

# Did you know . . . ?

St John Ambulance released a confronting TV commercial to boost first aid awareness. EACH year almost 900 West Australians die because too many people lack basic first aid skills. Thousands more suffer irreversible brain damage and serious injury. St John Ambulance released a confronting new TV commercial aimed at snapping West Australians out of their complacency.



An image from St John Ambulance's confronting campaign which aims to encourage people to learn first aid

One version of the commercial — which shows a child hitting his head while diving into a swimming pool and his helpless mother watching him drown — is so graphic it won't be shown before 8.30pm. Shorter versions will air during the day.

St John chief executive Tony Ahern said paramedics frequently attended emergencies when lives could have been saved if people on the scene knew basic first aid. It has been estimated that fewer than five per cent of the Australian population have first-aid skills.

In an interview with The Sunday Times, Mr Ahern, a former paramedic who spent 10 years on the road, said about 850 people die each year from cardiac arrest because no one was able to perform CPR before paramedics arrived. And about 20 die in car crashes each year because immediate first aid was not provided at the scene.

Those lives could be saved if more people knew what to do in life and death situations.

"Performing first aid before the ambulance arrives can often be the difference between life and death," he said. "It can also prevent more serious injury." Irreversible brain damage started once a person went more than four minutes without oxygen.

Last year, St John paramedics attended 1700 cases of cardiac arrest. Of those, about 40 per cent did not have CPR performed on the patient before they arrived, and had "zero chance of survival". Depending on circumstances, those who did have CPR could have anything up to a 20 to 30 per cent chance of surviving.

Mr Ahern said St John aimed to have every person in WA first-aid trained. That was why it had decided to use the confronting commercial.

"I think the campaign will get the message out there better than before," he said. "We have gotten the message out there, and the numbers we train in first aid show that is the case. But we won't be happy until we can survey the community and know that everyone knows first aid."

In the 60-second TV spot, that will air from tonight, a woman rushes to the aid of her drowning son in a backyard pool, only to be prevented from rescuing him by an invisible barrier.

Mr Ahern said the scenario should shock people into realising how helpless they will feel in that type of situation if they don't know basic first aid.

"We need to do things from time to time that really makes people stop, listen and look and pay attention to the message," he said. "I think the time is right just to remind people in this first aid space that it is confronting when you're in this situation. The reality is, that happens every single day.

"I have personally seen the frustration, terror and anguish caused by not knowing what to do and knowing that it's so simple to know what to do. That is the frustration for me."

## BRAIN CAN DIE IN THREE MINUTES

SIMON Hughes and Jo Partner have been trained to do whatever it takes to prevent a person dying.

But there is nothing these St John's paramedics can do if onlookers at an accident don't know basic first aid.



Simon Hughes and Jo Partner

It's a situation they said ambulance officers come across far too often — and one that needs to change.

"An ambulance can take on average between eight to 10 minutes to arrive," Mr Hughes, who has been a paramedic for 12 years, said.

"In that time the brain dies within three minutes. There is a level of time there that is really critical for someone to open and clear an airway, to start doing CPR, to stop bleeding those sorts of things."

Ms Partner, who spent 14 years as a paramedic in the UK before joining St John's two years ago, said ambulance officers were always relieved when they somebody at the scene knows first aid.

To book a first aid course ring 1300 ST JOHN or visit [stjohnambulance.com.au](http://stjohnambulance.com.au)

For the Children to go online and play the Triple Zero kid's challenge (also available on App Store and Google Play) <http://kids.triplezero.gov.au/>



# Basic Life Support

DRS ABCD action plan

**D**



## Check for **Danger**

Make sure it is safe for you, the casualty and bystanders.

**R**



## Check for a **Response**

Use a talk and touch technique to check for a response.

Talk: "Can you hear me?", "Open your eyes". Touch: squeeze shoulders firmly

**S**



## Call 000 **Send** for help

Shout for help or send someone to call Triple Zero (000).  
If required, send for help at the earliest possible stage.

**A**



## Open the **Airway**

Use the head tilt and chin lift technique to open the airway.  
If blocked, turn the casualty onto their side and clear their airway.

**B**



## Check for **Breathing**

Look, listen and feel for normal breathing.  
If not breathing or not breathing normally, commence CPR.

**C**



## Commence **CPR**

Give **30 compressions** followed by **2 rescue breaths**.  
If unable or unwilling to give rescue breaths, give compression only CPR.

**D**



## Attach a **Defibrillator (AED\*)**

Attach an AED\* as soon as available and follow the prompts.

\*AED: Automated External Defibrillator

Continue CPR until the casualty responds or normal breathing returns.



**If you don't know first aid you cant help!**



## Contact Us

If you have any questions relating to this FREE first aid training program please contact the First Aid Focus course coordinator on the below details:

Tel: 08 9334 1259

Fax: 08 9334 1224

Email: [firstaidfocus@stjohnambulance.com.au](mailto:firstaidfocus@stjohnambulance.com.au)

St John Ambulance believes every child in Western Australia should have access to vital first aid knowledge.

First Aid Focus is a FREE school program that provides first aid training to school students of all ages. In 2013 the program reached more than 100,000 Western Australian school students. This community youth initiative teaches school students of all ages basic first aid skills.

First Aid Focus was developed as part of the St John Ambulance's mission to ensure at least one person is trained in First Aid in every household in Western Australia. Experienced St John Ambulance first aid trainers are currently visiting kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools throughout the state, teaching tailored first aid courses to students.

The program is open to all schools and St John Ambulance professional first aid trainers visit at a time and date that suits the teacher, making it convenient and flexible. Enrol your school online now or speak to the First Aid Focus course coordinator to organise a training date.



### KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR TWO COURSE

It is never too early to learn the importance of first aid and with this in mind, St John Ambulance has developed a course specifically aimed at students from kindergarten to year two. Introducing the notion of first aid at an early age helps to equip children with the confidence and ability to help in an emergency.

Topics covered in the course include:

- Looking for danger
- Staying safe
- Checking for response (talk and squeeze)
- How to call for an ambulance
- Recognising a paramedic

The training sessions run for 60 minutes and can be delivered to several classes or a complete year group.

Students will receive a St John take home bag containing a First Aid certificate of completion, giveaways and other helpful first aid resources and information.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL COURSE

First Aid Focus is available to primary schools students from years 3 to 7. This training course is specifically tailored to deliver an enjoyable and enlightening course which is a great way to introduce primary school students to the importance of first aid.

Topics covered in the course include:

- Introduction and principles of first aid
  - How to call for an ambulance
  - Dealing with an unconscious casualty
- Recover

### HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

St John Ambulance aims to equip teenagers with the first aid skills they need when faced with a medical emergency. School years 8 to 12 are invited to participate in this fun and informative course with hands-on techniques and demonstrations, plus video testimonials. This includes the use of training manikins for the practical CPR sessions.

Topics covered in the course include:

- Dealing with an unconscious casualty
- Clearing a blocked airway
- CPR
- Managing a bleed
- Treating burns

The training sessions run for 80 minutes and can be delivered to multiple classes, an entire year group or even the entire school. Students will receive a certificate of completion and other helpful first aid information.

