

# ABOVE THE WATER BELOW THE WATER



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health



SA  
Ambulance  
Service





# ABOVE THE WATER BELOW THE WATER

The introduction of Emergency Breathing Systems (EBS) to MedSTAR - South Australia's Statewide Retrieval Service

**Belinda Amber**  
Nurse Consultant  
MedSTAR kids



# INTRODUCTION

- Who are we
- What are Emergency Breathing Systems (EBS)
- Why were EBS introduced to MedSTAR
- Challenges faced during the introduction
- Measures taken to improve training
- Personal experiences
- Discussion points and suggestions

# South Australian Ambulance Service - MedSTAR

- South Australia's single emergency medical retrieval service
- Adult teams/paediatric and neonatal teams
- Transport platforms - ambulances, sprint cars, helicopters, fixed wing aircraft



# Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET)

- HUET
- HUET is a mandatory requirement as per the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for air crew members and medical transport specialists
- Minimum every three years



# EMERGENCY BREATHING SYSTEM (EBS)

- Emergency egress assist device
- Not currently a CASA requirement
- 2023 – MedSTAR added EBS devices to life vests and commenced EBS training



# EBS TRAINING

**All MedSTAR clinical staff were enrolled in EBS training**

## Training

- Theory and demonstration
- Sit on bottom of pool - locating, establish breathing pattern/trouble shooting
- Swim with rope
- Escape training with device - 4 cage rolls (minimum)

# CHALLENGES

- Complexity of adding a breathing device
- Staff current in HUET
- Multiple cage rolls
- Personal experience

# STAFF CONCERNS AND FEEDBACK

**Limited feedback to management or providers**

**WHY?**

- Operational role security
- Embarrassment and psychological safety

**Anonymous survey**

# SURVEY RESPONSES

## THREE GENERAL THEMES

- GOOD
- CONCERNED
- NOT CONFIDENT

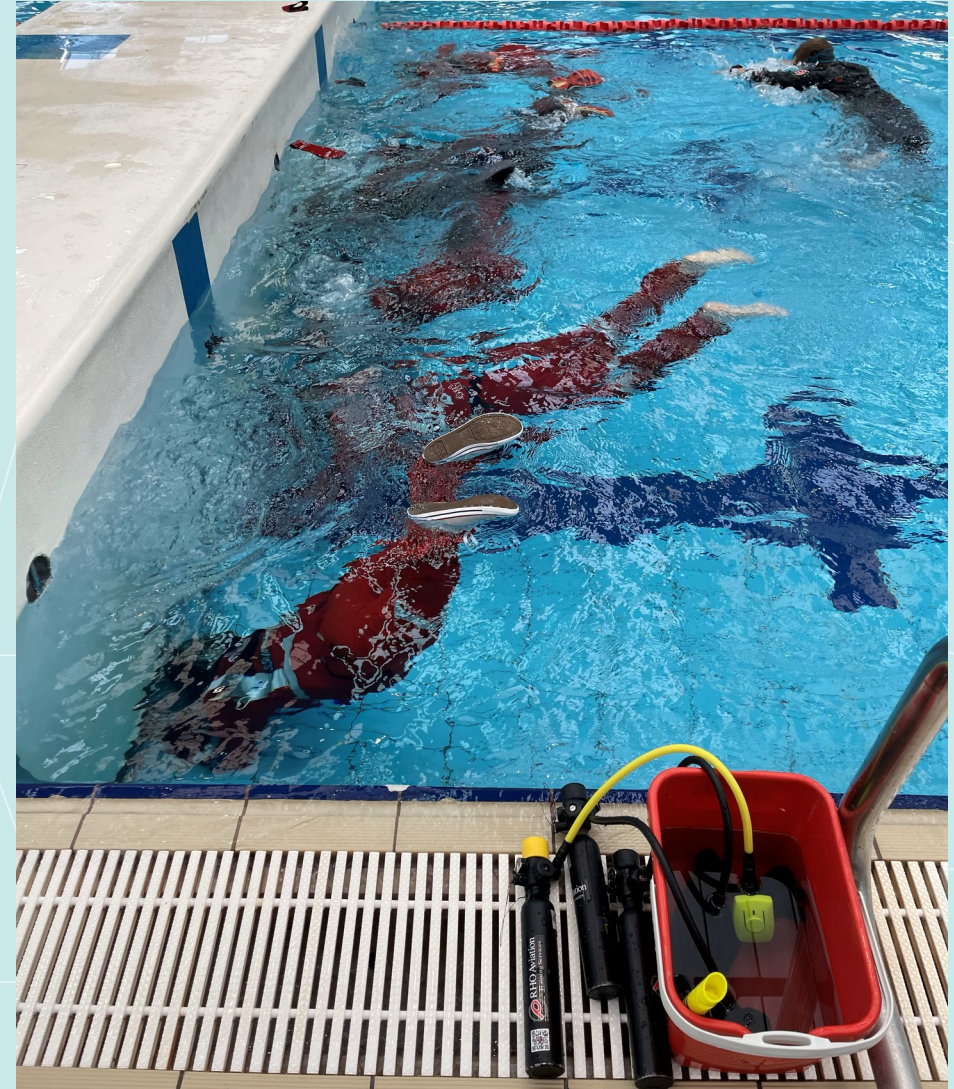


# RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

- MedSTAR changed the EBS training requirement to strongly recommended not mandatory
- EBS familiarization course established and run several times

# EBS FAMILIARISATION COURSE

- More time to practice – breathing pattern establishment, regulator clearance/purging and trouble shooting
- Self paced submersion
- Underwater swimming with EBS
- NO CAGE ROLL



# Personal experience

- EBS familiarisation course post EBS training
- Employee Assistance Program – Psychological Services
  - *Acknowledge thoughts and feelings*
  - *Connect with your body*
  - *Engage with what you are doing*
- Snorkelling - without goggles
- Swimming and desensitisation exercises

# CONSIDERATIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- Service impact
- Consider risk vs. benefit of training
- Additional familiarization time with EBS devices
- Psychological support for both HUET and EBS training

# QUESTIONS?



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health



SA  
Ambulance  
Service