

spotlite



NATIONAL NEWS FROM
THE AUSTRALIAN OFFICE
DECEMBER 2023

FROM THE PRIORY CEO, BRENDAN MAHER



This Christmas *Spotlite* is a bumper edition that reflects what a busy quarter it's been. While it's almost a wrap for the year, we all know that the work of St John does not take a holiday. With that in mind, I want to thank everyone in the St John family for their unwavering dedication and hard work all year. Of particular note, are the efforts of volunteers and frontline staff, and those behind the scenes who often go unsung. For those who will be working over the festive season – we appreciate the sacrifices you make to provide services to your communities.

For the Australian Office our 140 Year Anniversary culminated in a lineup of November events that provided an opportunity to connect with our network. We were hosted by His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) KStJ and Mrs Linda Hurley CStJ at Government House for our Save a Life Awards and Anniversary Reception. At Parliament House we held our second meeting of Parliamentary Friends of St John Ambulance Australia. This group, co-chaired by Senators Andrew McLachlan and Carol Brown, provides bi-partisan support to further our advocacy efforts. I thank all 23 members of this group for their input.

The evening of 11 November was one of celebration as we welcomed guests to Old Parliament House for our Chancellor's Dinner. The theme was one of kindness, as we reminisced on the impact of St John volunteers over 140 years. Chancellor, Cameron Oxley and Lord Prior, Prof. Mark Compton, along with keynote Kath Koschel of the [Kindness Factory](#), all made stirring speeches. We thank our CEOs, Chairs, Members, Volunteers and Supporters, who attended. A specific mention should be made of the attendance by the Deputy Chancellor of St John Hato Hone New Zealand, Brendan Wood, and CEO of St John Ambulance Papua New Guinea, Matt Cannon – our Pacific Peers.

FROM THE PRIORY CEO CONTINUED.

We were also treated to a host of messages of support from St John priories and establishments around the world.

Our annual Church Service was held at St Paul's Anglican Church in Canberra, on Sunday 12 November, followed later that morning by Chapter; both were very well attended.

This quarter, I have also been pleased to attend several State and Territory Investitures and to celebrate with those admitted or promoted to the Order. Our final Federal Council Meeting for the year was in Perth, and I participated in Grand Council held in Queenstown, New Zealand. These touch points provide opportunities for collaboration in action.

In September, it was with sadness that I attended the funeral of Prof. Peter Leggat AM ADC JP KStJ. Peter was a much-loved member of our St John community, with a long history of engagement across our Queensland and National offices and boards. His career and volunteering achievements were significant, and he will be missed by many. Vale Peter.

As we head into the Christmas season we are also reminded of the sufferings faced in our world. Our thoughts continue to be with staff and volunteers of our Eye Hospital Group and their services in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. If you'd like to be involved in supporting our colleagues you can do so through [My Cause](#).

I will end on a more upbeat note – by thanking my tremendous team at the Australian Office, the Priory Board and my CEO peers within the National Leadership Group for a year of great achievement and progress, and by further acknowledging our extended network and membership. We look forward to continuing our engagement with you in 2024.

Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season to you all.



ST JOHN EYE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY APPEAL



Since the launch of the Emergency Appeal for the St John Eye Hospital Group, you have help raise over \$10,000. This will help the Hospital support their staff and community during the current crisis in Gaza.

This is still time to make a donation.

Please share this link with your family, friends, colleagues and your wider St John family and make a donation today.

<https://www.mycause.com.au/p/327867/st-john-eye-hospital-emergency-appeal>

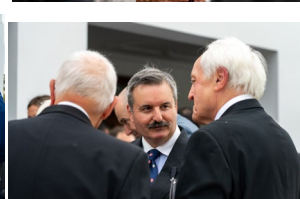
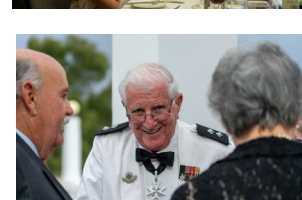


St John



**YEAR
ANNIVERSARY**

Celebrations of 140 years of St John Ambulance in Australia culminated in a fantastic dinner event at Old Parliament House.



SAVING A LIFE WITH CPR – SJAA AUSTRALIA OFFICE SAVE A LIFE AWARDS

At the Government House reception on 10 December to celebrate our 140 Year Anniversary, the Australian Office also awarded Save A Life Awards. This is the recipients' story.

