

4 April 2018

Bolland Review Submission

St John Ambulance WA, as the state's ambulance service provider and the premier provider of first aid training is passionately supportive of the push to make defibrillators (or AEDs) compulsory in Australian workplaces.

We believe the current review into the new work, health and safety (WHS) laws making defibrillators compulsory will help protect the lives of all working Australians at risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

We know from our extensive clinical research and practice that with cardiac arrest as a major cause of death in Australia, the time to defibrillation has a marked impact on patient outcomes.

In fact, we reported in our 2016 Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Report that patients shocked by a public defibrillator survive at twice the rate of those shocked just a few minutes later by an ambulance crew.¹


Core to our purpose is to make first aid a part of everyone's life and we have been providing first aid to Western Australian's for more than 125 years. Our experience over this extensive period of time has led us to a very clear conclusion that in order to provide the most effective first aid possible, the Danger, Response, Send for Help, Airway, Breathing, CPR and Defibrillator (DRSABCD) action plan is key.

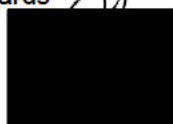
We also know that early intervention with a Defibrillator is one of the most critical components in improving patient outcomes for people that suffer a sudden cardiac arrest. This reinforces one of the objectives of the Act which is *"protecting workers and other persons against harm to their health, safety and welfare through the elimination or minimisations or risks arising from work."*

We know first-hand through our Community First Responder program (which has almost 2,000 registered defibrillators in WA) that the presence of a defibrillator with someone trained and confident in its use makes a significant difference in those critical minutes before an ambulance arrives. We can attribute 26 lives saved from 44 activations of a defibrillator in this program in 2017.

To have a greater impact in saving more lives a greater saturation of defibrillators is required.

Just as Fire Extinguishers and Workplace First Aid Kits were made mandatory, the time has now come for leadership around making Defibrillators also mandatory, so we can protect the lives of all working Australians at risk of Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

Regards 



TONY AHERN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

¹ www.stjohnambulance.com.au/docs/default-source/corporate-publications/st-john-wa---out-of-hospital-cardiac-arrest-report-2016.pdf?sfvrsn=2