



MEDIA RELEASE

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St John continues to provide eye care to North-West NSW communities

St John (NSW) is continuing to provide eye health services to remote indigenous communities in North-West NSW, whilst also raising funds to purchase equipment to extend these services.

On October 18-19, Dr Mick Champion, Chairman of the St John (NSW) Ophthalmic Branch, will travel to Moree, with the aim of raising awareness of the work St John (NSW) is doing there.

In August 2006 St John (NSW) established an Eye Clinic in Moree, to offer eye surgery services for the people of North-Western NSW. Funding for the program was also provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and the NSW Health Service.

The Clinic was established to address the high incidence of eye disease in the rural and remote communities of NSW, particularly among the Aboriginal population. Until recently, there was no comprehensive eye service available to those living in the area.

St John (NSW) secured the services of leading ophthalmologists and has helped to raise funds for equipment for the Clinic. The Clinic opened in October 2006, and over 70 operations have already been conducted.

Dr Champion will visit the ophthalmologists, as well as the patients that have so benefited from the work of the Clinic.

Some 10 operations will be taking place over October 18-19 and the Clinic is holding a special function on Thursday night at the Town and Country Club with local community leaders and doctors being among the guests.

St John is also holding the inaugural St John Silver Dinner on 13 November to raise funds to purchase a mobile eye care facility to extend the Clinic services to more remote and isolated indigenous communities.

Dr Champion comments:

“We are extremely proud to offer such a wonderful and valuable service to the local people of North-West NSW. 52% of the Australian population report eyesight problems, with indigenous people being at greater risk of developing eye disease.

“We hope that we can continue to expand these services across NSW with the support of the public.”

The Silver Dinner will be held at the Westin Hotel, Sydney on 13 November 2007 and tickets are currently available. For more information call 9219 6894 or visit www.stjohnnsw.com.au.

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Media contact:

Bethany Hoskin

Communications Coordinator

St John (NSW)

P: 9219 6856

E: bethany_hoskin@stjohnnsw.com.au

*Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) National Health Survey 2004–05