

MEDIA RELEASE



4 February 2009

St John Ambulance launches a “home away from home” in Blaxland

On Monday 9 February, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) will be officially opening the first phase of its Blaxland Training Centre upgrade.

The site has been integral for both St John and the Blaxland area over many years. Each year, over 1,000 St John cadets and an additional 1,000 adult volunteers come from all over NSW to use the site for camps and training. It has also been used to accommodate many of our volunteers during major events such as World Youth Day last year, the Sydney Olympics in 2000, as well as the 2003 Rugby World Cup.

The site continues to be used to provide respite for the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the State Emergency Services (SES) volunteers during times of disaster within the local area.

It has a dormitory with 36 beds, a kitchen and a communal area.

The first phase of the building upgrade is the refurbishment of the kitchen facilities, into a small-scale commercial kitchen, used to feed the many people who come through its doors and stay over the weekend.

The refurbishment cost around \$50,000 with a significant component raised through the generous support of the NSW State Government, Department of Emergency Services.

Attending the opening on the day will be Phil Koperberg MP, Member for the Blue Mountains; Peter Collins, Chairman St John (NSW); Major General (Rtd) Warren Glenny, Commissioner St John (NSW); and Sean Gavin, CEO St John (NSW); as well as local St John volunteers.

According to Major General Glenny, the training centre is a hub for St John (NSW), and the facilities it offers provide an additional resource that is available to other emergency service organisations such as the RFS and the SES.

“The St John volunteers use the facilities in a number of different ways. We have the local Blue Mountains City Division who meet each week at the site to share experiences and refine their training.

“In addition, it is used as a camp base to bring cadets to develop extensive first aid, teamwork and leadership skills, as well as an opportunity to earn proficiency badges and socialise. St John Cadets are part of a national youth organisation, for those aged 11 to 18. Once trained, they are able to provide first aid at events under adult supervision,” added Major General Glenny.

Peter Collins has indicated that this is the first step in continuing to modernise and develop the site for ongoing future use.

“There are many benefits with the upgrade of the Blaxland Centre for both St John and the local community. Improved facilities adds value to the site making it more effective for the adult and cadet volunteers.

“The local community reap the benefits of having many people continuing to come into the area on a regular basis, as well as opening up access to first aid training in the local community”, said Mr Collins.

ENDS

Notes to the editor:

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: All media is invited.

Location: St John Centre, 9 St John Road, Blaxland NSW 2774

Time: Starting at 10:30am

For further information please contact:

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