

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS – 110TH ANNIVERSARY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 13 AUGUST 2024

Good morning, everyone, and a very warm welcome to Government House to celebrate quite a remarkable milestone – the 110th anniversary of our Australian Red Cross. It is my honour to host this event. May I acknowledge the continuing and significant impact your organisation has had and has on our Tasmanian and national community. I would also like to particularly acknowledge those who have travelled from around the State this morning.

I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea, and waters.

On 13 August 1914, just nine days after the outbreak of the First World War, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson established the first branch of the British Red Cross at Government House in Melbourne. This first branch spread around our country and became one of Australia's most vital and enduring humanitarian organisations¹².

Australian Red Cross quickly became our premier wartime charity, particularly supported by women across the nation. By World War II, our Red Cross was the largest charitable organisation in Australia, with nearly half a million members. In the years that followed, Red Cross expanded its mission to include social welfare, disaster response, blood services, and first aid programs³.

Today, we mark 110 years of Red Cross Australia, which continues to act locally and globally, delivering essential aid and support where it is most needed. As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, our Red Cross

¹ Correspondence Claire Wolczak / Paula Chatwood 30 July 2024

² <https://www.redcross.org.au/celebrate-110-years/>

³ <https://www.redcross.org.au/about/history-and-heritage/timeline/>

Australia is part of the world's largest humanitarian network and includes over 16,000 volunteers and members across Australia⁴.

The dedication of our Australian Red Cross to helping people impacted by disaster, conflict, or social issues is impressive. In the past year, it has provided:

- 33 emergency activations across the country.
- support to more than 324,000 people during and after disasters.
- 423 branches and groups fostering social connection within communities.
- 216,000 hours of volunteer support connecting older and vulnerable people.
- 153,000 meals to older Australians.
- 7,788 tonnes of humanitarian aid products distributed globally.⁵

These statistics prove and highlight the Red Cross's ongoing commitment to helping those in need. After 110 years, our Red Cross Australia continues to uphold its commitment of treating every human with dignity, respecting the laws of war, and providing support in times of crisis.

This event is a formal opportunity to acknowledge all those who have volunteered for and served with our Red Cross. They contribute to its vital work. These efforts make a real difference and are deeply appreciated.

May I conclude by extending my congratulations to Australian Red Cross and all its members. One hundred and ten years of service is a significant and remarkable achievement.

Thank you.

⁴ Correspondence Claire Wolczak / Paula Chatwood 30 July 2024

⁵ Ibid.