



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

ORDER OF ST JOHN PARADE AND AWARDS

Sunday 1st December 2019

Mr Anthony Carbines MLA, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, **Representing the Premier**

Ms Georgie Crozier MLC, Shadow Minister for Health, Shadow Minister for Ambulance Services

Mr Tim Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Planning and Heritage, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Housing & Shadow Minister for Population

Mr Andrew Crisp APM, Emergency Management Commissioner and **Mrs Linda Crisp**

Mr Cameron Oxley, Chancellor, St John Ambulance Australia and **Ms Bronwyn Ross**

Mrs Virginia Bourke, Chairman, St John Ambulance Victoria

Mr Gordon Botwright, Chief Executive Officer, St. John Ambulance Victoria and
Mrs Tracey Botwright

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House to recognise the work of St John Ambulance Victoria's volunteers.

It is often noted that the Order of St John can be traced back more than 900 years. We marvel at its longevity.

It is sobering, isn't it, that when measured against the backdrop of this ancient country – the home to our First Peoples for so many millennia – it is such a short amount of time.

And so, it is important to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this afternoon.

When it comes to Victoria's modern history, St John's 150 years is a great achievement. And, although it is a mere blink in time, what a great deal of progress there has been.

Think back to when the first public meeting to found the St John Ambulance Association was held - in 1883. The mission, of course, to teach public First Aid classes.

I am not sure precisely how many trainees received their certificate in that first year, but I do know that 29 students qualified in the following year.

In a nice link with my role, it was Victoria's seventh Governor, His Excellency Sir H. B. Loch KCB, who presented the certificates to them.

Just a few years after the First Aid classes were started, St John raised sufficient funds to purchase six Ashford litters, (covered stretchers on wheels), to transport people to hospital.

Until then, humble transport methods had seen patients either carried on wooden doors, or perhaps bundled into a hansom cab to be taken to hospital.

Things became more 'modern' in 1899, when St John started a horse-drawn ambulance service, followed, a decade later, by the first motor vehicle ambulance.

Well, last year alone, you trained 52,000 Victorians in First Aid. And gave free training to almost 190,000 primary school children.

In addition, St John volunteers attended nearly 4700 events and emergencies, providing first aid to over 50,000 people.

Today, you transport many thousands of patients, assisting the sick, the elderly and the vulnerable – from taking them to hospital to helping them to attend medical appointments.

Across the many decades, your primary objective – to save lives through First Aid, and to assist those in sickness, distress and danger – has not changed.

But you have certainly changed some of the ways you set about it.

A perfect example of your innovative thinking is the GoodSAM Smartphone App, for which you have partnered with Ambulance Victoria.

Since just last year, GoodSAM has seen more than 250 of your volunteers register their willingness to attend a person suffering from cardiac arrest whilst paramedics are on the way.

The point is this. Whether carrying patients on covered litters, or lending a hand when a device tells you that nearby heart care is urgently needed, St John has been there.

St John HAS been there. St John IS there. And we know that St John WILL BE there.

You, the volunteers, continue to be the face of St John.

I have seen you up close across more than four years in this role. I have seen your expertise and your commitment. Your generosity of spirit in helping others. The families with generations of St John volunteers. The many years of service amongst those we recognise in this ceremony. Years too numerous to count!

As Patron, I commend and thank you all. Thank you for what you do. Thank you for how you make us feel. Thank you for inspiring others to be like you.

Thank you to Chairman, Virginia Bourke and the Board of Directors.

Thank you too to CEO, Gordon Botwright, the staff and, importantly, to the many generous donors and supporters.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Chairman to say a few words.