



MEDIA RELEASE

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Desal workers commended for saving a life

Ambulance Victoria presented seven heroic bystanders from the Victorian Desalination Project at Wonthaggi with bystander commendation awards on Friday 1 June.

The group saved the life of 56-year-old Ian McKenzie when he suffered a cardiac arrest after returning from a fishing trip on 29 March 2012.

Work mates Russell Main, Gary Gore, David Blake, Mark Wealands and Mick Pellicano were enjoying a Friday night drink when they saw Ian collapse into the fence of a nearby car park.

They immediately initiated CPR, called an ambulance and got the onsite paramedic and doctor, Noel Mirtschin and Dr Alistair Lewis, to get the previously installed Automated External Defibrillator.

'We saw him fall and he didn't try and break the fall so we knew something wasn't right,' said Mr Pellicano.

'Our CPR training just kicked in, we knew what we had to do and it was instinct but to be honest I thought he was gone. We all did.'

'To see him here today, upright and not blue is just magic. It really is great to see him.'

The group continued CPR and defibrillated Ian twice before Ambulance Victoria paramedics arrived. He was defibrillated two more times by paramedics before he was put into an induced coma and flown to The Alfred hospital in a critical condition where he underwent a quadruple bypass.

Single responder intensive care paramedic Duncan Rooney said that without their intervention Ian would not be here today.

'By performing CPR you are trying to prolong the time that it takes for brain damage to occur,' he said. 'How successful the paramedics will be in saving the patient's life is directly determined by the amount of time that has passed since the patient suffered the cardiac arrest and if CPR has been performed.'

'We have a high level of skill and a wide range of drugs but none of that will help if there has been a significant downtime.'

'I am very pleased to be here today,' said Ian. 'I did want to meet up with everyone who helped me and say thank you, they deserve all the accolades and acknowledgement. Without them and their training I wouldn't be here today, I realise that and I'm aware that I was extremely lucky to survive, everything just fell into place.'

For further information please contact:

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