

Event Briefing

Restart a Heart

Due to MO:	13 October 2025	Reference	HNZ00100602
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
From:	Martin Hefford, Director, Living Well, Planning, Funding, & Outcomes		
Copy to:	n/a		
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Consulted:	ACC		
Proactive Release:	This title is proposed by Health NZ for proactive release		

Contact for phone discussion (if required)			
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Martin Hefford	Director, Living Well, Planning, Funding, & Outcomes		

Attachments

Appendix 1: Runsheet

Appendix 2: Talking Points

Appendix 2 has been withheld in full.

About the event

Purpose	To support Restart a Heart Day which raises awareness about the importance of learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
Date	Wednesday 15 October 2025
Time	11:30am – 12:45pm
Venue	West Foyer, Executive Wing, Parliament Buildings
Expected attendees	Claire Carruthers, General Manager Fundraising and Communications, Wellington Free Ambulance [REDACTED] Rachel Wilson, Head of Communications, Wellington Free Ambulance [REDACTED]
Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora representatives	Nil
Media	Media have been invited
Talking points	Refer to Appendix 2

Background

1. This event briefing provides you with information to support your attendance at the talk and practical demonstration of CPR and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator. This is in support of Restart a Heart Day, which is a global initiative held every year on 16 October. The day is dedicated to teaching people the simple skills that can save a life if someone suffers a cardiac arrest.
2. Wellington Free Ambulance (WFA) will be running the demonstration.

Heart attacks and cardiac arrests in New Zealand

3. A heart attack and cardiac arrest are not the same thing, and a cardiac arrest is typically more urgent. Both are however medical emergencies and one can lead to the other.
4. A heart attack is a circulation problem where blood flow to the heart is blocked, causing damage to the heart muscle, whereas cardiac arrest is an electrical problem where the heart suddenly stops beating. A person experiencing a heart attack is usually conscious, whereas in cardiac arrest, they are unresponsive and not breathing normally.
5. In New Zealand, more than 2,000 people are treated for a cardiac arrest each year. For every minute without CPR or defibrillation, a patient's chance of survival falls by 10–15 percent. Only 11 percent of people will survive 30 days post the event.

6. Patients who are witnessed in cardiac arrest and receive CPR from a bystander are 2.8-times more likely to survive 30 days post the event.
7. Patients who have an *initial shockable rhythm* are 2.3-times more likely to survive 30 days post the event if they are given community defibrillation.

Wellington Free Ambulance

8. Established in 1927, WFA provides 24/7 emergency road ambulance and communication services for the greater Wellington Region. It is the only emergency road ambulance service which is free of charge to users for both injury and health attendances, due to fundraising to cover the costs of medical part-charges.
9. WFA owns and operates the Ambulance Communications Centre in Wellington. It is one of three inter-operable centres that provide a single, virtual service for New Zealand, with Hato Hone St John operating centres in Auckland and Christchurch. It provides call answering for 111 ambulance calls and ambulance dispatch.
10. WFA also provides patient transfer services for Health NZ, and non-government funded commercial and community services (including event health services, medical alarm monitoring and free community CPR training).

Wellington Free Ambulance's funding

11. ACC and Health NZ provide the majority of funding for WFA's emergency road ambulance services. The remainder is generated by its fundraising and commercial activities.
12. In the seven years to FY 2024/25, ACC and Health NZ funding for WFA has grown 145% from \$22M in FY 2017/18 to [REDACTED]
13. WFA has recently opened a new station in the Wairarapa. This new station build was funded through fundraising and contributions from ACC and Health NZ.
14. [REDACTED]

Appendix 1: Runsheet

Time	Details	Minister's Office notes
11:30am	Wellington Free Ambulance (WFA) arrive at Parliament WFA team to set up demonstration mannequins in the West Foyer	
12:00pm	Media and other attendees arrive Claire Carruthers and Emily van Velthooven to meet Minister outside Copperfield's Café and walk him to the demonstration area	
12:05pm	██████████ to speak	
12:10pm	Minister to speak (5 mins)	
12:15pm	██████████ to provide a shortened but comprehensive demonstration, inviting Minister to replicate her instructions on a mannequin Other mannequins available for attendees to have a go	
12:20pm	██████████ / Minister to answer media questions Attendees welcome to ask questions around WFA / Restart a Heart Day	
12:25pm	██████████ thanks Minister Informs of further demonstrations at Parliament Demonstration concludes	
12:25pm - 12:45pm	WFA to meet with Minister in Minister's office and services they're providing in the greater Wellington region	