CALLED INTO ACTION WHILE OFF-DUTY

On 29 December 2020, Superintendent Richard Breiner was holidaying with his family in Tuross Heads, a coastal town of New South Wales, Australia. Richard, a senior off-duty police officer with ACT Policing, was playing cards with his young children, with his wife Esther Breiner nearby.

"I was busy losing a hand to my kids at some sort of unicorn game, when I became aware of distressed and raised voices at the house next door. After a long time working in my field, you get an instinct for when something isn't right," Richard explains.

Richard and Esther both walked out to the deck, and their concerns were escalated when they peered into a neighbouring yard to see a man lying on the ground, and a younger male yelling into a phone on a call for help.

Within seconds Richard was jumping the fence to get to the scene, where he was able to assess the situation – an apparent Sudden Cardiac Arrest of a man approximately in his fifties, who had moments earlier been about to tend to a barbecue. Family members and friends were appearing quickly around the man – all in heightened states of shock and worry. At this point, the patient was turning pale and blue.

"I asked if anyone knew CPR and I spoke briefly with the emergency services on the phone. Once it was apparent that CPR was needed, and that the ambulance might take some time to reach us, I quickly began chest compressions."

Richard's training and experience helped him to remain cool and calm. This was not the first or last time that he has had to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), but usually he has experienced these situations in the line of duty – not as a civilian bystander. Esther Breiner also sprang into action - having previously received basic first aid training through her work in the airline industry. The two quickly and confidently worked as a team, rotating to perform compressions. They learned that the patient's wife had worked in nursing, and she began contributing to rescue breaths, despite her own distress.

THE VITAL ROLE OF EARLY INTERVENTION BEFORE AMBULANCE HELP ARRIVES

The first emergency personnel member on the scene was Senior Constable David Quick, who arrived in his police vehicle. Unfortunately, this vehicle was not fitted with a defibrillator, and so together, Richard, Esther and David – along with support from other bystanders – continued manual chest compressions for an extended period.

“ ———
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IF YOU WANT TO GIVE THAT
PERSON A CHANCE TO LIVE.

"We were taking turns, but it was quite a long wait. When the ambulance crew arrived they checked in on us, and supported us to keep going, while they applied the defibrillator pads, and started administering an air bag and medications."

While the average wait time for an ambulance in Australia is 10 minutes, this can be longer during peak periods, and particularly in regional areas. Performing CPR can be physically and emotionally demanding, but it's important to keep providing the intervention until paramedics arrive. Time is a major factor in the event of Sudden Cardiac Arrest. For every minute that passes without intervention, the chance of survival decreases by around 10%. Sadly, as many as 9 in 10 people who experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, won't survive, but early CPR and defibrillation can be lifesaving.



St John Ambulance Australia's National Training Manager, Mark Molloy who is also a paramedic in the ACT Ambulance Service, explains the importance, "Research into survivability of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests increasingly shows the vital impact that early recognition of an event and quality CPR, has in the chain of survival. The steps of which include, early recognition of cardiac arrest, calling for an ambulance, administration of CPR with a focus on quality chest compressions, defibrillation if needed, and eventually advanced resuscitation and post-cardiac care by medical professionals."

Mr Molloy further highlights that in this case, by rotating the duty of CPR, Richard, Esther and David would have been able to continue effective intervention for longer, as they waited for paramedics to arrive.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE AUSTRALIA STRESSES THAT ANYONE CAN DEVELOP THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO PROVIDE CPR, but that the number of people in the Australian community who hold current first aid training qualifications, are still worryingly low, despite the clear benefits. A recent survey issued by St John did find that those who have undertaken first aid training in the past three years were significantly more confident in their ability to provide first aid during an emergency situation (74% compared to 31%).

In this incident, NSW Ambulance were able to administer emergency medical aid on scene and to find a heart rhythm. Soon the patient was breathing and taken to hospital. The outcome was positive and the man survived. Medical professionals and the man's family both attributed this survival directly to the actions of Richard, Esther and David.

"While it was a long time to be performing CPR, it was then all over in a rush, and we were back inside as a family,

wondering whether he would make a full recovery. Sadly, I've been in situations where it hasn't always worked out, so it was great to hear from the family the next day that he was ok. They invited us over for drinks to say thanks."

