

**AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS, TASMANIAN DIVISION  
2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND RECEPTION  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
DRAWING ROOM, TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023**

Good evening and a very warm welcome to this reception for our Australian Red Cross Tasmanian Division.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea, and waters.

May I acknowledge all the attendees of this year's AGM and hope that your deliberations were positive and productive.

You have had a particularly busy year not only with your core services, but your many programs.<sup>1</sup>

I acknowledge your Connected Women Program (CWP) in Tasmania which aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of socially isolated migrant women by building confidence and skills through social connections and participation in the community.

The program is run in both the south and north of our State with nearly 200 migrant women with 24 nationalities and 28 languages. The program not only makes many positive differences for the participants, but also to our communities, by having women from diverse and rich cultures attending community events, venturing into volunteering, or training and continuing new friendships.

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<sup>1</sup> Email from Claire Wolczak to David Hughes September 26, 2023.

I quote from two participants of the program:

*"Coming to the Connected Women group reminds me of my home spaces; I can share language and food; it's like sharing with my sisters and cousins."*

*"...I did not feel confident about myself in the new land, till I joined the Connected Women group. Here, I see new people and friends like me. Everyone was welcoming and accepting. I enjoyed dressing up nicely every Monday to join the group, help packing food for everyone and talking to new people ... I am happier since joining the group and I keep telling my families at home about it".<sup>2</sup>*

Not only do you run such a beneficial program as the Connected Women Program for the participation of migrants, you also run an important program training health providers about the health, access, and equity issues migrants face, and of cultural sensitivities involved in care provision.

Finally, may I acknowledge your Bicultural Refugee Health Program in which you have been working to improve the health of people from refugee backgrounds, and their communities.

These initiatives align with one of my priorities as Governor, to raise awareness of and support responses to women's issues as they present in our community.

I thank you all for your work this year in support of the objects of our Red Cross: to mobilise the power of humanity to bring people and communities together in times of need and build on community strengths.

Thank you and please enjoy your reception.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.