

Defibs in Trucks

Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative



Project number HVSI 930



St John

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Acknowledgements

St John Ambulance Australia sincerely acknowledges the support and collaboration of our partners at Ron Finemore Transport in this Defibs in Trucks initiative. We extend our thanks to James Dixon (Chief Executive Officer), Natasha Field and the broader Ron Finemore Transport team for their commitment and contributions, which were integral to the success of this project.

St John Ambulance Australia would also like to acknowledge and thank Rommel Varghese and the Woolworths Group for generously allowing us to utilise their venue and facilities.

With thanks to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulators' Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, supported by the Australian Government.



Grant Purpose and Objectives

Project Description

St John delivered the *Defibs in Trucks* initiative to develop, pilot and implement the installation of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) within Australian heavy vehicles. The project was designed to improve safety outcomes in the heavy vehicle transport sector by increasing access to mobile, life-saving first aid capability for out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest, particularly in on-road, regional and remote operating environments.

The project delivered the installation of 50 new AEDs across a heavy vehicle fleet and provided industry-specific First Aid and defibrillator education to truck drivers and industry workers. Training in how to defibrillate a patient (use an AED) was critical, particularly for the truck drivers who had defibrillators in their vehicles.

The project was delivered in partnership with Ron Finemore Transport, which supported workforce engagement, access to vehicles, coordination of training delivery, and the staged roll-out of AEDs across its fleet.

Expected Outcomes

Through collaboration with heavy vehicle industry partners, the initiative empowered drivers to confidently take action when involved in, or first on scene at, collisions or roadside emergencies. By placing life-saving equipment and skills directly into operational environments, the project strengthened early emergency response capability on the road network, with the potential to save lives and improve outcomes for other road users. The initiative also addressed the psychological impact of emergency situations by reducing feelings of helplessness among witnesses and ensuring workers were better prepared to support their colleagues, peers and family members in critical moments.

Project Objectives



Equip 50 trucks/heavy vehicles with new, high-quality Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)



Increase truck driver / vehicle operator **knowledge**, skills and confidence to provide bystander first aid



Reduce roadside deaths by mobilising AEDs and First Aid skills in regional, rural and remote communities.



Summary of Project Activities

Stage 1 – Planning (March-April 2025)

- Established the project team with St John, Ron Finemore Transport and Woolworths representatives.
- Finalised the project plan and timeframes
- Developed a comprehensive communications and marketing plan / strategy, in consultation with the NHVR and with Ron Finemore Transport.
- Fifty state-of-the-art Vivest Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) were strategically procured through the St John National Product Sourcing Unit, ensuring the deployment of high-quality, reliable life-saving equipment across the fleet.
- The RFT team established the most appropriate approach for installing the units within the truck cabin, ensuring safety was prioritised and that the units were securely fixed, out of the way during normal operations, and easily accessible in the event of an emergency.
- St John and the RFT Team will work closely to plan the evaluation process and content that best suits the drivers and provides the best outcome for evaluation. Careful consideration of truck driver time off road must be factored in here and online evaluation will be created where possible.

Stage 2 – Development and Training (Commence May – September 2025)

- Appropriate training resources were identified and utilised, taking into consideration truck driver availability, locations, and operational constraints.
- The content of the training was reviewed, ensuring that it was the most appropriate for all users and that the information was in an appropriate language for the audience.
- Content and resources for practical, face-to-face training was also reviewed and communicated with volunteers to ensure their skills were up to date in preparation for face-to-face training for the September launch event.

Stage 3 – Training rollout (August – March 2026)

- Online training was rolled out using Ron Finemore Transport's internal online training platform, enabling drivers to complete the course at a time and location that suited their operational schedules. Using this platform also allowed St John and RFT to efficiently collect participant feedback, supporting continuous improvement of the training content and deliver.
- Face-to-face training was delivered during the September launch event, providing participants with practical demonstrations and hands-on experience using training manikins. This enabled participants to actively practice CPR techniques and gain firsthand experience in the correct use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).
- An unexpected transition to a new training platform at RFT created some challenges. While this shift introduced a slight delay in getting everyone trained, it ultimately set us up with a more effective long-term solution.

