

Booklet still saves lives 10 years on

WHEN Peter Rostron's mother-in-law was rushed to hospital he heard a nurse say, "We can save a lot of time because she has her Emergency Medical Information Book with her."

It was music to Peter's ears because he was chairman of the committee which launched the project 10 years ago.

The booklet is held in a plastic sleeve with magnets which attach it to a fridge. In an emergency, when a person may be confused or unconscious, paramedics or other medical personnel can read immediately what medication the patient is taking and any other medical conditions which may affect treatment.

"Even if somebody has no medical condition and may not be taking medication they should still use the book because it saves wasting time making enquiries," said project chairman Arthur Jeffries.

The Rotary Clubs of Tea Tree Gully, Modbury and Golden Grove joined forces to launch a pilot project in the City of Tea Tree Gully in 1999, in conjunction with the South Australian Ambulance Service.

The three clubs donated \$5000 to cover the cost of printing 5000 books which were to be distributed by the Ambulance Service to selected residential villages and doctors' surgeries.

During the three-month trial period, ambulance officers used the books on more than 300 occasions.

After the project was fully implemented in South Australia, the project committee contacted all ambulance services in Australia and New Zealand, and followed up with a marketing campaign to Rotary clubs throughout Australia.

"Up to January 2008, we had distributed 500,000 books, but after *The Senior* carried a story about the booklet demand soared and we have printed in excess of 750,000," Arthur said.

The Emergency Medical Information Book has been adopted by Rotary nationally and now Lions International is becoming involved, in what is believed to be the



LIFE-SAVER – Bernie Donohue (left) and Arthur Jeffries urge everyone to get an Emergency Medical Information Book.

first major project shared between Australia's two largest service organisations.

The basic cost has been retained at \$1, although now GST and freight are added.

Although they were initially designed for home use, the books' value has been recognised in other ways.

Some bus companies now require drivers to carry their personal book in case of medical emergency, and walking and camping clubs have begun recommending them to members.

The project has been honoured with two major awards – a rare Significant Achievement Award from the president of Rotary International and a Premier's Community Service Project Award.

■ Details on www.emib.org.au or from Arthur Jeffries 8264-2117, email arthur.jeffries@emib.org.au or Lions Clubs can email their co-ordinator Bernie Donohue, bernie.don@bigpond.com If you have trouble obtaining books in your area, write to: EMIB Project, PO Box 233, St Agnes, SA 5097, together with your payment of \$2 for each book, which includes GST and Postage.