FORMAL RECOGNITION THROUGH THE ST JOHN SAVE A LIFE AWARDS

At Government House on Friday 10 November, Mrs Esther Breiner, Superintendent Richard Breiner, ACT Policing, and Senior Constable David Quick, New South Wales Policing were each formally honoured with a St John

Save A Life Award, presented by their Excellencies the Hon. General David Hurley AC DSC KStJ (Retd) and Mrs Linda Hurley CStJ.

These Awards administered by St John Ambulance Australia, celebrate the actions of those who have used first aid to save or sustain the life of another person. All recipients have been nominated by their peers or a member of the community, and have shown how First Aid skills can be the difference between life and death in an emergency situation.

St John Ambulance Australia CEO, Brendan Maher, acknowledged why the Save a Life Awards are so special, "We are so pleased to have a way to honour these upstanding community members, whose exemplary efforts mean that someone is alive today. By highlighting the importance of first aid in everyday situations, we hope to encourage others to take action. The first step is learning basic first aid, and we see that as a life skill everyone should have."

Richard reiterates this when he talks about the experiences and thoughts he and Esther have had after the event. While he has been humbly grateful to accept the award, he is quick to point out that the real value is in the life they have saved.

"My advice to others is to just do something. You have to have the willingness to have a go if you want to give that person a chance to live. If you do nothing in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest, there is an almost certainty that person will die. If you take action, whether it's calling for help, or starting CPR, you are giving that person a chance. The fact that this happened in a suburban yard, to an everyday family, means it can happen to anyone. We all need to be ready."

The profound and lasting impacts of saving a human life

The experience has gone on to have a profound but positive impact on the Breiner family. Esther was so buoyed



Save A Life Award, Government House, Canberra. Left to right: Cameron Oxley, Chancellor, St John Ambulance Australia; Senior Constable David Quick, NSW Policing; their Excellencies the Hon. General David Hurley AC DSC KStJ (Retd) and Mrs Linda Hurley CStJ; Prof. Mark Compton, Lord Prior, St John International; and Superintendent Richard Breiner, ACT Policing and Esther Breiner.

and inspired, she is now pursuing a career in a support role within the ACT Ambulance Service, in the couple's hometown of Canberra. Richard is also using his experience to promote positive change in his community. He has since worked with ACT Policing to ensure that around 60 local police vehicles are equipped with Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). A move St John Ambulance says is important – encouraging all emergency service vehicles to be equipped with defibrillators.

When asked what his biggest takeaway is, Richard speaks poignantly of the value of human life. "It's a tremendous

privilege to be able to offer someone the gift of living with your own hands. I've often thought about what might have happened if we hadn't intervened... the impact not just on the person, but on their family and friends and all around them. I feel good that we were able to help someone have a future."

"I've been on duty and seen a lot of things, and I am proud of what I have achieved in my career and in my family life, but I think when I look back, this was a particularly defining moment. This just stands out as something special."

CELEBRATING 140 YEARS OF ST JOHN AMBULANCE IN AUSTRALIA

Happy snaps at the Government House Reception in Canberra on 10 December 2023.



PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF ST JOHN AMBULANCE AUSTRALIA

This year saw the launch of our Parliamentary Friends of St John Ambulance Australia (PFoSJAA) group. This cross-partisan group of 23 Members of Parliament and Senators is co-chaired by Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC CSTj (an active member of the Order of St John), and Senator the Hon Carol Brown.

This group presents St John with an important opportunity to further community advocacy efforts across key issues of shared national priority. This includes: making first aid accessible for everyone; improving public access to defibrillators; progressing systemic changes such as the implementation of first aid for learner drivers; enhancing St John's role in Australia's disaster response and resilience; and improving our standing on broader health and wellbeing issues in the Asia Pacific Region.

The PFoSJAA Group was officially launched at Parliament House in Canberra on 9 August 2023, and the group has since held a follow-up gathering to coincide with a series of national 140 Year Anniversary events in November. These events were well attended by representatives such as CEOs and Chairs from across all of States and Territories – further engaging in regional-specific advocacy discussions.

We thank our Parliamentary Friends for their support this year and for working together to progress the health and community services landscape in Australia.

