

MEDIA RELEASE

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St John (NSW) donates \$55,000 for vision-saving laser equipment

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) has fundraised to purchase new Integre vision-saving laser equipment for the eye clinic at the Pius X Aboriginal Medical Service in Moree.

The equipment will be presented by Jose Beuchat, of Ellex Australia, to the Pius X eye clinic on Friday 8 August at 1pm, and Dr Michael Campion, Chairman of the St John Ophthalmic Branch, will also be in attendance.

Dr Michael Campion comments:

“Diabetic retinopathy is the most common cause of blindness in working age adults in Australia and is the leading cause of blindness in Aboriginal people.

“This new laser equipment will allow us to provide a more comprehensive eye service in Moree as this equipment is not currently available.

“On behalf of St John, thank you to everyone who donated funds for this very worthwhile cause as we continue our work to strengthen and support people and medical staff in rural and remote communities.”

The laser works by sealing leaking blood vessels, reducing abnormal blood vessel growth and treats retinal tears at the back of the eye.

In August 2006 the St John (NSW) Ophthalmic Branch 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 170 operations have already been conducted.

In 2008, Dr Michael Campion has been the driving force behind fundraising efforts to purchase the new laser equipment. Dr Campion, who grew up in Moree, like his father, has given back an amazing amount of time and effort to the community of Moree.

Media are welcome to attend the presentation.

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