



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

St John volunteers on standby to deliver life-saving first aid at the MCG *MCG recognised as safest public place to have a cardiac arrest in the world*

St John Ambulance Victoria volunteers will be on hand and ready to administer life-saving first aid at the MCG this Grand Final day – internationally recognised as the safest public place in the world to have a cardiac arrest outside of a hospital facility.

St John Deputy CEO, Theron Vassiliou, said the survival rate of sudden cardiac arrest at the MCG is more than 90 per cent, and is recognised as the highest survival rate from out of hospital cardiac arrests anywhere in the world.

“In the last ten years there have been 69 cardiac arrests at the MCG. Thanks to the work of our volunteers and the 12 defibrillators located throughout the crowd at the MCG, the vast majority of people have left the game alive,” Mr Vassiliou said.

“This compares to an average survival rate in Australia of around just three per cent – an alarming statistic.”

St John Senior Volunteer, John Crennan, has personally assisted in treating ten cardiac arrest victims at the MCG over his 54 years of service.

“The feeling you get when you know you’ve helped save someone’s life is a lot like going out and getting drunk,” Crennan described. “It gives you a total high knowing you’ve helped someone in this way.”

Mr Vassiliou said that while he hopes there are no life threatening incidents such as cardiac arrest at this year’s Grand Final, there will be a team of around 100 St John volunteers onsite ready to respond.

“Cardiac arrest can happen to anyone at anytime, and people may not know that they are at risk. As an example, Meatloaf, who is on record as having a heart condition is performing at the Grand Final, hopefully we won’t need one of our defibs or First Aid crews.

“Our volunteer workforce will be strategically positioned around the stadium so they can get to any incident within the ground or surrounding car park in just a couple of

minutes. For every minute that passes without a defibrillator shock, the chance of survival decreases by ten per cent – defibs really do save lives,” Vassiliou said.

He said St John volunteers have been keeping footy fans safe at the MCG for around 90 years, and staff every sporting game and major event at the ground, in addition to Etihad and Skilled Stadium. The team is based out of nine dedicated first aid rooms at the MCG, and operates a couple of tailor made buggies that respond to incidents on the concourse and around the ground.

“It’s a very extensive set up, and a great deal of planning and preparation takes place to ensure the team is adequately staffed and equipped. On Grand Final day, the team will start preparing at 7am, and be hard at work until 7pm.

“Last year the team responded to more than 170 incidents across the two grand finals, more than half of which were simple headaches, abdominal pain and various wounds. Three people suffered cardiac related chest pain, all of whom were taken by ambulance after receiving essential first aid from our volunteers.”

He said that while the St John team are there to respond to any first aid requirements on Grand Final day, there are some things footy fans can do to keep themselves safe and well at the game.

“It’s important for fans to protect themselves from the sun by covering up with a hat, shirt, sunglasses and sunscreen, and avoid dehydration by drinking plenty of water and moderating alcohol consumption.

“Getting up and walking around at regular intervals is also a sensible thing to do, and anyone who requires medication should make sure they have it with them.”

St John is always on the lookout for first aid volunteers to help save lives at the MCG and right around the state. Anyone interested in volunteering for St John regardless of their age or location can learn more at www.stjohnvic.com.au

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About St John

St John saves lives through First Aid.

St John has been providing valuable services to Victorians for over 125 years, through First Aid at events, First Aid training, First Aid kits, equipment and programmed kit restocking services.

St John provides First Aid services at events across the state from major events like AFL Grand Final, Formula One Grand Prix through to regional field days and local community fetes.

With a growing business focus around duty of care, St John delivers professional First Aid services using a mix of paid and volunteer first aid professionals, however, in keeping with St John heritage local and regional events are delivered direct to community by volunteers.

Each year St John provides training to over 70,000 Victorians in essential, life-saving, first aid skills. Our extensive training portfolio is based on the first aid experience gained from treating over 23,000 casualties each year at major and community events around the state.

Revenue from training courses and the sale of First Aid kits and components provide direct benefit to communities throughout Victoria by assisting our volunteer operations.

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