



St John Ambulance Australia
MEDIA RELEASE

CALL TO MAKE AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AEDs) AS COMMON PLACE AS FIRE EXTINGUISHERS TO SAVE LIVES

- **Nearly all Australian Adults, ninety six per cent (96%) believe that Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are important in public locations according to new statistics released by St John Ambulance Australia.**
- **There is a call for AEDs to become as common place as fire extinguishers in our homes, workplaces and communities – to save lives.**
- **While eighty two per cent (82%) of Australian Adults think AEDs are important in homes, only 1% say they have purchased one.**
- **Out of Hospital Sudden Cardiac Arrest impacts 26,000 plus Australians per annum, and the early minutes are crucial. A shock from a defibrillator by a bystander can almost triple survivability.**

Ahead of Restart a Heart Day this October 16th, St John Ambulance Australia is calling for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to become as common place as fire extinguishers in communities, workplaces and homes.

New research released by St John Ambulance Australia today, shows that almost all Australian Adults – ninety-six per cent (96%) believe that AEDs are important to have in public locations. St John continues to actively advocate with governments, workplaces and communities, to improve Public Access Defibrillators, but there is still a long way to go¹.

A Sudden Cardiac Arrest can impact people of all ages, genders and lifestyles – occurring when the heart suddenly stops pumping and the body is starved of oxygen. Every year in Australia, around 26,000 people have a Sudden Cardiac Arrest Out of Hospital. Only around ten per cent (10%) of these people will survive².

St John Ambulance Australia, CEO, Brendan Maher, provided details about interventions that can make a difference, *“We know that bystander action in the early minutes following a Sudden Cardiac Arrest is vital to survival. Good quality CPR coupled with use of a defibrillator, increases the survival rates to as high as seventy per cent. These are actions almost anyone can undertake with First Aid training, and better access to AEDs.”*

“Out of hospital sudden cardiac arrests occur in locations such as homes, workplaces, sporting venues, and out and about in the community. It can happen anywhere, to anyone. This means that the first on scene are likely to be family, friends, colleagues or strangers. We need to work together to protect each other and save lives,” said Mr Maher.

Interestingly, the survey also found that while eighty-two per cent (82%) of Australian Adults thought that AEDs were important devices to have in homes, only one per cent (1%) had purchased an AED for their home.

“It’s great that the Australian public are really starting to recognise the importance of AEDs, but we simply need more of them. We’ve seen the great progress of awareness campaigns for things like fire safety, and now we want the same importance placed on AEDs as life saving devices. They should be as commonplace in our homes, workplaces and public buildings, as fire extinguishers.”

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that checks heart rhythm and provides a potentially lifesaving shock. They are compact and many now contain smart features that guide the user in their use. St John’s

G5 Fully Automated Defibrillators provide a heart rhythm reading within 10 seconds, and can even provide CPR instruction to guide optimal response. There are many other great units also available within Australia.

St John Ambulance Australia Advocate and experienced Paramedic, Mark Molloy explains the role that every day people can play, *“If we arrive on scene and can see the defibrillator pads in place or someone actively performing CPR, we know that person has a greater chance of survival. We know through data out of St John’s Ambulance Service in Western Australia, that patients with an initial shockable rhythm are almost three times more likely to be a 30-day survivor if they get an AED shock ahead of the ambulance arriving, compared to those patients who had to wait for a shock from a paramedic.”*

Restart a Heart Day is a prime time to discuss the importance of First Aid actions such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of an AED. It is a time for educating the public on the benefits of First Aid interventions that can delivered to save a life.

“We tend to say Call, Push, Shock as the simple reminder. Call triple zero so that an ambulance is on its way. Push means provide CPR at thirty compressions to every two rescue breaths. And shock, means to apply a defibrillator at the earliest possible time, and follow the instructions to deliver a shock if needed. If you don’t have access to an AED, then you should start performing First Aid, whilst sending someone else to get one,” explains Mr Molloy.

The recent survey by St John found that several factors would impact Australians’ decisions to purchase an AED for their homes, from education, to price, and for some, trepidations around using an AED. St John Ambulance Australia aims to encourage more Australians to be empowered to purchase, access and deploy an AED. First Aid Training is an essential life skill, recommended for all Australians, and CPR and use of an AED is part of this training.

For St John’s October sales on AEDs, visit shop.stjohn.org.au

For information on First Aid Training and other services visit www.stjohn.org.au

1. St John Ambulance Australia Commissioned Survey with You Gov, September 2024 (n=1009)

2. Heart Foundation, Sudden Cardiac Arrest Data – Accessed October 2024

3. St John WA, 2024

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