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## Paramedics in Australia. Contemporary challenges of practice. Peter O'Meara, Carolyn F. Grbich. (Eds). Reviewed by Steve Johnston

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Paramedics in Australia. Contemporary challenges of practice.*

Peter O'Meara, Carolyn F. Grbich. (Eds).

**Pearson Education Australia. Frenchs Forest, NSW, 2008.**

**ISBN: 9781442509115 (Paperback) \$AUD67.95 (RRP including GST)**

Reviewed by

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This book on first inspection appears to be another book aimed at the clinical theories associated with paramedical practice and education with a cover picture of three students performing a scenario on a manikin. However it is anything but, rather it is an examination of the development of the ambulance culture, the direction of the profession and issues that pertain to the industry and how this affects paramedics and their practice in an Australian context.

Its aim is at a foundation level of understanding for students entering the paramedic profession providing what is from my point of view a valuable starting point for the uninitiated. The chapters are well written and a number of credible authors provide insight in to key areas that affect contemporary paramedic practice in Australia.

The book is separated into 3 parts:

### **Part 1: The Australian Context**

- The Australian Ambulance System: a historic introduction
- Contextualising paramedic culture
- Paramedic practice in rural and regional Australia

This part provides an over view of the development of the Ambulance industry in Australia and gives a picture of the issues associated with regional practice both from the industry and practitioners point of view.

### **Part 2: Challenges in Paramedic Practice**

- Professionalisation
- Evidence based practice
- Clinical judgement
- Paramedics and the mentally ill
- Legal and ethical issues for paramedics

The notion of the profession and the professional are strongly covered in this part of the book with an emphasis on evidence based practice and the clinical decision making process. Link intrinsically with professionalism in this part of the book is the notion of dealing with the vulnerable and ethical issues confronting paramedics.

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### **Part 3: Organisational Challenges**

- Educating paramedics
- Working in ambulance service organisations
- From academia to clinical practice
- Communication and teamwork in paramedic practice
- Managing emotion, work and stress

Part 3 deals with issues that confront paramedics throughout their careers that are influenced by organisations, institutions and the nature of the industry that they work in.

Highlights were the chapters on rural and regional practice in Part 1 and chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Part 2 which really capture the issues for paramedics working in Australia. The editors of this multi-author book have done an excellent job in providing key foundation knowledge for paramedic students in an Australian context. The chapters throughout the book are supported by highlighted activities, key points, scenarios and tutorial questions which should stimulate good thought and discussion and would be a valuable addition to the curriculum of most introductory units in paramedicine or for those considering or beginning a career as a paramedic.