



The Place To Be

# Media release

From the Minister for Victorian Communities and Minister  
for Commonwealth Games

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## **NEW FUNDING TO SUPPORT EXTRA ST JOHN VOLUNTEERS**

The Victorian volunteers of St John Ambulance service will soon be even better equipped to provide first aid services at community events – including the upcoming Commonwealth Games – thanks to \$1.5 million in new Bracks Government funding.

Announcing the funding, the Minister for Victorian Communities, John Thwaites, and Minister for Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, also launched a St John campaign to recruit an extra 1000 volunteers ahead of the Games.

Mr Thwaites said St John would receive two Bracks Government Victorian Community Support Grants.

“The first grant of \$1 million will enable St John to purchase essential equipment such as computers, vehicle stretchers and defibrillators,” Mr Thwaites said.

“A further \$500,000 will go towards upgrading the communications network that mobilises the volunteer service each day.

“The Bracks Government recognises the crucial role volunteers and their organisations play in building stronger communities.”

Speaking during National Volunteers Week, Mr Madden said volunteers were the lifeblood of major events like the Commonwealth Games.

“I’d urge people to consider St John’s call for an additional 1000 volunteers to provide services at the Games,” Mr Madden said.

“The Games are just under a year away, but new volunteers are needed now so they are fully trained and experienced in the field by March 2006.

“By applying to be a St John volunteer you can be part of the biggest event Victoria has ever staged.”

St John Chief Executive Officer Ian Clark said the Bracks funding represented a major step in securing a solid foundation of external support which will allow St John to build a sustainable future.

“These grants will allow St John, through our volunteer network, to continue to deliver superior first aid services and support the State’s Emergency Plan.”

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Mr Clark said St John recognised the importance of partnering with stakeholders like the State Government to raise awareness of the vital role the organisation plays in first aid service to the Victorian community.

“St John’s specially trained first aid volunteers and healthcare professionals treat almost 20,000 patients at more than 7000 public events held each year in urban, regional and rural Victoria,” he said.

Mr Clark said that to be eligible to volunteer with St John, volunteers must have a current senior first aid certificate or be willing to obtain one. They will also need to consent to a national police check.

“Opportunities for St John Ambulance volunteers exist in first aid, radio communications and logistics. Healthcare professionals are also needed for Advanced Casualty Management teams.

“All volunteers will receive role specific training in areas such as asthma management, defibrillation, driver education and radio communications,” he said.

Mr Thwaites said National Volunteer Week was a great opportunity to recognise the enormous amount of unpaid work that volunteers undertake each year.

“Our research shows that 41 per cent of Victorian adults volunteer for more than an hour every week,” he said.

“With a total of almost 230 million hours of volunteer labour each year, Victorian volunteers are effectively a fulltime workforce of more than 100,000 people. Grants like these help give that workforce the tools they need.”

He said the Government also supported volunteering through the highly successful Victorian Volunteer Small Grants program.

“Since we launched the program in September last year, we have given out \$1 million in grants to small volunteer organisations,” he said.

For more information contact Justine Dobbs at St John on 8866 3471 or [jdobbs@hq.sjaa.com.au](mailto:jdobbs@hq.sjaa.com.au) or visit [www.stjohnvic.com.au](http://www.stjohnvic.com.au)