Senator Hon Anne Ruston
Senator Paul Scarr
Senator Andrew Bragg
Senator Hon Carol Brown
Senator Dorinda Cox
Dr Mike Freeland MP
Dr Carina Garland
Mr Steve Georganas MP
Mr Julian Leeser MP
The Hon Nola Marino MP
The Hon Kristy McBain MP
The Hon Michael McCormack MP

Mrs Melissa McIntosh MP
Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC
Ms Alicia Payne MP
Senator Louise Pratt
Mr Dan Repacholi MP
Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP
Mr David Smith MP
Senator Tammy Tyrrell
Mr Bert van Manen MP
Ms Jenny Ware MP
Dr Anne Webster MP



Senator the Hon Carol Brown and Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC with the St John Defib crew at the launch of the Parliamentary Friends group in August.

ST JOHN BRANDED DEFIBRILLATORS – OUR WINNING BRAND

In 2021, St John Ambulance Australia (SJAA) and ZOLL Medical Corporation signed an exclusive distributorship for St John branded defibrillators.

The St John branded defibrillator is one of the leading brands in the Australian market and this partnership has seen us place many thousands of defibrillators into the Australian community and workplaces.

In November this year, SJAA was awarded ZOLL's Asia Pacific (APAC) Business Partner of the Year 2022.



The award was accepted on behalf of SJAA by Dilhan De Silva, General Manager, National Product Sourcing Unit, and Adrian Watts, CEO, St John Ambulance ACT.

This award is to be celebrated by all our St John colleagues nationally as we strive to get more defibrillators into our community,

From the Australia Office Annual Report 2023 ...

7,592 St John AEDs placed in the Australian community as part of community programs.

3,819 St John AEDs sold throughout Australia.

ST JOHN MEMBER MERCHANDISE

Get in a good stock of St John merchandise for all your forthcoming summer events and public appearances!

The National Product Sourcing Unit has excellent prices on selected St John merchandise –

- 140 Year Anniversary First Aid kit (members only price) – **\$14.95**
- Baseball cap St John (MER1014) – **\$8.50**
- Junior Johnny Bears (2 bears/pack) (MER1013) – **\$12.00**
- Lanyards Red and White (MER1015) – **\$1.90**



Order via <https://orders.stjohn.org.au/> Remember, you must have an account to make an order!

GRAND PRIOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Second only to the Sovereign Head of the Order, King Charles III, is the Grand Prior, Prince Richard the Duke of Gloucester.

A significant achievement for Youth members is the Grand Prior Award. This international award is for all St John Youth members. The Award is presented to Youth members by the Prior (the Governor General) or Deputy Prior (State Governor or Territory Administrator) at an annual ceremony.

We are delighted to recognise the following recipients of the Grand Prior Award for 2023.



New South Wales

Adamstown RSL Cadet Division

Caleb Bridges

Bankstown City Cadet Division

Ibrahim Takkoush

Alan Wong

Blacktown City Cadet

Ashyra Chand

Usha Makkena

Fairfield Cadet Division

Daniel Ma

Granville Combined Division

Skye Blair

Jessica Chen

Sandra He

Nicolas Li

Elizabeth McFarlane

Nelufer Raji

Queanbeyan Combined Division

Annalise Steele

Wallsend Cadet Division

Kasey Crebert

Western Suburbs Cadet Division

Nathan Chen

Northern Territory

Farrar Youth Division

Maddison Carrier

Humpty Doo Combined

Monique Dries

Jessica McMillan

Stephanie McMillan

Palmerston Youth Division

Brandon Baxter

Makaila Smith

South Australia

Mitcham Colonel Light

Gardens

Lily Thai

Noarlunga

Hamish Westbury

Woodville Youth Division

Corey Boeck

Matthew Reid

Whyalla Youth Division

Daniel Everett

Tasmania

Hobart Cadets

Alana Jane Cornish

Victoria

Communications Division

Kaven Ratnanesan

Maroondah Youth Division

Eliza Allen

Monash Youth Division

Cassandra Huynh

William Moloney

Pascoe Vale Girls Division

Grace Davies

Whitehouse Youth Division

David Dunlop

This article was first published in the SJAA Annual Report 2023, with errors. Those have now been corrected, and we extend our sincere apologies to those Cadets who ended up in the wrong State or Territory! We honour your service.



This year, we proudly celebrated 140 years of providing First Aid to our community. In recognition of this amazing continuous achievement, you can purchase our Commemorative First Aid Kit with all proceeds of sale going to help our friends and colleagues at the St John Eye Hospital Group.

