

St JOHN AMBULANCE SERVICE, HYDEN sub-branch

This service was initiated by Bob Clayton in the early '70s. An old Dodge unit was bought from the Kondinin sub-branch with local funds. It was garaged privately and called out via an emergency landline. An F100 was added in '78, and the very reliable Mercedes units a few decades on. The service comes under the Brotherhood of St John, a religious Order, that has expanded from First Aid into a wide range of people care services in WA.

Ray Herring, Keith Billingham, Bob Bailey and Colin Muir were the main Driver/First Aid volunteers over the years, but more than 12 are also now trained in the district. There is no payment for time, and a call-out can consume half a day or more at a time. There are about 100-200 callouts per year to the Hyden/Kondinin units, mostly from road accidents. (Smithy's off- road racing required an ambulance present twice a year.) Volunteers are not Paramedics, only permitted to apply primary care, not even injections, but can give oxygen and pain relief. Their main objective is to get the patient into the care of the Doctor or hospital staff in Kondinin or Narembeen, quickly and safely. The number of accidents, recording and reporting, and training required to stay registered increases year by year. It is serious volunteering...

Their work is largely unseen by others in the district, and highly confidential. As many accidents have Police/legal implications no photos or patient details are permitted. But the work can be exciting, demanding and very interesting. And... " you can save a life or prevent serious disability in an accident victim. That can be really something."



Demonstration of patient transfer to Flying Doctor service, '98. Used to be done in the open...now there is a modern transfer station courtesy the Lions.

Photos are available from a recent training/accreditation session in Hyden.

