

CONFERENCE REPORT

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**St John Ambulance (Australia) National Conference
'The Next Step'**

22-26 June 2005, Melbourne, Australia

Justine Dobbs

Public Relations Co-ordinator
St John Ambulance Australia, Victoria

St John Ambulance Australia held its annual National Conference, "The Next Step", in Melbourne on 22-26 June 2005.

Over 600 delegates attended the conference to participate in workshops, plenary sessions and listen to seminar themes which discussed latest advances in Pre-hospital Clinical Care, Emergency Management and Preparedness, and Pre-hospital Education. Mr Ian Clark (CEO) St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria), welcomed delegates to the conference in an opening speech prior to commencement of the official program. The Minister for Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, and swimmer Daniel Kowalski OAM were present at the opening.

Topics for the St John conference were chosen to complement the current environment, with a strong focus on the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games and its preparedness. The conference attracted a diverse array of specialist expertise and included speakers from Australia and overseas, all of whom delivered exceptionally interesting topics in their respective fields.

Detective Superintendent Nicholas O'Brien delivered a particularly interesting presentation on the theme of Emergency Response and Preparedness. His topic of '*Communicating Warnings: The European Experience*', examined the current context and threat of international terrorism in the UK, and touched on CBRN terrorism. Detective Superintendent O'Brien also spoke of London's preparedness in the event of major disasters, through the *London Emergency Services Panel*.

Detective Superintendent Nicholas O'Brien is a member of the *UK Association of Chief Police Officers - Terrorism and Allied Matters Committee*, and Liaison Officer for *Police Forces as the Counter Terrorism and Extremism* at the British High Commission in Canberra

Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld, Director of Neurosurgery at the Alfred Hospital delivered his presentation, *Iraq and Mass Casualty Triage Under Fire*, as a part of the 'Difficult Environments' sub sector of the Clinical Care stream. Professor Rosenfeld was deployed in Iraq for three months as a Neurosurgeon and spoke of the trauma and challenges he and his medical team encountered. Professor Rosenfeld recently retired as the Commissioner of St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria).

SEMINAR THEMES

Pre-hospital Clinical Care:

St John Ambulance Australia offers an expansive and unsurpassed range of first aid services through its volunteer membership. The introduction of accredited education has seen an increased range of clinical skills, and with this, a desire for increased information

and knowledge relating to clinical care issues through the spectrum of emergency care. This stream of the seminar was presented in partnership with Australian College of Ambulance Professionals.

Emergency Response and Preparedness:

Natural emergencies have been a constant source of activity for St John Ambulance across Australia, and in Victoria, long deployments of many weeks are not uncommon. Relationships with the other emergency service organisations have been well formed and with the impending operations in support of the Commonwealth Games in 2006 this was an excellent opportunity to showcase inter-agency co-operation.

Pre-hospital Education:

With St John Ambulance Australia moving along a path of accredited education at all levels, this is an area of great change and excitement. As a large volunteer body, the move to accredited education has been difficult with much learning along the way. The pre-hospital education theme provided an excellent opportunity to learn of new advances and innovations, and was presented in partnership with Monash University Centre for Ambulance and Paramedic Studies.

Volunteerism:

Looking at the lifecycle of volunteers, this theme covered all aspects and issues of volunteerism and progress from a broad base of organisations. A plenary session by Dr Jeff Ayton (Chief Medical Officer, Polar Medicine Unit, Australian Antarctic Division) shared his experiences in remote area medical practice and the challenges faced in extreme environments. Other topics included "Volunteers in Emergency Management", "Volunteer Recruitment Strategies" and "Volunteer Motivation".

Youth Engagement:

As a national provider of youth services, St John Ambulance Australia engaged a variety of key representatives from youth based organisations in Australia. Topics included the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme, Communicating with Youth and Motivating Youth. The theme concluded with a stimulating and interactive 'Youth Forum' which was represented by eight youth based organisations, who responded to issues raised by a facilitator, and from the floor, with or without notice.

Those who attended the St John National Conference commented on the exceptionally high quality of the conference, the presentations and the program outline. The 2006 St John National Conference will be held in Western Australia.

St John is a national, charitable, volunteer based organisation which provides first aid services at public events and in times of emergency. Every year, 2,200 Victorian St John volunteers attend over 7,000 public events in Victoria, and are often first on the scene to provide first aid services to almost 20,000 people in need. St John has been delivering medical assistance to the community for over 120 years.

Conference Abstracts

Victorian Website: <http://www.stjohnvic.com.au/>

Australian National Website: <http://www.stjohn.org.au/>

St John Ambulance Conference 2006

June 21-25 2006

Duxton Hotel,

Perth, Western Australia

[Download Registration Form](#) (pdf)

