Snr Cst Matthew Bennett of Macquarie Fields HWP gets a warm welcome from 78-year-old Elaine Wren, whose life he saved last year when he transported her to Liverpool Hospital in a police vehicle.

Photo: Stuart Marshall
Snr Cst Matthew Bennett was driving along Moorebank Avenue, Moorebank last year when he saw a woman waving frantically out of her car window before she pulled over.

Snr Cst Bennett turned his vehicle around and returned to the place where the woman had stopped, to see if she required assistance.

The woman, later identified as Mrs Jan Pond, quickly explained that her passenger, 78-year-old Elaine Wren, was having an asthma attack and did not have her appropriate medicine.

Snr Cst Bennett requested an ambulance for Mrs Wren and initially assessed that she appeared to be coping sufficiently with her breathing.

A short time later, however, her condition deteriorated dramatically. Snr Cst Bennett discovered the ambulance was still seven minutes away while Mrs Wren’s situation was becoming critical. He decided to transport her to Liverpool Hospital himself, and had positioned her in the passenger seat of his police vehicle when a Liverpool HWP car driven by Snr Cst Learson arrived at the scene.

After a quick conversation between the two officers it was decided that Snr Cst Learson’s vehicle would act as an escort. Both vehicles proceeded under lights and sirens to Liverpool Hospital.

During the journey, Snr Cst Bennett was aware of Mrs Wren’s rapidly worsening condition, and at one point she appeared to have stopped breathing. Throughout the drive he constantly provided her with words of reassurance and support.

On arrival at Liverpool Hospital Mrs Wren appeared to have stopped breathing as hospital staff rushed her to emergency. Approximately 30 minutes later Snr Cst Bennett was informed that Mrs Wren’s condition was life threatening and did not appear hopeful. It was touch and go for a while but finally, Mrs Wren began to stabilise.

In the days that followed Snr Cst Bennett kept in touch with Mrs Wren’s family, who advised him that she had actually been deceased at the time of her arrival at hospital. She had then been immediately ventilated, but remained on life support for two days, and was then kept in intensive care for three days. She remained in hospital for a total of seven days.

Dr Melissa Baraket, Staff Specialist Respiratory Physician at Liverpool Hospital said she believed Snr Cst Bennett’s quick response played a direct role in saving Mrs Wren’s life.

“My impression is that the rapid transfer of Mrs Wren to the nearby hospital expedited the life saving treatment of her severe asthma attack,” Dr Baraket said.

Mrs Wren said she could not remember anything of what occurred after the point when she first saw Snr Cst Bennett’s car pull over.

“On my recovery, I was told all that had transpired that day, and it shocked me to think that I had been a load of trouble. I appreciate everything that was done to get help for me that day, which in turn, saved my life,” she said.

“If it wasn’t for my young saviour and his actions, I would not be here now.”

Mrs Wren said she was touched to receive a phone call from Snr Cst Bennett after she had returned home from hospital.

“One of my greatest surprises was when I was sent home I received a telephone call from Matthew himself enquiring of my well being, and wishing me well,” she said.

“I was told, amongst other things, that the policeman that took responsibility for me after he was hailed down was just a young man doing his job, and he did it so effortlessly, making me his number one priority.

“I will be forever grateful to Matthew, for saving my life. It is because of Matthew that I have a new respect for the young men and women out there trying to make this world a better place.”

Mrs Pond, who witnessed all of Snr Cst Bennett’s efforts, said she could not overstate the impression he made.

“I truly would not be sitting here smiling about the outcome if it had of not been for him and his devotion to duty. He is a credit to his badge and Elaine’s family thank him for giving them back their mother, sister and grandmother.”

A family still have their much loved grandmother thanks to the efforts of an officer from Macquarie Fields HWP.

 saves a life