



## MEDIA RELEASE

### From saving lives to receiving awards

#### *Tamworth volunteers honoured*

**15 October 2009.** Margaret O'Connor and William Byrnes give up their spare time to provide first aid at local community and sporting events, but on Saturday 10 October, the St John Ambulance volunteers paused from helping injured people to receive an award for their voluntary work.

The residents of Tamworth and Inverell, respectively, were amongst the 150 awardees at the St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) Annual Awards Ceremony, held at Sydney University. Mrs O'Connor received a Third Bar for 27 years of dedicated service and Mr Byrnes received a Service medal for 12 years.

St John (NSW), which is a self-funded charity and has been providing first aid services to the community for over 125 years, awarded its volunteers for their long term commitment.

St John (NSW) also recognized members of the public for providing outstanding first aid in various emergency situations and awarded several organisations for their support to St John.

Sean Gavin, CEO of St John (NSW), said the volunteers give up their time willingly and regularly to provide a service they believe in.

"They have quietly yet effectively assisted those in need at local sporting and cultural events as well as in large gatherings like the Sydney World Masters Games, Big Day Out, New Year's Eve celebrations and the City to Surf.

"Other St John volunteers assist primary school aged children with reading and writing, while another group of volunteers assist Health Department nurses with the NSW Schools immunization Program.

"It's an honour to recognise their contribution through this award ceremony", Mr Gavin said.

In addition to its volunteer services, St John (NSW) has trained many hundreds of thousands of people in first aid. In many cases, this training has resulted in ordinary people having the courage, confidence and skills to manage an emergency situation, and in so doing, saving lives.

In 2008, when St John Ambulance celebrated its 125 years of service in Australia, over 3,500 volunteers provided more than 450,000 hours of voluntary service across the state in the areas of first aid, early literacy, immunisation and ophthalmic care.

To know more about St John or to become a volunteer visit [www.stjohnnsw.com.au](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au) or call 1300 360 455.

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**ENDS**

**Photos are available upon request.**

**For further information please contact:**

Guilherme Feijo  
Marketing Partner, Community  
St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)  
T: 9219 6894 / M: 0410 220 872 / E: [guilherme\\_feijo@stjohnnsw.com.au](mailto:guilherme_feijo@stjohnnsw.com.au)