



17 September 2009

National Stroke Week 14-20 September 2009

## FAST Challenge

### Stroke Unit Stars vs. Lifeguard Legends Saving more than lives in the pool

Staff of the Launceston General Hospital and Launceston Aquatic will take a different approach to saving lives today by participating in the National Stroke Foundation's FAST Challenge.

The teams will put their skills to the test in the pool to show the importance of a FAST response in a rescue situation. Similarly, the people of Launceston are urged to act FAST at the first signs of stroke.

**F.A.S.T.** stands for **Face, Arms, Speech and Time**. The **FAST** test involves asking three simple questions:

- **Face** – Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
- **Arms** – Can they lift both arms?
- **Speech** – Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- **Time** – Time is critical. If you see any of these signs call **000** immediately

Today's FAST Challenge provides a great opportunity to raise awareness of National Stroke Week and launch the new FAST campaign.

"Stroke can happen to anyone at anytime and it's our responsibility to make sure people know how to recognise the signs and what to do," said Connie Digolis, State Manager of the National Stroke Foundation. "The FAST campaign provides a clear, simple message that is easy for Tasmanians of any age to remember".

Research has found 70 per cent of stroke patients and 46 per cent of bystanders did not recognise stroke at the onset of symptoms, and 85 per cent did not call an ambulance immediately, risking death or severe disability from stroke.

In support of the event, Mayor Albert van Zetten said: "Recognising that someone is having a stroke and knowing what to do can save that person's life. For the people of Launceston, the FAST Challenge begins today to ensure we all know how to think and act FAST".

With school holidays almost at an end, Launceston Aquatic provides the perfect venue for promoting the new campaign.

"Our Challengers have been trained in their line of work to save lives," Ms Digolis said. "Today has been about helping people understand that they can save lives too. It's just a matter of them acting FAST".

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