Stage 4 – Equipment Installation (August 2025)

- All fifty Vivest defibrillators were installed into the Ron Finemore fleet of 50 trucks. The installation involved minimal alteration to the existing cabin and ensured driver safety, storage efficiency and ease of access in case of an emergency.
- Custom stickers were produced and affixed to the external panel of the trucks. These stickers play an important part in community safety – allowing anyone to access the defibrillator when needed, not just the truck driver.

Stage 5 – Communication and Marketing (September 2025)

- Promoted the partnership across national CEO communications and the St John website (stjohn.org.au) to reach key stakeholders and industry audiences.
- Delivered organic social media posts (Meta and LinkedIn) to educate truck drivers and the public on roadside first aid and AED access in truck and to celebrate the launch of this initiative.
- Shared milestone stories and outreach content highlighting project progress, outcomes and industry impact.
- The Defibs in Trucks launch event was the most successful stage in the project. It took place at the Woolworths Distribution Centre in Erskine Park in September 2025. Activities that took place included: free opportunity to learn CPR and how to use a defibrillator session; Truckie First Aid kits, speeches from key industry representatives, information packs, containing information about defibrillators and how they benefit community and media and PR activity.



Stage 6 – Monitoring and evaluation (August 2025 – March 2026)

- We delivered the RFT program using the Yarno training platform, which supported consistent delivery of the learning content. Once the platform changed, we needed to collect feedback directly via individuals. This presented a challenge but an opportunity to improve the data collected.
- Using Yarno’s built-in evaluation tool allowed us to gather structured feedback directly from participants.
- The evaluation insights highlighted how participants experienced the training and where future improvements could be made.

Stage 7 – Final Report (March 2026)

“This program highlights that continued collaboration between government, regulators, unions, and industry can set new benchmarks for safety across Australia’s supply chain.”

Senator Tony Sheldon NSW

Program Management

Overall

The *Defibs in Trucks* Project was led by St John Ambulance Australia, with Ron Finemore Transport serving as a key partner throughout the initiative. The project delivery was primarily managed by the Strategic Programs and Partnerships Manager from St John Ambulance, Fairlie Tucker, in collaboration with James Dixon, CEO of Ron Finemore Transport and his team.

Risk Management

Several project risks were identified, including potential delays in receiving required first aid equipment. This was addressed through St John's National Product Sourcing Unit, which utilised a robust supply chain and centralised distribution to ensure timely, cost-effective access to high-quality products. Compliance with ISO standards and TGA regulations, as well as ethical sourcing, ensured both quality and availability; no equipment issues were encountered.

One of the key risks identified during the project was the possibility that the training provided might not be sufficient for truck drivers to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. To address this concern, the project team collaborated closely with Ron Finemore Transport to thoroughly assess and understand the needs of the staff who would participate in the training. This partnership enabled the development of targeted evaluation questions designed specifically to highlight any gaps or shortcomings in the training content and learning process. Through this approach, the project aimed to ensure that all participants received the most relevant and effective instruction possible, thereby minimizing the risk of inadequate training outcomes.

One of the additional risks identified during the project was the difficulty truck drivers faced in accessing the eLearning component. To address this risk, the project team worked closely with Ron Finemore Transport (RFT) and its staff to ensure the training could be completed using mobile phones. This solution allowed drivers to finish their training at any convenient time, enhancing accessibility and supporting successful completion of the eLearning requirements.

Loss of key Project Staff was also on our risk radar, however the risk was low. The project was delivered by a skilled multidisciplinary team supported by robust recruitment and training processes. Built-in skill redundancies, shared training and ICT assets, and well-documented procedures ensured continuity and resilience throughout delivery.

Stakeholder Management

Ron Finemore Transport (RFT) were a key stakeholder throughout the full lifecycle of the project, reflecting the strength of the established and ongoing partnership between the two organisations. Their engagement was integral to the effective planning, coordination and delivery of project activities, with regular operational meetings held to support collaboration, oversight and alignment. RFT enabled us to reach a broad network of key industry representatives which allowed us to really amplify the message.

Woolworths Group and Primary Connect also provided significant support to the project, particularly in relation to the delivery of the launch event. Their contribution was instrumental in securing an appropriate venue and access to suitable vehicles, ensuring the initiative could be showcased within an operational heavy vehicle environment. In addition, Woolworths supported media engagement activities both in the lead-up to and on the day of the launch event, contributing to increased visibility, stakeholder awareness and broader public understanding of the initiative and its safety outcomes.

