



**Government
of South Australia**

SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council 2025-26 Annual Report

SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council

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ISSN:	1443-0282
Date approved by the Board:	N/A
Date presented to Minister:	30 September 2026

To:

The Hon Blair Boyer MP

Minster for Health and Wellbeing

This annual report will be presented to Parliament to meet the statutory reporting requirements of *Health Care Act 2008* and the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular *PC013 Annual Reporting*.

This report is verified to be accurate for the purposes of annual reporting to the Parliament of South Australia.

Submitted on behalf of SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council by:



David Portolesi

Presiding Member

Date: 30 September 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout South Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, their spirituality, history and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



From the SAASVHAC Presiding Member



The SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council (SAASVHAC) continues to play a central role in representing and advocating for volunteers across regional South Australia. Comprised of twelve members elected by their peers through their respective Zone Ambulance Coordinating Committees (ZACCs), the Council provides a formal mechanism for volunteer voices to be heard across all of SAAS.

Throughout 2025 and 2026, SAASVHAC met formally on a bi-monthly basis, maintaining steady engagement with key SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) stakeholders.

Regular guests included the Volunteer Support Unit, Clinical Services, the Communications and Engagement Team, the electronic Patient Care Record (ePCR) team, the Executive Director, Country Operations, and the Chief Executive Officer. These interactions ensured that volunteer perspectives remained integrated into organisational planning and decision making.

This year's discussions highlighted several important matters relating to volunteer support and operational consistency. SAAS has agreed to reimburse insurance excess costs incurred by volunteers involved in animal-related vehicle incidents while travelling to or from their duties. In addition, a further proposal has been advanced encouraging SAAS to explore options for providing personal insurance coverage to volunteers during transit to and from authorised volunteer activities. Both initiatives reflect a growing recognition of the practical risks volunteers manage and the need for contemporary protections. These initiatives aim to reduce the financial burden on volunteers and support their continued ability to serve their communities.

Significant progress has also been made in the ongoing review of volunteer training. Findings and recommendations from the 2024 Volunteer Training Review have now been released to all volunteers, marking the beginning of a structured improvement program. The focus of these reforms is to enhance the overall training experience, strengthen capability development, and improve long-term volunteer retention across all regions. Through representation on the Volunteer Training Review Steering

Committee, I contribute to the ongoing improvement of volunteer training by working closely with SAAS senior management.

In 2025, SAASVHAC broadened volunteer involvement across a wider range of organisational initiatives. As a result, more SAASVHAC members are now actively involved in key organisational forums, including the Volunteer Training Review, Violence and Aggression Working Group, Uniform Committee, Reimbursement Model Review, and several other project groups. This increased participation has strengthened the volunteer voice across SAAS, ensured earlier visibility of emerging issues, and enhanced the Council's ability to contribute meaningfully to policy development and operational improvements.

Volunteer retention remained an ongoing challenge across the organisation. Despite this, SAASVHAC noted encouraging signs of continued community interest in volunteering for SAAS, with overall volunteer numbers increasing alongside a trending increase in retention rates. This reflects both the resilience of the volunteer workforce and ongoing efforts to enhance the volunteer experience, reinforcing the need for continued investment in volunteer wellbeing, training and organisational support.

The Volunteer Ambassador program led by the Communications and Engagement team, was enthusiastically embraced by SAASVHAC. Volunteers from across the state were selected to represent SAAS in recruitment campaigns, receiving media training and featuring across social media platforms. This initiative leveraged familiar community faces to strengthen recruitment messaging and celebrate volunteer contributions. Alongside other recruitment initiatives undertaken by SAAS, this program continues to be a driver in the increase in overall volunteers across the state. This positive trend reflects both the resilience of the volunteer workforce and the ongoing efforts to improve the volunteer experience, reinforcing the importance of continuing to invest in volunteer wellbeing, training quality, and organisational support.

SAASVHAC remains committed to strengthening the volunteer experience and ensuring that regional voices continue to shape the direction of SA Ambulance Service. The progress achieved over the past year demonstrates what is possible when volunteers and SAAS leadership work in genuine partnership, with shared focus on safety, capability, and long-term sustainability. As SAAS continues to refine its training, support systems and recruitment strategies, SAASVHAC will maintain its role as a steady, constructive advocate, championing practical improvements, elevating volunteer perspectives, and helping build a resilient, well supported volunteer workforce for the years ahead.



David Portolesi

Presiding Member

SAAS Volunteer Health Advisory Council

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Overview: about the agency

Our strategic focus

Our purpose	SAASVHAC's purpose is to: Provide advice and advocate for the needs, priorities, and issues concerning volunteers within SAAS in its provision of ambulance services to the country regions of South Australia. Represent the interests and needs of volunteers within SAAS across the whole country of South Australia. Provide advice to the Minister and SAAS on matters affecting the volunteer sector within SAAS. Provide advice on any strategic issue that may impact the recruitment or retention of SAAS Volunteers.
Our vision	To be a professional, vibrant, and committed volunteer workforce delivering best practice patient care within SAAS, with SAAS being the volunteer organisation of choice.
Our values	To support, promote and understand SAAS volunteers through the representation of the Zone Ambulance Coordinating Committees while being open, honest, and transparent in communication with the management of SAAS.
Our functions, objectives and deliverables	SAASVHAC continues to focus on: Our People – We commit to developing a professional, vibrant, motivated and informed volunteer workforce which is an integral part of a successful service delivery model. Communication – We commit to meaningful, relevant and timely communication with our volunteers, SAAS and communities. Training and Development – We commit to providing fulfilling, flexible and relevant training which supports both the delivery of services and the personal growth of our volunteers. Reward and Recognition – We commit to developing an innovative and meaningful strategy which recognises, rewards and promotes achievements and contributions of our volunteers. Recruitment – We commit to aligning our retention and recruitment strategies to the fundamental needs of our volunteer community. Advocacy and Lobbying – We commit to identifying and acting upon current, relevant issues which impact volunteers and to a vigorous process of broad community engagement. Financial Sustainability – We commit to a well-organised, efficient and transparent process for the administration of the Country Capital Reserve Fund and Country Operating Reserve Fund.

