

First aid trainers strengthen communities

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First aid trainer Marcelle Mangan is kneeling beside the torso of a mannequin. She has the heel of her hand on its chest and her other hand stacked on top of the first. Six trainees are doing the same beside other mannequins, poised to follow Mangan's demonstration. She begins to show how to correctly perform CPR chest compressions and the percussive chorus of six trainees pumping weight into their own mannequins' chests follows.



Marcelle Mangan is a commercial first aid trainer with St John. *Supplied*

The other trainees seated around the room watch and listen to Mangan interact with her mannequin until she asks everyone what happens if an ill person is nearly drowning in their own vomit.

"If we blow too hard and vomit is coming out of the mouth, what

would we do?" she says.

"Recovery," somebody says, and the group turns its mannequins onto their sides.

Mangan, a commercial first aid trainer with course provider St John, is delivering St John's Provide First Aid course to members of the public at St John First Aid Training Centre in Melbourne's CBD.

She estimates she teaches about seven different types of first aid courses and says she can take more than 30 training sessions per week.

"There are times where you feel really comfortable and there are times when you might feel a little bit nervous, based on the audience, but most of the time I feel good," says Mangan.

Mangan, who has been a commercial first aid trainer for four years, had previously worked in an eclectic variety of roles including personal trainer, paramedic and teacher.

Her main qualification for teaching first aid, she says, is certificate IV in training and assessment.

She's part of a team of St John first aid trainers who train 400,000 Australians a year.

"We've got such a variety of people teaching first aid for St John," says Mangan. "As long as they have the ability to teach in front of a group, and St John gives them the training for first aid, then they're ready to go."

At today's session, Mangan divulges a lot of educational information. She demonstrates the features and functionality of equipment such as defibrillators, refers to her electronic

whiteboard, invites trainees to participate in exercises, throws up questions and gives answers.

In the next year, one of her main goals is to continue to push quality first aid training out to the community, in alignment with St John's aim to have at least one person ready to provide first aid across every home, workplace and public setting.

Her rationale for her goal is crystallised in a story she tells about a manager who collapsed and died in a workplace that wasn't prepared to provide first aid.

"The fallout was terrible," she says.