Project Communications

A comprehensive Communications Plan was developed as part of the project and implemented throughout its delivery, culminating in a highly engaging and successful launch event held on 25 September 2025. The event was attended by a range of key sector representatives, including Senator Tony Sheldon; Mr Chris Brooks, Director, Primary Connect + and Transport, Woolworths Group; Scott Greenow, A/Executive Director Freight for Transport NSW; along with many other industry leaders and stakeholders.

The launch showcased the defibrillators installed in the trucks and featured uniformed St John volunteers providing practical demonstrations on defibrillator use and the administration of CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Woolworths generously provided the venue, enabling heavy vehicles to be displayed on site and enhancing the impact of the event.

The event not only celebrated the success of the initiative but also fostered important discussion on the critical role of defibrillators in both community settings and the heavy vehicle transport sector.

Awards

Ron Finemore Transport was recognised with the Extra Mile in Safety Award at Primary Connects' annual Transport Safety Day, an event celebrating leadership, collaboration and commitment to safety across the transport sector. The award acknowledged Ron Finemore Transport's partnership with St John Ambulance Australia and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to deliver an innovative safety initiative involving the installation of life-saving Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) across refrigeration and general freight trucks.

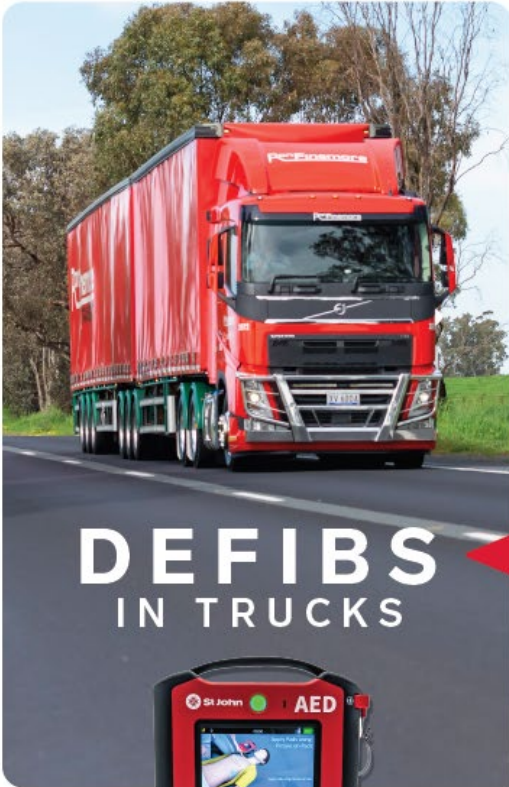
The initiative was recognised for its potential to save lives, particularly in rural and regional areas where truck drivers are often first on the scene of an incident. The award highlighted Ron Finemore Transport's long-standing leadership in safety and its commitment to protecting both its workforce and the wider community, demonstrating how industry collaboration can deliver meaningful, real-world safety outcomes.

Issues

Reaching the target of delivering training to 300 truck drivers and ensuring completion within the approved project timeframe presented a key implementation challenge. This was primarily the result of a system change within Ron Finemore Transport's learning management system (LMS). Initially, the training was hosted and distributed through the RFT LMS via an externally contracted provider; however, when this arrangement concluded, the training was no longer accessible to staff and could not be systematically deployed or monitored through the existing platform.

To address this issue and minimise disruption to project delivery, an extension of time was sought and approved. The project team implemented an alternative solution whereby the training remained hosted on the St John Ambulance Australia system, with unique access codes created and distributed to remaining participants through RFT. This approach ensured continuity of training delivery, restored participant access, and enabled improved oversight and monitoring of training uptake and completion, supporting achievement of the project's training objective.

The system change also created an additional challenge in relation to the collection of evaluation data. As the training was no longer hosted within the RFT platform—where evaluation tools had been purpose-built to capture participant feedback—an alternative evaluation approach was required. The project team adapted its evaluation methodology to continue collecting meaningful feedback and insights, ensuring that participant experience and learning outcomes could still be assessed and incorporated into project reporting and continuous improvement processes.