The First Aid Kit contains current and up to date First Aid products to treat those small injuries and illness. Each kit is \$30 (including postage within Australia). Orders and payment can be made via Try Booking; see the QR code or go to <https://www.trybooking.com/COATU>

Orders received will be shipped mid-January.

ST JOHN NT – CADET FIRST AID COMPETITION

We're delighted to congratulate the St John Ambulance NT Cadet members who participated in their annual First Aid Competitions on Saturday 16 September.

Although initially horrified to discover the comps were being held at a local shopping centre, and so they would be showing their first aid skills in public, the Cadets quickly and ably attended to their duties. Since you never know when or where you would have to provide first aid, this was a great learning experience.



A WORTHY RECOGNITION

Dan Tehan MP of the Division of Wannon, Victoria, recently presented a National Volunteer Award to one of our own – Bruce Caslake CSTj (from Portland). For valued services to his community, Bruce was recognised for his commitment and dedication as a St John Ambulance volunteer.

Bruce is also a member of St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, and has had several essays published in *St John History*. He is renowned for hosting the very popular St John trips to countries of our ancient history.

Congratulations Bruce. Well deserved; we're all very proud of you.



Dan Tehan MP (left) with Bruce Caslake



St John

A Christmas Message from Professor Mark Compton, Lord Prior December 2023



Watch on YouTube: https://youtu.be/9qNOmLyBf_0

As the very special time of Christmas is upon us, I would like to extend to everyone, and to your families and friends, my very best wishes and warmest greetings for this Christmastime.

As I write this message from the St John International Office in London, December is upon us and Christmas is rapidly approaching!

Christmas is a time of great joy, and great hope, and it's a special time for so many across the world.

I want to use this opportunity to say thank you to everyone in the Order. To all of the volunteers, staff, and Order members worldwide, for everything you've done this year to make our Order even greater. And an additional special thanks to your loved ones who provide so much support and encouragement that enhances your ability to contribute to the Order and its work.

The world in which we live continues to face many challenges; I think particularly of our colleagues at the St John Eye Hospital Group in Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank as they live through the worst conflict their region has seen for many years. The people of St John, rooted in their communities, continue to give amazing and devoted service on a global scale and I take great pride in promoting the people and the work of our Order and the impact we have in 44 countries and territories across the world.

I hope you all enjoy a break over your winter, or summer, or whatever season Christmas brings for you. During this time, please think about the Order: what we have all achieved over the last year, and the many opportunities that present themselves for the next year.

2023 has been a year of significant achievements. It saw St John Malawi host its first Investiture Ceremony, an expansion of

services for St John Ambulance Tasmania to support communities in Timor-Leste, and the refurbishment of St John Jamaica's training facilities. We've launched our new Health and Management Assessment (HAMA) and begun the development of a global Success Model for First Aid toolkit. We celebrated St John Australia's 140th Anniversary, joined the King's Procession for the Coronation of HM King Charles III, and enjoyed "Defibruary" with St John Cymru, and "Shocktober" with Hato Hone St John, and an excellent Grand Council meeting held in Queenstown New Zealand in September where we could continue to explore the Order's global strategy. (This list is by no means exhaustive!)

We look forward next year, to the launch of our Global Leadership Programme, and to our Grand Council meeting in Cardiff next summer. There is so much we do for communities across the world and so much more we can do to serve more people in need to have even greater impact on our communities. Please continue to think about how we can get bigger and better in the years to come as we enjoy the fact that we are all part of a magnificent international healthcare charity with the special status as a Crown Order of Chivalry. We are many across the world, but we are one.

Thank you again for all that you do. The Order is an important institution, a wonderful organisation, but it's absolutely nothing without the people who give their time so selflessly, as volunteers, as staff, as members of the Order, right across the world, touching the lives of millions of people each year.

A very happy Christmas to you all.

**Professor Mark Compton AM GCStJ
Lord Prior**

11 December 2023



ADMISSIONS & PROMOTIONS 2023

Admissions and promotions to The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Priory of Australia for 2023 are proudly acknowledged below. This was published in the [Commonwealth of Australia Gazette](#) on Thursday 16 November 2023.

