



## MEDIA RELEASE

22 August 2006

# Local Penrith St John Volunteer Saves Cardiac Arrest Victim

Local Penrith St John Ambulance Volunteer Steve Cachia, along with other Volunteers made an amazing life-save at this year's City to Surf race.

The day was extremely busy for the 220 St John Volunteers on duty. They treated over 1,500 participants with ailments ranging from blisters and sprains to one case of Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

A 50 year old contender collapsed to the ground in an unconscious state after suffering from a Cardiac Arrest on Queen Elizabeth Drive.

Steve Cachia, along with other volunteers were called and arrived at the scene within one minute of his arrest.

CPR was administered and the semiautomatic defibrillator was placed on his chest to analyse the heart rhythm.

The machine found an irregular rhythm and the casualty was shocked once before the heart started to beat regularly.

These machines save lives and the Penrith Division is in urgent need of purchasing one to use at their local community events.

"Defibrillators are an easy to use device that shocks the heart when a casualty goes into arrest, they analyse the rhythm and will advise the user when to shock and when to commence CPR," said Rhonda Bignell, CEO, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW).

"The current survival rate from sudden cardiac arrest outside a hospital is less than five per cent. Unfortunately, CPR alone is often just not enough."

"If someone receives defibrillation within the first three minutes of having a sudden cardiac arrest, their chance of survival improves dramatically, well over 50 per cent. They are a critical step in the chain of survival in these circumstances. "

This is the second year in a row that a patient has successfully been resuscitated using defibrillation by St John Ambulance volunteers after suffering a cardiac arrest at the City to Surf. The casualty has been released from hospital and is recovering well at home.

Steve, a NSW paramedic, chose to volunteer his time on the day when he could have worked overtime with the ambulance service.

“Steve is to be commended on his commitment and selflessness on volunteering on the day, which resulted in saving a life. Volunteers make a remarkable contribution to the community.” Said Ms Bignell.

“In 2005, 2,300 St John (NSW) volunteers provided over 350,000 hours of service to over 30,000 people in the state,” said Ms Bignell. “It is this commitment to helping others that is the backbone of St John.”

For more information or to join St John please call 1300 360 455.

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