

St John WA

Recognition Ceremony

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Friday 26th February 2021

** Check against delivery*

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I am so honoured to be here tonight recognising outstanding individuals who consistently work selflessly, with honour and integrity to make our State an even better place to live.

The last year has tested our community like never before. The global pandemic, together with the 2020 bushfires and the recent Gingin/Wooraloo/Gidgegannup fires has seen St John's stretched to capacity in fulfilling its purpose '*for the service of humanity*'. And I witnessed first-hand the amazing and necessary work you do for the state.

In times of adversity, heroes are always born. Difficulty most often brings innovation, compassion and a strength of spirit that generally lives under the surface of our day-to-day lives. COVID19 and the bushfires were no different.

St John and its staff are among the unsung heroes of COVID. You have acted with flexibility and agility in an ever-changing landscape.

You've worked collaboratively with a host of state and national bodies to keep the WA community as safe as possible while faced with a virus that wreaked havoc worldwide. Your fast actions helped minimise the spread of COVID here in Western Australia and allowed us to retain a sense of normality for (pretty much) the better part of 12 months while we watched the rest of the world struggle to contain the virus and keep its people safe.

Earlier this month Perth was faced with its second COVID lockdown, after only just recovering from the bushfires that decimated over 80 homes in the Perth hills. As I toured the Incident Command Centre and the evacuation centres, I was blown away by the true soul and generosity of our people and have never been prouder to be a Western Australian.

The spirit, compassion, care and kindness of Western Australians shone through this month. Yourselves - front line service staff and volunteers - spent tireless hours supporting distressed community members at their most vulnerable and I was so touched by your gentle, caring and supportive ways.

Your response to emergencies has been remarkable in the past year. What is even more remarkable is the fact that you continue to provide your normal services to our community in the midst of wild bushfires and a global pandemic.

- 240,000 ambulance patients
- Almost 306,000 calls answered by 000
- Over 1000 critical care missions undertaken on RAC Rescue Helicopter
- 135,000 patients transferred

- 400,000 trained in first aid, 320,000 through St John's free first aid training
- Over 270,000 patients treated at GP and Urgent Care
- 3,400 events attended by Event Health Services with over 20,000 patients treated

These statistics are staggering and must be acknowledged and commended. As shall you, who sit before me today.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. For acting selflessly. For choosing a profession which values service to humanity. For being the individuals who rush in to dangerous situations, when most others are fleeing. You are unique. You are special. And you are so deserving of the recognition you are receiving today.