



press clip

# A simple way to help arrest risk



ST JOHN Ambulance Victoria has called on Victorian football clubs to act now to save lives, following a recent spate of cardiac arrests at local matches.

Sports Medicine Australia has also called for the mandatory placement of defibrillators in all sporting clubs in the wake of the tragic death of Bacchus Marsh football player Nathan Prince two weeks ago.

St John Ambulance Victoria deputy CEO, Theron Vassiliou, said St John would again be supporting clubs as the summer sports season rolls around, acting as an interim solution while clubs raise funds for life-saving defibrillators, which can cost \$3000-\$4000.

"Sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, no matter what their age or gender," Mr Vassiliou said.

"In Victoria in the last three months alone there have been three deaths from cardiac arrests during sporting events. Without a defibrillator close by, the survival rate for cardiac arrest is somewhere between 2 and 5 per cent."

Following the death of another young footballer in Rupertswood last year, Defib Your Club, For Life

was started as a not-for-profit organisation to help reduce the number of cardiac-related deaths at sporting venues.

Defib Your Club, For Life joined forces with Sports Medicine Australia with the aim of putting as many defibrillators into clubs as possible.

Andrew White, an ambulance paramedic for more than 20 years and founding director of Defib Your Club, For Life, hopes Nathan Prince's tragic death shines a spotlight on the importance of defibrillation.

"Sporting clubs need to be empowered to react to their own cardiac emergency armed with the appropriate equipment, skill and understanding to do so prior to ambulance arrival," Mr White said.

Both Sports Medicine Australia and Defib Your Club, For Life said the message to key sporting stakeholders was simple: the more defibrillators out there, the more lives will be saved.

Portarlington Bowls Club installed one just a few months ago. And Geelong Football Club doctor Geoff Allen would not be here today without his good mate and fellow Cats club doctor Chris Bradshaw

and his trusty defibrillator.

Dr Allen is a picture of health a year after suffering a cardiac arrest in the middle of Adelaide's AAMI Stadium.

Geelong's football clubs will soon be among the first to receive the devices through the Defib Your Club, For Life campaign, which is gaining momentum and significant corporate support.

St John Ambulance said it understood there was a cost to clubs in purchasing a defibrillator and training parents and staff, and funds needed to be raised to cover these costs.

"In the meantime, having a St John First Aid Services team onsite gives the club the immediate peace of mind that their players and supporters have the best possible chance of survival in the event of a cardiac arrest," Mr Vassiliou said.

To find out more about the first aid services St John can offer, or to arrange for St John to attend your local sporting match or event, contact St John on 1300 360 455 or visit [www.stjohnvic.com.au](http://www.stjohnvic.com.au)





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## Case for defibrillators

**ST John of God Ambulance Victoria says immediate defibrillator can help save lives.**

**20,000** Australians suffer a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) each year.

**SURVIVAL** rate is between two and five per cent.

**FOR** every minute that passes, the

chance of survival is reduced by 10 per cent.

**AVERAGE** ambulance response time is between nine and 14 minutes.

**SCA** is not gender or age specific.

**THE** level of risk in your workplace increases with age, location and environment.

**THE** basic Chain of survival now includes Defibrillation.



**CLOSE CALL:** Ambulance officers attend to Geelong's Dr Geoff Allen after he suffered a cardiac arrest before a Cats game in July last year at AAMI Park in Adelaide. Below: A picture of health, Dr Geoff Allen and his wife Claudia.