

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Attention: News Editor

### **Ambulance equipped for heavy patients**

St John Ambulance in Albany has taken delivery of a bariatric ambulance that will serve the entire Great Southern, improving the handling of people with high body mass.

Bariatric ambulances address significant workplace safety issues that arise from the increasing number of overweight and obese people in the Australian population.

Albany's new ambulance was supported by \$50,001 in State Government funding through the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the new vehicle would help to reduce workplace injuries among ambulance officers.

"Our communities already owe a great debt of gratitude to St John Ambulance officers," Mr Manning said.

"Unfortunately, their work has exposed them to an increasing risk of injury from handling heavier patients, something that will be addressed by this new ambulance.

"Bariatric ambulance services have previously only been available in Perth.

"The Albany-based ambulance serves the GSDC's aim to ensure that access to health services in the Great Southern is comparable to that in the metropolitan area," Mr Manning said.

The ambulance is equipped with a bariatric stretcher with an expandable patient surface, and a hydraulic loader to get the stretcher and patient in and out of the vehicle.

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