DEFIBS IN TRUCKS




MOBILISING LIFE-SAVING AEDs ON AUSTRALIAN ROADS

stjohn.org.au



Defibs in Trucks – life saving equipment to be mobilised on Australian roads


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St John Ambulance Australia
 Published by Mliette-Blu Ornelas · September 26, 2025 ·

Yesterday we officially launched the Defibs in Trucks Program in Sydney! 🇦🇺

Thanks to funding from the [National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's](#) Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, 50 of [Ron Finemore Transport](#) trucks will now be fitted with AEDs.

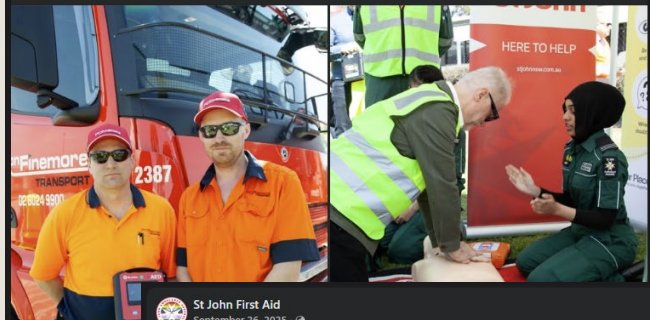
The initiative is all about improving emergency health outcomes on roads, especially in regional and remote areas.

It also gives drivers and road transport workers the confidence that comes with practical first aid and defibrillator training.

An AED is a small, portable device that can deliver a life-saving shock to restart the heart during Sudden Cardiac Arrest. With the right access and training, almost anyone can use one. ❤️

A big thank you to all our guest speakers, including Senator Tony Sheldon, and to the amazing teams at NHVR, Ron Finemore Transport, and the [St John First Aid NSW](#) team and volunteers for their incredible support in bringing this launch to life. 🙌💚

Want to learn more? Head to <https://stjohn.org.au/>




St John First Aid
 September 26, 2025 ·

50 Defibs Hit the Road 🇦🇺❤️ St John Ambulance Australia has launched the Defibs in Trucks program, placing 50 AEDs in Ron Finemore Transport trucks, helping save lives on regional NSW roads.

75% of Aussies believe AEDs should be in vehicles, yet access remains limited, particularly in areas with barriers to emergency care, with higher risks in regional areas across the state.

Thanks to support from the NHVR's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, truck drivers will receive lifesaving first aid training and learn how to use their new AEDs, empowering drivers to have the confidence to respond in cardiac emergencies, especially in remote areas.

We sincerely thank Senator Tony Sheldon, Ron Finemore Transport, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, Woolworths Group Limited, and St John Ambulance Australia members for supporting this exciting launch. Together, we're driving change and saving lives. 🙌

National You
Like



Wrap up video, promoting the initiative:

<https://youtu.be/OrjqYGBd2BY>

Ron Finemore Transport among Primary Connect award winners

by [Staff Writer](#)

August 20, 2025

in [Industry News](#), [National Heavy Vehicle Regulator](#), [Primary Connect](#), [Ron Finemore Transport](#), [St John's Ambulance](#)

Reading Time: 2 mins read A A



Image: Primary Connect.

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Primary Connect has announced Ron Finemore Transport as the recipient of a new award.

Along with several other carrier partners, Ron Finemore Transport was honoured with the Extra Mile in Safety Award at Primary Connect's recent annual Transport Safety Day.

Over 140 transport carriers, industry experts, and leaders were on hand for the event which promotes connection, recognition, and commitment to safety.

Ron Finemore Transport were recognised for their partnership with St John's Ambulance and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

The initiative with both parties involved placing life-saving Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in their refrigeration and general freight trucks based in the Central West.

Chief Executive Officer James Dixon said Ron Finemore Transport was incredibly proud to receive recognition through the 'Extra Mile in Safety' Award from Primary Connect.

"This honour reflects the importance of collaboration across our industry, and we thank our partners St John Ambulance and the NHVR for helping bring this initiative to life," he told *Prime Mover*.

"By equipping our refrigeration and general trucks based in the Central West with life-saving AEDs, where our drivers are often first on the scene, we hope to make a real difference in the moments that matter most," Dixon said.

