



# position statement on

## ST JOHN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

### BACKGROUND

The National Board of Directors of St John Ambulance Australia (National Board) recognises the positive impact that, for over 92 years, our youth development program (the Program) has had on the lives of many young Australians, the organisation and the Australian community. The Program has played a significant role in providing a diverse range of development opportunities for young Australians aged 8 to 17 years in learning first aid, developing leadership skills, increasing personal resilience and developing a service ethos.

The National Board of Directors acknowledges that many young members who participate in our Program go on to volunteer with St John into adulthood, follow a career path with St John, or become valued members of the health professional community, amongst other occupations. Members that have participated in our Program become caring, compassionate, kind and responsible citizens with an enthusiasm for aiding those in sickness, distress, suffering and danger.

The general model provided to young members engaged in St John youth programs is coordinated and progressive, with identified pathways for increasing first aid skills and knowledge, and leadership skills and attributes. Providing a youth development program is consistent with the organisational goals of making first aid a part of everyone's life, and increasing personal and community resilience.

The National Board of Directors supports the continuation of a strong youth development program, and the engagement of young people under the age of 18 years in the organisation, both today and into the future.

### STATE AND TERRITORY VARIATION

The National Board of Directors notes that each state and territory in the St John federation has a long history of and significant experience in providing youth development programs to young Australians. Each St John entity is somewhat different to the next—their individual youth development programs (where offered), while having many similarities, contain localised variations. Some of these variations may

**Making first aid a part of everybody's life.**

be simply procedural (e.g. the way things are done) or they may be in aspects such as language used, uniform, content and opportunities offered.

Over the years, the Programs in each jurisdiction have witnessed many changes; some more so than others. Some jurisdictions have moved away from providing the traditional Cadet program in favour of solely providing youth engagement programs, such as the First Aid in Schools program. Others have chosen to modernise their Cadet program and give it a fresh look and feel, or retain only basic elements of the program. Others engage young members aged 16 years and above, in their adult programs.

The National Board recognises that each of these unique Programs has its own value, and impacts the entity's local community in its own way. As such, the National Board of Directors supports each St John entity's freedom to shape their own programs and adapt to meet their local community needs, so long as these local adaptations meet the objects and purposes as set out in The Royal Charter and Statutes of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (the Statutes). Under the Statutes, and all Licensing Agreements between St John Ambulance Australia Inc. and state/territory entities, licensed entities are required to provide opportunities for the instruction of children in first aid and other subjects that are conducive to the education of good citizens.

The National Board is committed to continuing to provide support to state and territory entities to deliver youth programs that are most relevant for their needs and reflective of their communities. This includes the maintenance of resources for the (national) elements of Program and providing opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practice via the National Cadet Group. In providing this support, and within the spirit of collaboration, the principle of flexibility will be observed. All entities should endeavour to make every attempt to work together in developing solutions that work in favour of everyone—especially with a view to maintaining the core goals of St John—making first aid a part of everybody's life and providing opportunities that build individual and community resilience.

## POLICY POSITIONS

1. **MAINTAINING A STRONG YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:** The National Board of Directors supports the continuation of a strong youth development program, and the engagement of young people under the age of 18 years in the organisation, both today and into the future.
2. **SUPPORT:** The National Board is committed to continuing to provide support to state and territory entities to deliver youth programs that are most relevant for their needs and reflective of their communities.
3. **FLEXIBILITY:** The National Board of Directors supports each St John entity's freedom to shape their own programs and adapt to meet their local community needs, so long as these local adaptations meet the objects and purposes as set out in The Royal Charter and Statutes of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem (the Statutes).
3. **WORKING TOWARDS A COMMON GOAL:** All entities should endeavour to make every attempt to work together in developing solutions that work in favour of everyone—especially with a view to maintaining the core goals of St John—making first aid a part of everybody's life and providing opportunities that build individual and community resilience.

## MONITORING AND REPORTING

The National Board is responsible for monitoring and reporting against this Position Statement.

### CHAMPIONS

Engagement with youth development programs will be led by the National Board of Directors.