

MEDIA RELEASE



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RE: Learn First Aid Today - *Everything Else Can Wait*

With the vast majority of the population knowing first aid is important, but only 8%¹ having a current first aid certificate, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) is launching a hard hitting initiative to encourage people to learn first aid now.

St John (NSW) CEO, Sean Gavin, says many people put off doing a first aid course because the general business of daily life gets in the way.

“Doing a first aid course is something most people say they will get round to, but it may be too late.”

“You never know when you are going need these skills to help someone in need” he said.

The St John (NSW) initiative *Everything Else Can Wait* profiles people who have used their first aid skills to save lives in normal, everyday situations. It also focuses on those whose lives have been saved by people using quick thinking and first aid skills.

People like Ian Denniss who saved his wife Patsy, Arthur Garske who saved his own life with his first aid knowledge and Paul De Gelder, the Navy diver attacked by a Bull Shark last year, recount their experiences and show how courageously they used their skills in the face of medical emergencies.

Key emergency services including the NSW Fire Brigades, Ambulance Service of NSW, CareFlight, The Children’s Hospital at Westmead and the 2005 Australian of the Year and burns specialist Dr Fiona Wood, have joined forces with St John (NSW) to highlight the importance of first aid.

Greg Mullins, Commissioner of the NSW Fire Brigades says first aid saves lives and it isn’t complicated.

“Lives are being lost every day because of a lack of first aid knowledge in the community. It can be as simple as opening someone’s airways so they can breathe,” Mr Mullins says.

Burns specialist Professor Fiona Wood sees how lives can be changed in an instant and understands the impact first aid can have on the burn injury.

“First aid can reduce the severity of a burn injury by up to 80%, it is most effective when started within the first few minutes of an accident, the time taken to heal is significantly reduced and the ongoing treatment needed is reduced,” Prof. Wood says.

People can call 1800 STJOHN or visit www.stjohnfirstaid.com.au for more information.

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¹ St John (NSW) based on ABS population statistics (2008) of NSW population of ages 15 years + and St John (NSW) estimates.

Notes to Editor:

To see the Multimedia News Release which contains our TV Commercial, First Aid Advocates & Ambassador stories, audio and other information, visit:

<http://medianet.multimediarelease.com.au/bundles/7246ce8a-6076-4a24-8d8f-951866660ba6>

Publicity campaign begins 31st May

Advocates (ordinary people who have used their first aid skills in real situations) and Ambassadors (Emergency Services personnel who see the effect when first aid given) are available for interview.

Advocates:

Ian & Pasty Denniss (Singleton): Ian saved Patsy when she suffered sudden cardiac arrest in bed

Arthur Garske (Parramatta): saved his own life after an accident at work

Dominic Alati (Hurstville): first bystander to help a girl hit by a car

Amanda Cheers (Bathurst): helped her neighbour who collapsed

Mark Sundin (Marrickville): helped a man who collapsed at the wheel of his car

Paul De Gelder: saved by colleagues after shark attack in Sydney Harbour

Superintendent David Driver (Orange): saved a man who had stopped breathing after an asthma attack

Ambassadors:

Dr Fenton O'Leary (Westmead Children's Hospital)

Dr Steve Walker (Care Flight)

Prof. Fiona Wood (Burns Specialist, Perth)

Greg Mullins (Commissioner, NSW Fire Brigades)

Greg Rochford (CEO Ambulance Service NSW)