

29 Oct 2015 6:00 AM AEST - 'We'll teach one million students across Australia how to save lives': CASF pledge**PRESS RELEASE****29 October 2015****'We'll teach one million students across Australia how to save lives': CASF pledge**

Sydney's Cardiac Arrest Survival Foundation (CASF) has pledged to teach over one million students across Australia how to save lives using defibrillators. And they'll do it using a simple new teaching aid for schools. The promise by the Foundation, Australia's only charity dedicated to reducing needless deaths from out of hospital cardiac arrests, comes during the month of Shoctober, Australia's dedicated defibrillator awareness month.

While cardiologists and emergency services are encouraging first aid training and defibrillators in schools, many schools in NSW do not have their own defibrillator. Yet 200 students at a Sydney girls' high school are learning how to use defibrillators simply and effectively as part of a trial program in their PE class. Head of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College Kim Vandervelde, said Year 9 and 10 students learn the skills in the elective Physical Activity and Sports Studies (PASS) program. Each Defibrillator Class runs for about 45 minutes, with students watching a free 30-minute tutorial video called *Defibrillator Class Video* while using a simple training device called a DefibMat. Developed by CASF, the DefibMat simulates using a defibrillator and does not require specialist training for a teacher to use it. While the girls found the mat easy to use, the skills they gained could one day mean the difference between life and death.

"Our students can add this knowledge to their lifesaving and CPR skills learnt in PDHPE, and be more educated on the role defibrillators play in critical incidents," Ms Vandervelde said. "Involvement in the trial has allowed the girls to experience a defibrillator scenario in a clear, easy-to-follow, non-confronting manner, so they will be able to use this experience in any situation where an AED may be required."

Other schools can join in. The Defibrillator Class package including video and 12 DefibMats costs only \$695. Everything a teacher needs to run the class is in the package, which is available from the Shoctober website. Go to our Teachers Hub at (www.cardiacarrest.org.au) where you can purchase a class package or find out more. All proceeds benefit the Cardiac Arrest Survival Foundation and help save lives. CASF Chair Dr Don Dingsdag says it is important for young people to understand what a defibrillator is, what they look and sound like, and where they might be located.

“Defibrillators are increasingly available in workplaces and public spaces and our students need to learn about them,” Dr Dingsdag said. “Sudden cardiac arrest is a silent killer: it can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time or age.”

Sudden Cardiac Arrest kills between 23,000 and 33,000 Australians each year, more than breast cancer, shootings and road crashes combined. That’s about two busloads of people dying every day. With roughly half a million students currently doing years 9 and 10 across Australia, the Cardiac Arrest Survival Foundation wants to educate as many of them as possible so that when the time comes, they’ll know what to do.

For more information contact media@cardiacarrest.org.au, phone 02 9498 8837, or go direct to:

- Dr Don Dingsdag, the Chair, Cardiac Arrest Survival Foundation, 0410 598 982; or
- Kim Vandervelde, Head of PDHPE at Monte Sant’ Angelo Mercy College, 02 9409 6395.

Please see the following files attached:
[casf-red.jpg]

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