 2011, to 97% in 2012, to 96% in 2013). There were no other statistical significant changes over time.<sup>4</sup> The result for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance was slightly higher at 97%.

In 2013, all states/territories scores were high and stable, although Northern Territory achieved the lowest result than the other ambulance services. This was consistent with 2012. Also, compared to other states/territories, Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who have been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations.

<sup>4</sup> Although there were no statistical significant decreases for *Ambulance paramedics satisfaction* for any of the ambulance services, at the aggregate level (which had a much larger sample and, hence, lower error margin) there was a statistical significant decrease for Australia.

## Trip/ride satisfaction

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with the conditions of the trip when being transported by an ambulance.

**Table 10: Trip/ride satisfaction ratings (Q8)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
NT (I)	1	2	97	96	↔
NSW (I)	1	4	95	95	↔
SA (I)	1	4	95	96	↔
ACT (I)	2	3	95	93	↔
WA (I)	2	3	95	97	↔
VIC (II)	2	5	93 #	93	↔
TAS (II)	3	4	93 #	97	↓
QLD (II)	4	4	92 #	94	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>94</b>	↔
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>97</b>	↔

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The majority of states/territories scored similarly, with the exception of Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. These states/territories achieved significantly lower perceived levels of performance for *Trip/ride satisfaction*, therefore formed the second-best rated group. The lower scores for Victoria and Queensland were consistent with 2012. Also, compared to the other states/territories, Victoria had a higher proportion of carers who completed the survey and of patients who have been transported only once. These patients tend to provide more critical evaluations. A lower score for *Trip/ride satisfaction* could be explained by geographical and transportation differences such as distance of travel, rugged terrain, large proportions of population living in the hills or up in valleys where access includes windier roads, and also differences in vehicles used for transport.

Most results were stable from 2012 to 2013. However, there was a decrease for Tasmania, going back to a similar level as it was in 2011 (from 92% in 2011, to 97% in 2012, to 93% in 2013). There were no demographic changes over time to explain this variation. This decrease did not impact the Australia result at aggregate level. Similar to 2012, in 2013, 94% of respondents in Australia were *satisfied or very satisfied* with the conditions of their trip while being transported in an ambulance. The result for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance was higher at 96%.



## Overall satisfaction

Respondents were asked about their overall satisfaction with using the ambulance service.

**Table 11: Overall satisfaction ratings (Q10)**

Ambulance services	Very dissatisfied or dissatisfied %	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied %	Satisfied or very satisfied		Change 2012-2013
			2013 %	2012 %	
NSW (I)	0	1	99	98	↔
SA (I)	0	1	99	97	↑
WA (I)	0	1	99	98	↔
ACT (I)	1	1	98	97	↔
TAS (I)	1	1	98	98	↔
VIC (I)	1	1	98	97	↔
QLD (II)	2	2	96 #	97	↔
NT (II)	2	3	95 #	98	↔
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>	↔
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	↔

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to satisfied or very satisfied customers in 2013.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of satisfied or very satisfied customers (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to its performance in 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*↔ ↑ ↓ - Indicate change in the results for satisfied or very satisfied customers from 2012 to 2013 (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

Over time, the *Overall satisfaction* score for all states/territories maintained stable. The only exception was South Australia, which had an increase from 97% in 2012 to 99% in 2013. In 2013, South Australia had a higher proportion of patients (and fewer carers) completing the survey. Patients tend to provide less critical evaluations, what could explain this variation over time. The increase for South Australia did not impact the Australian result at the aggregate level. Similar to 2012, in 2013 the *Overall satisfaction* for Australia maintained high at 98%. The result for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance was slightly higher at 99%.

In 2013, Queensland and Northern Territory achieved the lowest score compared to the leading ambulance services. Northern Territory had a higher proportion of younger patients and patients who have been transported only once. These groups tend to provide more critical evaluations. There were no demographic differences to explain this variation for Queensland. Consistency in the result over years also point out to the true change in scores.

The confidence interval for *Overall satisfaction* was calculated based on the overall patient population (total road and air) for the different patient segments at 95% confidence level. This demonstrates the allowed error given the sample size and proportion of *satisfied or very satisfied* respondents.

