



MEDIA RELEASE

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St John Ambulance Australia Project Wins Two ACT Safe Work Awards

On 22nd October, St John Ambulance was awarded two ACT Work Safe Awards for Project HeartStart Australia; 'Best Health And Safety Training Program' and 'GIO Australia Excellence Award'.

The goal of **Project HeartStart Australia**, which was launched in 2004, is to have defibrillators available at more public events – particularly in regional areas where ambulances may not be as readily available.

The project aims to increase public access to defibrillation in the event of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA). SCA is Australia's biggest killer, taking the lives of nearly 20,000 people every year. The most successful treatment for SCA is defibrillation within a few minutes of the event.

Project Manager, Christine Barber is thrilled Project HeartStart Australia won both awards, especially the prestigious GIO Excellence Awards.

"This is fantastic recognition for a vital program run by St John. To date 13 lives have been saved by our defibrillators and we hope to extend the program further in more communities across the country" she said.

As an example of the program's success, 21 year old Dwayne Klowet in September 2008 survived a SCA at Victoria's Eastland's Shopping Centre. More recently in April 2009, 63 year old Brian Bombell also survived a SCA after disembarking at Sydney's Airport terminal in April 2009 to attend family celebrations from the Gold Coast.

Under the Project HeartStart initiative, St John had installed the defibrillator at the shopping centre and airport terminal and trained a number of staff in their use.

The evaluation of this pioneering project identified that the application of a defibrillator in those first crucial minutes will increase a person's chance of survival from 5% to over 50%.

Project HeartStart is now looking for further funding to continue placing these life saving defibrillators in more communities across the country.

ENDS

Notes to editor:

A full list of where Project HeartStart defibrillators are located is available on request or can be found at: http://www.stjohn.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=51

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