

## MEDIA RELEASE

**28 May 2008**

### Keep safe this winter

With an average of 100 deaths from house fires every year in Australia<sup>1</sup>, when keeping warm this winter, don't forget to take the right precautions when heating your home.

Burns are one of the most common injuries during winter with fires being caused by heaters, fireplaces and electric blankets.

To minimise the risk of fire in your home, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) advises the following:

- Have the emergency telephone number handy — call 000.
- Have a fire extinguisher in a central position — not near the stove.
- Have a fire blanket or woollen blanket in the kitchen — for use on burning oil.
- Fit smoke detectors on all levels and check regularly — if the smoke detector makes a chirping sound every few minutes, it needs a new battery.
- Ensure electrical wiring and appliances are in good repair.
- Do not deadlock doors when you are inside the house.
- Be aware of risks of falling asleep while smoking.
- Store flammable materials including matches and lighters safely.
- Do not fit security grilles to all windows and doors.
- Develop and practice an evacuation procedure.

If you live in a bushy environment

- Make sure gutters are clear of leaves and other vegetation.
- Clear undergrowth, overhanging branches and any flammable material and liquids from around the house.
- Seal off area under house.
- Clear a fuel break of about 30-40 metres around the house.
- Contact the fire brigade for advice on evacuation on high bush fire risk days.

Importantly, everyone should know what to do in case of a fire and how to provide first aid to victims of a fire. Remember:

- You should check for danger before doing anything.
- Never endanger yourself or other bystanders in order to rescue someone else
- Have someone call '000' immediately.
- Remove casualties to a well ventilated area away from smoke.
- If throat is swollen, loosely apply an ice pack around the neck.
- If the casualty has been burnt, run the burn under cool water for up to 20 minutes.
- Seek medical aid urgently if the burn is larger than a 20 cent piece.
- If casualty is not breathing, begin CPR.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ncis.org.au](http://www.ncis.org.au)

**125** years of service  
**St John**  
1883 – 2008



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

St John (NSW) sells the Fire Safety Pack which includes a fire extinguisher, fire blanket, two smoke alarms and a small first aid kit.

In June this year St John Ambulance Australia celebrates 125 years of service, commemorating thousands of hours of voluntary community service, and remaining the leading first aid organisation across the country. As part of celebrations, St John is encouraging the community to get involved with the organisation through one of three ways. This includes becoming a volunteer, doing business with St John through first aid training or buying a first aid kit, and by making a donation.

**For more information on St John (NSW) visit [www.stjohnnsw.com.au](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au) or call 1300 360 455.**

**ENDS**

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