

# A thank you straight from the heart

Dogs fan Rob McCarthy (right) is reunited with paramedic Liam Moore. Photo: Chris Hopkins



## Carolyn Webb

Ten minutes before the final siren of the 2016 grand final, Rob McCarthy's heart raced as his beloved Western Bulldogs fended off the Sydney Swans.

He turned to a fellow fan sitting in the MCG Southern Stand and joked that he hoped there was an ambulance parked outside the ground, "because if the Doggies win I'm going to have a heart attack".

Two minutes later, Mr McCarthy collapsed from a cardiac arrest.

He was not conscious as the Bulldogs triumphed, but is alive to savour the victory today because an off-duty paramedic saved his life.

Now fit and well, after having a stent put into a clogged artery, the father of one returned to the 'G on Sunday, Father's Day, to launch the Heart Foundation's Big Heart Appeal.

A grateful Mr McCarthy, 65, of Yarraville, warned men over 40 to get their heart health checked with their GPs.

He hugged paramedic Liam

Moore, who performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on him, and also thanked MCG medics Jack Cameron and Dale Rodger, who shocked his heart back into rhythm with a defibrillator.

The Heart Foundation released a survey showing one in five people wouldn't know how to recognise a cardiac arrest, and 40 per cent would not feel confident to administer CPR.

The main reasons for not stepping forward were a lack of knowledge or confidence, and fear of doing harm.

Mr McCarthy's cardiologist, Heart Foundation board member Dr Nick Cox, said that in an emergency someone must be prepared to act.

Even untrained bystanders could "have a go" at CPR and using a defibrillator. "You can't make things worse, and you'll probably save a life."

For every minute of inaction, a patient's chances of survival went down by 10 per cent, he said. "So after 10 minutes you've got virtually no chance of survival."

At the 2016 grand final, off-duty

paramedic Liam Moore, 25, was barking for the Swans near Mr McCarthy when the call went out for help.

By the time he laid Mr McCarthy between two rows of seats, there was no pulse. Mr Moore performed CPR about five minutes before the defibrillator was administered.

Mr McCarthy remembers sitting up on a stretcher as the players received their medals, asking bystanders, "Have the Doggies won?" and giving the thumbs-up as he was carried away.

# Doctors slam vaccination 'laziness'

## Adam Gartrell

Health correspondent

Australia is woefully unprepared for the next pandemic flu, with doctors hoping this winter's deadly outbreak will serve as a wake-up call for people too lazy to get vaccinated.

Australian Medical Association president Michael Gannon has expressed frustration that take-up rates for flu vaccines remain stubbornly low.

"Australia is woefully unprepared for the next pandemic flu," he told Fairfax Media. "You never know when it's going to come - whether it's five years away, 10 years away, 15 years away - but people are lazy and

been confirmed nationally this season, leading to a spate of nursing home deaths in Victoria and Tasmania. Static, and in some states falling, vaccination rates - combined with virulent new strains - have contributed to the outbreak.

Every March, April and May doctors recommending the flu vaccination face ambivalence from patients and hostility from anti-vaxxer "fruiteakes", Dr Gannon said. "And then when people start getting sick in June, July, August - when people start getting hospitalised, start getting admitted to ICUs and start dying - then there's suddenly a panic."

His comments follow the federal government announced unprece-



Health Minister Greg Hunt. Photo: Paul Jeffers

working in aged-care facilities," Mr Hunt said. "We cannot continue to have a situation where people, whose immunity is already low, are at risk from others who may be infected."

The move comes after the outbreak killed seven people aged between 70 and 94 at St John's Retirement Village in Wangaratta between August 16 and 30. The outbreak also killed six residents of a Tasmanian nursing home earlier in August, it was confirmed at the weekend.

Every Australian over the age of 65 is entitled to a free flu shot, but there is no requirement for aged-care workers or residents to be vaccinated. Dr Gannon said it was "ut-

commend it and there are certainly groups that should have it - but whether we should legislate it is another matter."

Mr Hunt is also demanding answers from the Victorian government over why there was a 20-day delay between the Victorian Health Department being told of the flu deaths and the Commonwealth Health Department being notified. The government has ordered a review of the Wangaratta deaths.

So far in 2017, 52 influenza-associated deaths have been notified to Commonwealth health authorities. Most deaths were due to influenza A, with the median age 81.

There has been almost 2½ times