

MEDIA RELEASE

IT is not often that a Red Cross blood unit collecting blood is faced with the prospect of turning away blood donors because they have to close shop.

At 3.30 pm on Saturday, 17th April, the Red Cross unit attending the Sikh Youth Australia (SYA) blood drive at the Austral Gurdwara had to tell potential donors that they could not take their donations.

Pleas like “Please, we want to give blood,” and “We drove for more than an hour to come here just to give blood,” swayed the Red Cross unit to stay open until 4.30 pm, and even then there were those who had to be turned away.

Mr Harpreet Singh, SYA blood drive coordinator, said that more than 200 people from all over Sydney turned up at the Sikh Mission Centre in Ninth Avenue, Austral, to donate blood.

The Honourable member for Macquarie Fields, Dr. Andrew McDonald MP, was also present to lend support to the blood donors and the organizers.

Speaking to the donors and organizers, Mr McDonald said that it was a “great event for a great cause”, and that he was “very proud to see young Australian Sikhs coming together to do amazing things for our country”.

Apart from the blood drive, SYA also organized a collection of clothing and gifts for the poor and needy.

Nisha Johl, the organizer for this project, said that 10 large boxes of clothing and gifts were collected and these had been sent to the Mathew Talbot Hostel, Kings Cross and The Exodus Foundation, Ashfield.

Harpreet also said that the Red Cross unit was very pleased with the organization and the hospitality showed to them. A team member, Al, told Harpreet that they had had a “brilliant” day and that “this was the best turnout they had ever had at a blood drive organized by the Sikhs”.

The Red Cross unit and all donors and visitors were also treated to lunch and tea at the Sikh Temple in Austral.

END

Caption for Pic A:

Dr Andrew McDonald with SYA blood drive organizers. From left, Harpreet Singh, Dr McDonald, MP, Saranpaal Singh Calais and Harmeet Kaur.