"Ron Finemore AO has long been an industry leader in safety, and it has always been at the heart of everything we do. This award is a powerful reinforcement of our ongoing commitment to protecting not only our people but also the wider community."

As trucks are often the first on the scene in rural and regional areas, this pilot program is viewed as having the potential to save lives along key routes like the Great Western Highway.

"This award, nominated by our carrier partners, recognises an innovative safety initiative that can make a real difference to the industry and the community," said Primary Connect in an online statement.

Primary Connect also thanked Ron Finemore Transport for its leadership.

"This is a powerful example of going the extra mile for the safety of our teams and the wider community," the company said.

MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2025

Defibs in Trucks – life saving equipment to be mobilised on Australian roads

On Thursday 25 September, a St John Ambulance Australia program aimed at saving lives on roads by equipping Truck Drivers with Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), was launched in Sydney at the Erskine Park Distribution Centre of Primary Connect, the supply chain business that supports Woolworths Group.

St John's Defibs in Trucks Program, funded by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's (NHVR) Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative (HVSIs) will see AEDs installed in fifty trucks across the Ron Finemore Transport fleet, principally operating from Sydney across the Blue Mountains to Central West NSW.

The initiative aims to achieve better emergency health outcomes for drivers, particularly in regional and remote areas. The initiative will further empower drivers and road transport workers with practical education in first aid and defibrillator use. An AED is a portable device that offers a potentially life-saving shock to re-establish heart rhythm during a Sudden Cardiac Arrest. With access and training, almost anyone can use one.

St John Ambulance Australia CEO, Brenden Maher acknowledges the importance of equipping vehicles and drivers with AEDs and first aid skills.

"We know that heavy vehicle operators, as frequent road users, are often first on scene during collisions and roadside emergencies. Mobilising AEDs on major routes and empowering drivers with the skills to use them has the potential to save lives."

Out-of-hospital Sudden Cardiac Arrest impacts around 26,000 Australians per annum. Chances of survival from sudden cardiac arrest are reduced by 7-10% for every minute that a person does not receive defibrillation. Even with the shortest ambulance response times in Australia (9-15 minutes) bystander intervention in the crucial first moments post collision or roadside emergency is crucial.

"Medical emergencies don't wait for convenient locations. Having life-saving equipment and skills more readily available on our roads will improve the chances that a person will receive the critical care they need, while waiting for an ambulance," said Mr Maher.

St John Ambulance Australia is working with funders such as the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and industry partners such as Ron Finemore Transport, to facilitate positive change.

NHVR Chair, Hon. Duncan Gay AM spoke at the launch highlighting that Defibs in Trucks is one of 16 HVSIs programs funded under a broader \$4.4 million investment towards heavy vehicle safety initiatives.

"We are dedicated to keeping our trucking community and all Australians safe on our roads. This initiative shows how government and regulators, and private and charitable sectors can come together to tackle road safety challenges with practical solutions."

Achieved Outcomes and Impact

What Was Achieved

The *Defibs in Trucks* project has significantly increased the availability of lifesaving Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) within the heavy vehicle transport industry and the regional, rural and remote communities in which these vehicles operate. This increase in the availability of defibrillators will save lives. By embedding 30 (thirty) AEDs directly into working heavy vehicles, the project has strengthened mobile emergency response capability and improved access to critical lifesaving equipment in environments where timely medical assistance is often limited.

In addition to increasing the number of mobile defibrillators in the community, the project has delivered meaningful improvements in first aid awareness and capability among 300 truck drivers and their colleagues. Targeted training and education have increased participants' understanding of the importance of early intervention in medical emergencies, including sudden cardiac arrest, and improved confidence to act as bystanders when incidents occur. The training has increased the number of bystanders who know what to do in an emergency. Collectively, these outcomes have contributed to enhanced safety outcomes for the heavy vehicle workforce and the broader community, reinforcing the role of industry-led initiatives in improving road safety and emergency preparedness. While the broader community benefit and flow-on effects of increased first aid capability are difficult to quantify, mobilising AEDs and trained responders into high-risk transport corridors contributes to stronger early emergency response and supports the development of more resilient communities.