As a Dame of Grace

Valmai Dempsey

As a Knight of Grace

Robert Wilson

As Commander

Alistair Dunn

Eleanor Hill

Karen Limb

Ilan Lowbeer

Sean McGuinness

Rolf Schafer

Anthony Smith

As Officer

Kathleen Broadbent

Brett Butler

Ian Digweed

Rhys Dowell

Thomas Drake Brockman

Barbara Groves

Rodney Hocking

Brain Gallop

Mark Engel

John Gallagher

Ross Parkinson

Ian Rae

Lynda Tyler

As Member

Tyrone Andrews

Edward Anstee

Bevan Bailye

David Boadle

Charlie Bartak

Shannan Bradley

Connie Bruynen

Brenda Brown

Rodney Burgess

Celia Campbell

Hayley Clarke

Mark Cockburn

Serena Coleman

Lance Cooper

Bradley Costin

Kerrilee Dennis

Carole Donaldson

Janine Doney

Rachael Doney

Ross Doney

Catherine Driver

Craig Ellis

Caroline Elliott

Sabrina Erdossy

Heidi Fischer

Catherine Graham

Shane Gray

Stuart Green

Kelly Guest

Jay Hammond

Caryn Hargrave

Paul Harrington

Kelly Harverson

Abbey Hay

Claire Hensby

James Hunt

Tracie Ironside

Matthew Jaskolski

Victoria Jones

Jennifer Joseph

Jade Kirk

Jamie Kopper

Michelle Lamont

Chelsea Lazar

James Leigh

Rocky Liang

Davide Luisetto

Belinda Marsh

Shirley Marsh

Mavis Marshall

Mark McDonald

Michael Morgan

Keita Morimoto

Shane Munro

Hamish Nicholls

Erin Nugent

Leonardo Pane

Elizabeth Ravalli

Darryl Shaw

Catherine Smith

Michaela Stone

Thomas Theel

Beth Trezona

Damien Vickers

Hilary Warrington

Adrian Watts

Deborah Williams

Craig Zaal

Andrew Zollia

AUSTRALIAN PRIORY NEWS ●●●

ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICE

The Priory's annual church service was conducted at St Paul's Church, Manuka, on Sunday 12 November. The Church Service and Chapter Meeting marked the conclusion of the weekend's celebration of the 140th Anniversary of St John's service to the community in Australia.

On a warm morning, our members were welcomed by the Rev. Canon Dr Ben Edwards to St Paul's, who shared his duties with the Priory's Sub Prelate, Bishop Richard Hurford.

The Lord Prior, Professor Mark Compton GCStJ was in attendance along with the Chancellor of the Australian Priory Cameron Oxley KStJ. They headed the procession of 30 senior members of the Order of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. We were delighted to also welcome members of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.



ARE YOU A HISTORY BUFF? ARE YOU CURIOUS ABOUT THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE STORY? JOIN THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA.

As a member of the Historical Society you will have the opportunity to engage with the past and present story of St John, and connect with people who share a similar passion. History is for everyone – it's a rich and diverse field that appeals to people of all ages.

The St John Historical Society organises several online events throughout the year, publishes a regular newsletter and annual journal. And we'd love to welcome you to the Society. There are always opportunities to contribute to the activities, as well.

History is for everyone, and ours is a rich and diverse one that appeals to so many people around the world. You're invited to join in on this journey with your fellow Johnnies.

To become a member of your State or Territory Historical Society, please complete the Membership Application form: <https://stjohn.org.au/about>

25TH HISTORICAL SOCIETY SEMINAR

The 25th Historical Seminar was held in Canberra on November 11 and received excellent feedback on the day. The program was book-ended by two invited speakers: Brendan Wood, Deputy Chancellor from Hato Hone St John (New Zealand), and Matt Anderson, Director of the Australian War Memorial, both of whom gave entertaining and interesting presentations.

We were delighted that James Cheshire was awarded a Gold Commendation (personally presented by the Lord Prior, Professor Mark Compton) in recognition of his 12 years as Secretary of the Historical Society. James had organised the seminars for many years, but the success of this Seminar proved that our new Secretary, Dr Elizabeth Ellis, has most ably taken over the task.

All papers presented at the Seminar will be published in the forthcoming issue of *St John History* Volume 23.



Members (and guests) of the Historical Society at the 25th Seminar. Left to right: Dr Ian Howie-Willis, Dr Elizabeth Ellis, Pam Heiermann (guest, from St John Tasmania), Brendan Wood (guest), Deputy Chair, Hato Hone New Zealand; Dr Matthew Glozier, Priory Librarian; Trevor Mayhew, and Emeritus Professor John Pearn.