Our Membership structure

Outgoing Members over this period

Murray Mallee Zone – Paul Farr (01/03/2026)

Incoming Members over this period

Murray Mallee Zone – Steve Deutscher (01/04/2026)

Current Members as of 30 June 2026

Central Zone – Christian Manie and Jeanette Mackenzie

West Zone – Monika Servin and Ann Trewartha

Yorke Zone – Christine Smith and Derek Carkle

Fleurieu/Kangaroo Island Zone – Brooke Fishlock and Tracey Bellamy

Murray Mallee Zone – David Portolesi and Stephen Deutscher

Limestone Coast Zone – Joanne Hough and Keryn Everlyn

Changes to the agency

During 2025-26 there were no changes to the agency's structure and objectives as a result of internal reviews or machinery of government changes.

Our Minister



Hon Blair Boyer MP, Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

The agency's performance

Performance at a glance

SAASVHAC is an unincorporated body that provides advice to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing via the Chief Executive of the Department for Health and Wellbeing and the Chief Executive Officer of SAAS, on behalf of SAAS volunteers.

Agency specific objectives and performance

N/A

Corporate performance summary

N/A

Employment opportunity programs

N/A

Agency performance management and development systems

N/A

Work health, safety and return to work programs

N/A

Executive employment in the agency

N/A

Financial performance

Financial performance

As SAASVHAC is unincorporated, its assets and liabilities are included in the financial reports of SAAS.

Consultants disclosure

N/A

Consultancies with a contract value below \$10,000 each

N/A

Consultancies with a contract value above \$10,000 each

N/A

Contractors disclosure

N/A

Contractors with a contract value below \$10,000

N/A

Contractors with a contract value above \$10,000 each

N/A

Contracts entered with SA businesses and non-SA businesses

N/A

Other financial information

N/A

Other information

N/A

Risk management

Risk and audit

As SAASVHAC is unincorporated, its assets and liabilities are included in the financial reports of SAAS.

Fraud detected in the agency

Nil.

Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud

SAASVHAC Members and SAAS volunteers abide by any relevant SAAS strategies to control and prevent fraud.

Public interest disclosure

Number of occasions on which public interest information has been disclosed to a responsible officer of the agency under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018*:

Nil.

Reporting required under any other act or regulation

Act or Regulation	Requirement
<i>Health Care Act 2008</i>	SAASVHAC continued through the zone ambulance coordinating committees to communicate and consult with SAAS Volunteers. The Council also worked alongside SAAS to safeguard the needs, priorities, and interests of SAAS Volunteers to provide an ambulance service to the country of South Australia.

Reporting required under the *Carers Recognition Act 2005*

N/A

Reporting required under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007*

N/A

Public complaints

Number of public complaints reported

As SAASVHAC is unincorporated, public complaints are included in the SAAS Annual Reports 2025-26.

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of complaints 2025-26
Professional behaviour	Staff attitude	Failure to demonstrate values such as empathy, respect, fairness, courtesy, extra mile; cultural competency	N/A
Professional behaviour	Staff competency	Failure to action service request; poorly informed decisions; incorrect or incomplete service provided	N/A
Professional behaviour	Staff knowledge	Lack of service specific knowledge; incomplete or out-of-date knowledge	N/A
Communication	Communication quality	Inadequate, delayed or absent communication with customer	N/A
Communication	Confidentiality	Customer's confidentiality or privacy not respected; information shared incorrectly	N/A
Service delivery	Systems/technology	System offline; inaccessible to customer; incorrect result/information provided; poor system design	N/A
Service delivery	Access to services	Service difficult to find; location poor; facilities/ environment poor standard; not accessible to customers with disabilities	N/A
Service delivery	Process	Processing error; incorrect process used; delay in processing application; process not customer responsive	N/A
Policy	Policy application	Incorrect policy interpretation; incorrect policy applied; conflicting policy advice given	N/A

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of complaints 2025-26
Policy	Policy content	Policy content difficult to understand; policy unreasonable or disadvantages customer	N/A
Service quality	Information	Incorrect, incomplete, out-dated or inadequate information; not fit for purpose	N/A
Service quality	Access to information	Information difficult to understand, hard to find or difficult to use; not plain English	N/A
Service quality	Timeliness	Lack of staff punctuality; excessive waiting times (outside of service standard); timelines not met	N/A
Service quality	Safety	Maintenance; personal or family safety; duty of care not shown; poor security service/premises; poor cleanliness	N/A
Service quality	Service responsiveness	Service design doesn't meet customer needs; poor service fit with customer expectations	N/A
No case to answer	No case to answer	Third party; customer misunderstanding; redirected to another agency; insufficient information to investigate	N/A
		Total	

Additional metrics	Total
Number of positive feedback comments	N/A
Number of negative feedback comments	N/A
Total number of feedback comments	N/A
% complaints resolved within policy timeframes	N/A

Service improvements

N/A

Compliance statement

SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council is compliant with Premier and Cabinet Circular 039 (PC039) Complaint Management in the South Australian Public Sector	N/A
SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory has communicated the content of PC039 and the agency's related complaints policies and procedures to employees	N/A

As SAASVHAC is unincorporated, its compliance statement is included in the SAAS Annual Report.

Appendix: Audited financial statements 2025-26

As SAASVHAC is unincorporated, its assets and liabilities are included in the financial reports of SAAS.