



PRESS RELEASE: WARC AND PARTNERS CELEBRATE WORLD HEART DAY

[World Heart Day](#) takes place on the 29th September every year and is the World Heart Federation's and the world's biggest platform for raising awareness about cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke.

The University of Sydney's [Westmead Applied Research Centre](#) (WARC) is recognising this year's global campaign **MY HEART, YOUR HEART** by asking the community of western Sydney to make a **Heart Promise** to care for *their* heart by eating healthily, doing more exercise and stopping smoking and to look after *their loved one's* hearts by encouraging them to do the same and learning Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

About 25,000 people suffer a cardiac arrest outside of hospital in Australia every year. Currently only 10% of these people survive. CPR can save lives. For every minute that passes without CPR the chance of survival falls by 10%. A rapid response by a community bystander can improve health outcomes, but many community members report feeling a lack of knowledge and confidence if confronted with a cardiac arrest. Recent Australian surveys indicate less than half of people who suffer a cardiac arrest in the community have someone step in to do CPR or use an AED before an ambulance arrives.

To promote World Heart Day, WARC partnered with the [Michael Hughes Foundation](#); [Surf Lifesaving NSW](#); [Heart Foundation Australia](#) and [Western Sydney Local Health District](#) and [Heart Support Australia](#) at **Westmead Hospital on Friday 28 September** promoting healthy heart tips and providing all day demonstrations of CPR.

Professor Clara Chow, Cardiologist and Academic Director Westmead Applied Research Centre said, "unfortunately as a Cardiologist I see the devastating outcomes of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. If more family and community members were confident to do CPR, the outcomes for these patients could change. We hope we can encourage people to learn CPR and make them feel confident to assist."

One of the event partners, the Michael Hughes Foundation, was established following the untimely death of Dundas father Michael Hughes of sudden cardiac arrest, the Foundation has placed more than 200 defibrillators throughout NSW and trained more than 1300 people to use them and how to administer basic first aid. The latter is vital to survival, said Julie Hughes, foundation executive director and wife of Mr Hughes. "CPR is critical," she

said. "With no intervention, within four minutes a person in cardiac arrest will suffer brain damage and after eight minutes, there is little chance of survival."

The National Heart Foundation's, NSW Heart Health Manager Scott Walsberger said, "there are some risk factors that you can't change, such as getting older and having a family history, but you can change risk factors such as smoking, blood pressure and cholesterol." Cate Ferry, Clinical Issues Manager from the Heart Foundation added that you can reduce your chances of developing coronary heart disease by "adopting healthy lifestyle habits and following your doctor's advice."

Demonstrating how to apply CPR on specially designed manikins, was Craig Carney from the Australian Lifesaving Academy, Surf Lifesaving NSW, "Surf Life Saving is much more than just saving lives on the beach...a key priority for us is reaching out to all Australians through our substantial community education programs including our CPR courses."

Members of the public and administrative staff from around the hospital and Westmead precinct tried out their CPR skills on specially designed manikins and making Heart Promises to follow healthy heart tips. Associate Professor Julie Redfern, Physiotherapist and Deputy Director of the Centre said, "This was a great event and hopefully we can promote the importance of looking after our heart health and encouraging the general public to become first responders to community cardiac arrests."

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