VALE BETTY ESTHER STIRTON OAM DSTJ

In September this year, we were saddened to share with you the passing of our highly respected and much-loved member Betty Esther Stirton OAM DSTJ. .

Joining St John NSW as a Cadet in 1942 with the Canterbury-Bankstown Division, Betty progressed through various roles, including Superintendent for 10 years leading to her appointment as Corps Officer Nursing Cadets and then promotion to the District Staff in 1968. There, between 1968 and 1995, Betty held roles such as, District Staff Officer Nursing Cadets, District Superintendent Nursing and Deputy Commissioner in 1983. She was the first woman in Australia to be appointed as a Deputy Commissioner.

Betty joined the newly established NSW St John Community Care Branch in 1989, then served as the Chair from 1992 to 1998 and thereafter as a Director of the St John NSW Board. Betty was also a member of the Training Branch Committee and Ophthalmic Care Branch Committee for many years. She was a long serving member of the State Council and was appointed Vice President in 2004. Other St John commitments have included chairing the St John Facilities and Support Committee for the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympic Games, and then for the Rugby World Cup in 2003.

Betty contributed countless hours to the service of her communities and St John during her 76 years as a member of St John. Although retiring in 1995 from operational service, she became our Honorary Archivist in 1990, gathering historical items and documents for the St John NSW Archives and Museum until her retirement in 2018. Betty represented St John NSW on the Priory Library Standing Committee (1993–1998) and then the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia from 2001. She was involved in every facet of St John NSW over many years and at a National Level.

Her volunteering contribution was widely known and respected – Betty was given a special mention by Mr David Elliot in the Legislative Assembly in 2012, impressed by her 60 years of volunteer service at that time. Of the many awards that she received, achieving her 70 years of service was important to Betty. She was also the recipient of numerous awards such as Honorary Life Membership, Priory Vote of Thanks, St John Special Plaque, and a Certificate of Appreciation. For her dedication and devotion to duty, Betty was admitted as a Member of the Order of St John in 1963, and then promoted to Officer in 1971, Commander in 1977, and Dame of Grace in 1983. In 1997, Betty was awarded the OAM for her service to the community through St John Ambulance Australia for over 50 years at that time, and as Chair of the Community Care Branch.

On her last known visit to Burwood, Betty was happy to look around, meet with staff members and share a cup of tea with them, telling everyone 'I've had a wonderful life'. Betty was 93 years old.



VALE FRANK DUNSTAN CSTJ

Earlier this month, with a heavy heart, St John NT advised that Frank Dunstan had passed away.

Frank was a Commander of the Order of St John who had dedicated over 25 years to volunteering within the Territory community with Bushfires NT and St John NT. He tirelessly devoted thousands of hours and was honoured with a number of awards for his dedicated service.

As St John NT's volunteer historian, Frank was a great story-teller and had written four books about our organisation. His final publication, *About the Order of St John* was launched only the week before by His Honour Professor the Honourable Hugh Heggie PSM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, and Deputy Prior of the Order of St John, and our Patron Ms Ruth Jones.



In his own words, Frank was inspired to write the book because he noticed that “few members of the Order knew anything about the Order” – himself included. As an organisation steeped in history, the handbook includes an explanation of the grades of the Order, the robes and medals and Investiture ceremonies held in the Northern Territory.

Frank first came in contact with St John when he enrolled in a First Aid course in 2001 where he was invited to join as a volunteer. Frank signed up with the Darwin Adult Division before moving to the new Humpty Doo Adult Division. Within a year, he became the inaugural Divisional Superintendent and in 2002 was awarded the Adult Volunteer of the Year and the Humpty Doo Division was named Adult Division of the Year.

In 2006, he was no longer an active member but agreed to become an affiliate member and took on the role of writer and editor of the St John NT's *Vollie News*. Frank composed an edition of *Vollie News* every week for over 12 years – almost 600 editions documenting the life and work of the volunteers across the Territory and capturing a valuable part of St John History.

We extend our sincere condolences to Frank's son and to the many St John volunteers, members and staff, not only in the NT but around Australia, who served and worked with Frank.

Mark Ferguson ASM CSTJ
St John Ambulance Australia (NT) Inc.