



140 YEARS OF ST JOHN AND FIRST AID IN AUSTRALIA - THE MISSION TO SAVE LIVES CONTINUES

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- **St John Ambulance Australia has released new figures from a national survey to coincide with its 140 Year Anniversary.**
- **First aid training improves the confidence to provide first aid in an emergency, by more than double.**

St John Ambulance Australia will celebrate its 140 Year Anniversary this Saturday 24 June. St John was established in Australia through the delivery of first aid to railway and early industry workers in 1883, in Victoria. Now, through the tireless work of around 20,000 staff and volunteers, the mission to save lives through first aid interventions is as imperative as ever.

To demonstrate the ongoing importance of first aid, St John Ambulance Australia shared results of a new survey, which revealed about 72 percent of Australian adults say they have witnessed a health or medical emergency, yet more than half (53 per cent) wouldn't be confident in their ability to provide first aid in such a situation.

Results also found:

- Almost three in 10 (28 per cent) surveyed Australian adults reported never having undertaken first aid training;
- Fewer than four in 10 (36 per cent) had training that could be considered *current* (received in the past 3 years);
- More than half (51 per cent) of those who witnessed a health or medical emergency had provided first aid to someone during the emergency; and
- People who had undertaken first aid training in the past three years were significantly more likely (than those who haven't), to have confidence in their ability to provide care in an emergency (74 per cent compared to 31 per cent).

St John Ambulance Australia CEO, Brendan Maher said he hoped to use the latest survey results as a conversation-starter, to highlight the ongoing importance of first aid for all, and identify the gaps that need to be filled.

"This anniversary is an opportunity to remind every Australian about the importance of first aid training. These figures highlight that for Australians who have undertaken some form of first aid training in the past three years, their confidence to provide care is significantly increased. The practical knowledge and skills that are gained through training can be used in an emergency situation, and other instances of common illness or injury," Mr Maher said.

"Interventions such as putting someone in the recovery position, keeping an airway open, stopping a bleed, or knowing how to deliver CPR and use a defibrillator, are skills anyone can learn. They can be used to save a loved one, friend, colleague, or member of your community."

To celebrate the 140-year milestone, attractions and public buildings across Australia will light up in red and green on the evening of Saturday 24 June. Over 23 landmarks are expected to be participating nationally, including:

- The National Carillon and Old Parliament House in Canberra;
- Bolte Bridge in Melbourne;
- Adelaide Oval and Town Hall in Adelaide;
- Story Bridge in Brisbane; and
- Regional attractions in locations such as Gladstone and Townsville.

Mr Maher said the colours were symbolic of the safety and responsive care that have become synonymous with St John uniformed services in Australia and internationally. Many other activities such as first aid demonstrations and volunteer events, will take place across all states and territories. The anniversary also coincides with St John's Day - a day internationally celebrated to recognise the important role of St John members, volunteers and services.

"Help never grows old. It's at the core of what we do, and we have a strong network of dedicated volunteers who now reach more than half a million people every year through community services. This reach can be extended by ensuring more Australians receive our training," said Mr Maher.

For more information about St John Ambulance's 140 Year Anniversary Celebrations the public can visit www.stjohn.org.au/140years.

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**Survey results are from a St John Ambulance commissioned survey through You Gov (n=1061 statistically representative sample of Australian adults), June 2023.*

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