



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Emergency First Aid Training for Carers – An Australian First

An Australian first, the Federal Government will provide a one-off \$114,000 grant to the St John Ambulance to help provide courses for carers in practical life saving first aid.

This is could train up to 2,000 carers a year - during the pilot.

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot made the announcement today in Queensland with Federal Member for Moreton, Mr Graham Perrett.

The grant will help fund the design and delivery of a specific first aid course for carers by offering flexible practical and online components.

The funding for St John Ambulance is part of the Australian Government's commitment to carers through the National Respite for Carers Program, which is providing \$194 million in 2008-09.

"As a former police officer I know how important it is to receive first aid emergency training from St. John Ambulance," Mrs Elliot said.

"I received my first aid training certificate from St. John Ambulance and I know first hand how those skills can save lives.

"Effective and practical first aid treatment can save lives. Knowing what to do in an emergency situation can make the difference between a near miss and tragedy," Mrs Elliot said.

As well as dressing wounds, putting on slings, lifting and moving the injured, treatment of burns, it is also about problems specific to carers such as how to respond to cardiac arrest; a blocked airway or a diabetic who has very low blood sugar.

"This course is a first step and it will be designed for people voluntarily caring for frail elderly or disabled relatives or friends.

"The flexible model would allow carers to take the first aid course using workbooks, a CD-ROM or online, followed by practical workshop," Mrs Elliot said.

Existing respite care programs would allow the carers to take the time to attend the practical one-day workshop.

Carers will get training in first aid so they can respond to a variety of instances including:

- Basic CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation);
- Injuries from trips and falls, such as fractures and wounds;
- Low or high blood sugar levels;
- Choking;
- Shock, including shock from gastroenteritis; or
- Acute asthma and anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction).

"Carers across this nation play an important role in Australian society. This is about supporting them so they can continue to care for loved ones.

Each year, St John Ambulance delivers 380,000 first aid certificates, making it Australia's largest first aid training provider. It has training facilities and centres in every State and Territory.

Almost 2.6 million Australians provide care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who are frail aged. Of these about 500,000 are primary carers – the people who provide the majority of the care.

For more information, contact Mrs Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280