**Table 12: Confidence interval for overall satisfaction ratings**

<b>Ambulance services</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval +/- Error margin</b>				
	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
ACT	1.3	1.6	1.9	1.6	1.2
NSW	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.0
NT	2.4	2.4	1.9	2.0	2.9
QLD	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.6	2.0
SA	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.4	1.0
TAS	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0
VIC	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.3
WA	1.8	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2
<b>Australia</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>

## Reasonable time for emergency ambulance arrival

Respondents were asked what they expected to be a reasonable time for an ambulance to arrive in an emergency situation. This was an open-ended question, providing respondents with the opportunity to answer the exact timing in minutes.

Table 13 illustrates indicators such as: average (mean value), median (a mid-point where half the answers are below this point and half above), minimum (lowest answer), maximum (highest answer) and range (range between the lowest and the highest answers).

**Table 13: Reasonable time for emergency ambulance arrival (Q9)**

Ambulance services	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Range
	(in minutes)				
TAS	16	15	1	80	79
QLD	14	14	3	65	62
WA	14	12	1	60	59
SA	13	10	1	60	59
NSW	14	10	2	60	58
ACT	12	10	2	60	58
VIC	14	12	3	40	37
NT	13	10	2	35	33
<b>Australia</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order based on the range.*

The average results were largely consistent with the previous surveys.

The most common answers for Australia and for New Zealand Wellington Free Ambulance were:

**Table 14: Most common times expected for emergency ambulance arrival**

	Australia %	New Zealand WFA %
5 minutes	9	11
10 minutes	34	33
15 minutes	28	27
20 minutes	11	12
30 minutes	6	8

Similar to 2012, the most common times expected for emergency ambulance arrival for Australia were: 5 minutes (9%), 10 minutes (34%), 15 minutes (28%), 20 minutes (11%) and 30 minutes (6%).

Also consistent with 2012, 49% of respondents believed the ambulance should arrive in 10 minutes or less, 31% thought 11 to 15 minutes was the ideal time and 20% expected it in 16 minutes or more.

For Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand, the most common times expected for emergency ambulance arrival were: 5 minutes (11%), 10 minutes (33%), 15 minutes (27%), 20 minutes (12%) and 30 minutes (8%). Similar to Australia's results, 50% of respondents from Wellington Free Ambulance believed the ambulance should arrive in 10 minutes or less, 28% thought 11 to 15 minutes was the ideal time and 22% expected it in 16 minutes or more.

# RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

This section reports on the demographic characteristics of the respondents who partook in the 2013 study. It includes an indication of who actually answered the questionnaire (the patient who had been transported or a relative/carer), as well as patients' gender, age and usage level (how many times they had used ambulance service in the twelve months prior to the survey). These characteristics are important because they influence respondents' answers and were used to interpret and explain results for the core questions of the study throughout this report.

## Who completed the survey

Respondents were asked: *'Is the person completing this survey... the patient that was transported, or a relative, or carer of the patient?'*

**Table 15: Proportions of patients and carers who completed the survey (Q1)**

Ambulance services	Patient %	Carer/relative %
NSW (I)	82	18
SA (I)	81	19
ACT (I)	80	20
NT (I)	80	20
QLD (I)	80	20
TAS (I)	80	20
WA (II)	72 #	28
VIC (II)	68 #	32
<b>Australia</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>16</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to the proportion of patients.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of respondents that were patients (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to the proportion of respondents that were patients (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The majority of the respondents were patients. In Australia, patients composed 77% of the sample. For Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand, 84% of the respondents were patients. Both results were consistent with 2012.

Western Australia and Victoria had a lower number of patients answering the survey compared to the other states/territories. Carers tend to provide more critical evaluations; hence, this could be a reason why Victoria scored lower than other ambulance services for *Trip/ride satisfaction*.

Compared to 2012, there were more patients and fewer carers who completed the survey in South Australia and in the Australian Capital Territory (patients answering the survey in South Australia increased from 75% in 2012 to 81% in 2013; and in the Australian Capital Territory increased from 73% in 2012 to 80% in 2013). This variation could be the reason why both ambulance services scored higher in some service dimensions.

## Gender

Respondents were asked about the gender of the patient transported.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 16: Proportions of male and female patients who have been transported (Q11)**

Ambulance services	Male	Female
	%	%
WA (I)	52	48
ACT (I)	48	52
NSW (I)	48	52
VIC (I)	48	52
QLD (I)	47	53
SA (I)	47	53
TAS (II)	44 #	56
NT (II)	43 #	57
<b>Australia</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to the proportion of males.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of respondents that were males (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to the proportion of respondents that were males (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

In total, the composition of patients transported in Australia was 48% males and 52% females. This is consistent with 2012.

