

# MEDIA RELEASE



3 February 2009

## A great way to start the Year of the Ox

In the great Chinese Zodiac, the Ox represents prosperity through fortitude and hard work.

That is why, according to Dr Anthony Cheung, President of the Lions Club of Sydney Chinese Inc., St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) was chosen as the Charity Recipient for their 2009 Ball, to be held on 7 March 2009 at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour.

“St John (NSW) is actively involved in areas that also touch the Chinese community. From the first aid volunteers who attend both major and local events, through to community care initiatives including early literacy programs aimed at helping children who are struggling to read and write, and assisting the NSW Department of Health care for students in the immunisation program.

“They represent many of the virtues of the Ox, including tireless hard work and caring of the ones who need the most”, Dr Cheung said.

“We are honoured to be chosen once again as charity recipient of the 2009 Ball. Their contribution and generosity will support our volunteers to continue to provide the highest calibre of service in the local communities”, said Sean Gavin, CEO of St John (NSW).

During more than 125 years of existence, St John Ambulance has embraced a diversity of cultures, resulting in strong links within the Chinese community.

State Commissioner of St John (NSW), Warren Glenny, said St John is more closely affiliated with the Chinese community than many may realise.

“St John is a people-based organisation. In NSW alone, we support and train over 3,000 volunteers who provide in excess of 400,000 hours of voluntary first aid, many of those directly involved with the Chinese community.

“For instance, in one of our busiest divisions, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Division, almost 50% of the volunteers come from a Chinese background”, Mr Glenny said.

Rita So, who has been volunteering for over 7 years in UNSW division, believes St John sees no barriers of creed, race, colour or religion.

“The great thing about this organisation is that no matter who you are or where you are from, you are part of the St John family.

“I provide first aid at many events, including local Chinese community events”, said Ms So.

In addition to volunteering services, St John has been running Senior First Aid and Caring for Kids courses in Mandarin and Cantonese since 2000, with over 35 courses conducted during that period.

Carrie Tang, trainer with St John, said it's very important for organisations such as St John to be able to train in different languages, such as Cantonese and Mandarin.

“Whether it is learning first aid so that in the event of an accident, you can assist in those critical moments before professional help arrives or helping our children to read in school, these are universal values, that no matter what language you speak you should be able to do.

“In such a diverse city like Sydney, where many people are born overseas, it’s very important for organisations such as St John to be able to cater for as many people as possible” Ms Tang said.

For more information on the Charity Ball please visit [www.sydchineselions.org.au](http://www.sydchineselions.org.au), e-mail [sydneychineselions@yahoo.com.au](mailto:sydneychineselions@yahoo.com.au) or call President Dr Anthony Cheung on 0414 330 887. To find out more about St John (NSW) please contact 1300 360 455 or visit [www.stjohnnsw.com.au](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au).

**ENDS**

**Notes to the editor:**

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: A media conference will be held Thursday, 12 February 2009 at 11:30am, Zilver Restaurant, Level 1, 477 Pitt Street, Chinatown.**

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