Impact

The *Defibs in Trucks* project delivered measurable safety and social outcomes by strengthening early emergency response capability within the heavy vehicle transport sector. By mobilising AEDs into operational environments and equipping 300 drivers and industry workers with first aid and defibrillation capability, the project reduced risk associated with delayed response to sudden cardiac arrest and roadside medical emergencies, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas. The presence of trained responders and readily accessible lifesaving equipment supports faster bystander intervention, improves the likelihood of survival, and contributes to safer road environments for drivers and other road users. While broader community benefits and the flow-on effects of increased first aid capability are difficult to quantify, the project has made a meaningful contribution to community preparedness and resilience by embedding lifesaving skills and equipment on our roads.

The project also delivered economic and industry benefits by supporting a proactive safety culture and demonstrating the value of preventative investment in heavy vehicle operations. Improved emergency response capability has the potential to reduce the severity and consequences of incidents, helping to minimise disruption, downtime and associated costs for industry, while supporting workforce wellbeing and retention. Importantly, the initiative showcased effective collaboration between government, regulators, industry and the not-for-profit sector to deliver a practical, scalable safety solution aligned with the objectives of the Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative. By integrating safety

innovation into day-to-day operations, Defibs in Trucks contributes to safer, more productive supply chains and provides a model that can be replicated across fleets to deliver sustained safety improvements across the heavy vehicle industry.

Project Evaluation

Project Success

The *Defibs in Trucks* project is considered a success against its core objectives of equipping heavy vehicles with AEDs, increasing driver knowledge and confidence to provide bystander first aid, and reducing the risk of roadside deaths in regional, rural and remote communities. Fifty trucks were successfully fitted with high-quality AEDs, and training was delivered to truck drivers and industry workers, increasing awareness of sudden cardiac arrest and the importance of early intervention. While there is currently limited quantitative data to fully measure changes in confidence or to directly attribute lives saved to the project, qualitative feedback from participants and partners indicates increased capability, preparedness and willingness to act in an emergency. Further feedback and evaluation data will continue to be gathered over time to strengthen the evidence base. Although the lives saved as a result of the initiative cannot yet be quantified, the project has clearly established critical lifesaving infrastructure and skills on Australian roads, with impacts expected to grow and become more measurable into the future.

Lessons Learned

A key lesson from the *Defibs in Trucks* project was that training uptake was slower than anticipated, largely due to operational pressures and system changes. This highlighted the importance of allowing adequate time, flexible delivery methods and contingency planning to support participation.

The project also demonstrated that evaluation activities would have been more impactful if supported by an incentive. Feedback indicated that uptake and completion of evaluation would likely have been higher if participants had a clear incentive to do so, reinforcing the value of embedding simple motivators to strengthen engagement and improve the quality and quantity of evaluation data collected.

In addition, the project reinforced the value of social media as a powerful tool to engage audiences and build awareness. A key improvement for future initiatives would be to promote the program in a more 'always on' way, using sustained and consistent digital communications to maintain momentum, reinforce key messages and extend reach beyond major milestones or launch events.

Sustainability and Future Plans

Sustainability

St John is committed to increasing the number of defibrillators in the community. This project provided the opportunity, in partnership with Ron Finemore Transport and the broader industry, to embed

lifesaving capability directly into everyday heavy vehicle operations. Sustainability is supported through strong industry partnerships, integration of AEDs into operational fleets, and training that aligns with existing workplace safety systems. Importantly, ongoing community engagement was identified as a key success factor in sustaining momentum—helping to reinforce awareness, encourage shared ownership and ensure the initiative continues to deliver long-term safety benefits beyond the life of the project.

The learnings from this project will directly inform future initiatives, enabling St John and industry partners to refine delivery, strengthen engagement and achieve sustained, long-term safety impact across the transport sector and the communities it serves.

Next Steps

St John will continue to raise awareness of the lifesaving power of defibrillators and seek opportunities to fund the placement of additional AEDs in the community, particularly within the transport and heavy vehicle industry. This will include continued and targeted social media activity and educational vignettes that reinforce key training messages and support ongoing confidence to act in an emergency. Building on the success of this pilot, St John will also maintain and strengthen its partnership with Ron Finemore Transport, working collaboratively to sustain existing capability and explore opportunities to expand the program across additional vehicles, fleets and industry partners, ensuring the initiative delivers lasting safety outcomes beyond the life of the project. The work and impact of this pilot project will inform the expansion of the defibs in trucks concept.