In 2013, Tasmania and Northern Territory achieved significantly lower proportions of male patients transported compared to the remainder ambulance services.

Compared to 2012, there were fewer males transported in the Australian Capital Territory, going back to same level it had in 2011 (change from 48% males in 2011, to 40% in 2012, back to 48% in 2013). The proportion of males and females from 2012 to 2013 for all other states/territories was stable.

<sup>5</sup> This information is not available for Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand.

## Age groups

Respondents were asked about the age of the patient transported.<sup>6</sup> The survey used eighteen age groups in alignment with the Australian Bureau of Statistics quotas, starting from 0-4 years old up to 85 years old and over.

**Table 17: Age of the patients (Q12)**

Age Groups	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	WA %	VIC %	Australia %
0-4	0	0	4	0	0	2	2	0	<b>0</b>
5-9	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	<b>0</b>
10-14	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	<b>0</b>
15-19	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	0	<b>1</b>
20-24	2	0	2	2	1	1	1	2	<b>1</b>
25-29	3	2	3	3	1	1	2	1	<b>2</b>
30-34	2	3	8	3	1	1	2	2	<b>3</b>
35-39	3	2	12	2	2	2	2	1	<b>2</b>
40-44	5	5	9	4	4	5	3	2	<b>4</b>
45-49	6	6	11	6	4	4	4	3	<b>4</b>
50-54	5	6	13	6	7	6	4	5	<b>6</b>
55-59	8	11	12	9	7	7	4	5	<b>8</b>
60-64	10	11	12	11	8	8	9	7	<b>9</b>
65-69	13	14	5	8	12	11	7	11	<b>11</b>
70-74	10	19	2	10	12	14	11	10	<b>13</b>
75-79	11	17	0	12	10	10	16	15	<b>14</b>
80-84	12	4	1	10	15	13	14	16	<b>11</b>
85+	9	0	1	13	15	11	17	18	<b>11</b>

<sup>6</sup> This information is not available for Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand.

Three main age groups were created to assist in determining statistically significant differences in the ratings. These were 0-24, 25-49 and 50+ years old.

**Table 18: Patients' main age groups (Q12)**

<b>Ambulance services</b>	<b>0-24 years</b> %	<b>25-49 years</b> %	<b>50+ years</b> %
VIC (I)	4	9	87
SA (I)	2	12	86
NSW (II)	0	18	82 #
WA (II)	4	14	82 #
TAS (II)	6	13	81 #
QLD (II)	3	18	79 #
ACT (II)	3	19	78 #
NT (III)	11	43	46 ##
<b>Australia</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to the proportion of 50+ years old.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of respondents that were 50+ years old (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to the proportion of respondents that were 50+ years old (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

Overall, 82% of the respondents in Australia were 50 years old or over. This was similar to 2012.

Compared to the other states/territories, Victoria and South Australia were the ambulance services with higher numbers of patients aged 50 years old or more. This was consistent with 2012. Also, as in previous surveys, Northern Territory had a significantly lower proportion of 50 years old or over patients compared to the other ambulance services. Older patients generally give higher scores and younger patients lower scores. This partly explains the lower performance of the Northern Territory for some service dimensions.

Compared to 2012, in 2013 the proportion of age groups of the patients was stable across most states/territories. However, there were fewer patients aged 50 years old or over in South Australia. This did not impact the results for the state on any service dimensions over time. On the other hand, there were more respondents aged over 50 years old in the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria. Older patients generally give higher scores. This increase could have impacted the results for both states/territories, i.e. better results in 2013 compared to 2012 for *Paramedics' care*.

## Usage of ambulance service

Respondents were asked to identify how many times the patient transported used the ambulance service in the last twelve months.

**Table 19: Usage of ambulance service in the last twelve months (Q13)**

Ambulance services	Once	Between 2 and 5 times	More than 5 times
	%	%	%
ACT (I)	72	27	1
NT (I)	68	27	5
SA (II)	54 #	41	5
TAS (II)	51 #	42	7
WA (II)	50 #	43	7
NSW (II)	50 #	42	8
QLD (II)	48 #	43	9
VIC (III)	44 ##	48	8
<b>Australia</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>New Zealand WFA</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>4</b>

*Ambulance services are listed in descending order according to the proportion of patients transported once.*

*# - Indicate ambulance services that differ from others, based on the proportion of patients transported once (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

*(I), (II), (III), etc - Indicate the rank each ambulance service achieved according to proportion of patients transported once (statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ).*

The results for usage of ambulance service in the last twelve months were stable in Australia, with 49% of patients being transported once only. For Wellington Free Ambulance in New Zealand, 58% of the patients had been transported once.

The Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory were the ambulance services with higher incidences of patients transported only once in the last twelve months. This was consistent with 2012 and previous years. Patients who have been transported only once tend to provide more critical evaluations. This partly explains the lower performance of the Northern Territory for some service dimensions. Also, compared to the other ambulance services, Victoria was the state with a lower number of patients transported once. However, this did not impact on the results for the state, i.e. did not provide higher results compared to other states/territories.

Although respondents' levels of ambulance services usage varied across states/territories, the results were mostly consistent over time. The only exception was South Australia. There were more patients transported only once in 2013 compared to 2012. However, this change did not lower any results for South Australia.



# CONCLUSION

Satisfaction scores in 2013 were very high and stable compared to the results from previous studies. Overall, 98% of patients in Australia and 99% in New Zealand (Wellington Free Ambulance) were *satisfied or very satisfied* with the ambulance service they received.

All individual patient segments in Australia and New Zealand performed well and were relatively stable for most service dimensions, with only small variations. Demographic differences (% of patients and relatives or carers who completed the survey, age distribution and usage levels) could have caused differences between states/territories services scores due to sample bias.

## **Recommendation:**

Consistent with our advice in the previous years, we recommend changing the reporting style from focusing on amalgamated figure of “satisfied” and “very satisfied” patients, to reporting these two groups separately. The reason for this advice is that in many dimensions the amalgamated score has reached almost 100%. While this indicates an excellent performance, from the analysis point of view, this result presents a statistical challenge known as the “ceiling effect”. This effect means that changes in scores are harder to identify when they vary by such a narrow margin at the top of the scale.

Reporting separately the proportions of “satisfied” and “very satisfied” customers will allow for better sensitivity of the measurement instrument, providing better identification of the changes over time and between the states.

# APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

## Patient Satisfaction Survey

Please answer the questions below by placing a tick in the appropriate box. If you don't understand any questions, please use the 'don't know' option and move to the next question. If the question is not relevant to your experience, mark the 'NA' box and move on to the next question. Please note that your personal opinions will be kept confidential and that no information, which could identify you, will be released. Information obtained from you will be combined with the other responses and used for analytical purposes only.

### Q1 Is the person completing this survey?

- 1 The patient that was transported
- 2 A relative, or carer of the patient

### Q2 When the ambulance was called, thinking about the time it took to be connected with an Ambulance Service call taker, were you?

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

### Q3 How satisfied were you with the assistance provided by the Ambulance Service call taker, were you?

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

**Q4 Thinking about the time the ambulance took to arrive, were you?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

**Q5 Thinking about how caring the ambulance paramedics that attended to you were, were you?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

**Q6 How satisfied were you with the standard of treatment provided by the ambulance paramedics, were you?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

**Q7 How satisfied were you with the ambulance paramedics' explanation about what was happening to you and why, were you?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

**Q8 Thinking about your journey in the ambulance, how satisfied were you with the quality of the ride i.e. smoothness of transport and quietness of the vehicle? Overall, were you?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say
- 7 Not applicable

**Q9 All things considered, if you had an emergency in your home, what do you think is a reasonable time for an ambulance to arrive after calling one?**

No of mins \_\_\_\_\_

**Q10 How satisfied were you overall with your last experience using the Ambulance Service, were you?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Dissatisfied
- 5 Very dissatisfied
- 6 Don't know/Can't say

**Q11 Gender (of the patient)**

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

**Q12 Please indicate the age group that you (the patient) fall into.**

- 01 0-4
- 02 5-9
- 03 10-14
- 04 15-19
- 05 20-24
- 06 25-29
- 07 30-34
- 08 35-39
- 09 40-44
- 10 45-49
- 11 50-54
- 12 55-59
- 13 60-64
- 14 65-69
- 15 70-74
- 16 75-79
- 17 80-84
- 18 85 and over

**Q13 How many times have you (the patient) used the Ambulance Service (in the last 12 months)?**

- 1 Once
- 2 Between 2 and 5 times
- 3 More than 5 times

**Q14 What is your (the patient's) postcode?**

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

**Q15 Include non-standard demographic questions (if required).**

Please add any additional comments you have regarding your experience of the Ambulance Service.

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The Ambulance Service respects your privacy and would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please place the completed questionnaire in the reply paid envelope provided and post.