

A year in review. 2024-2025



**Australian
Red Cross**

**SOCIETY OF WOMEN
LEADERS**



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Flags on the Geneva, Mont-Blanc bridge for the International Conference
of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Photo: Jorge Perez/ICRC

A message from the CEO.

ANDREW COLVIN AO APM | CEO, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS



This past year has been one of both challenge and progress for Australian Red Cross (ARC), and once again, the Society of Women Leaders (SWL) and Rising Women Leaders (RWL) have stood beside us, playing a pivotal role in our ability to meet humanitarian needs with compassion, agility, and impact.

We are incredibly grateful for your generosity and commitment. The collective strength of your giving continues to shape lives, providing not only funding but also energy, advocacy, and vision to everything we do.

Through your support, more than \$830,000 was raised across six vital programs this past year, with contributions reaching across the country and beyond. From international emergency response and preparedness to the continued support of the Baby Hub in Galiwin'ku—where eight Members visited—your impact is both visible and deeply felt.

As our emergency teams continue to respond to more frequent and compounding disasters, your support ensures we can be there not only in the moment of crisis but throughout the long recovery journey.

Last year alone, Red Cross staff and volunteers supported more than 213,000 people across Australia before, during and after disasters, an achievement made possible because of a community like yours.

This year marked one year since the launch of RWL, a growing community of dynamic young women passionate about driving humanitarian change. Their enthusiasm, fresh perspective, and drive for collective action are helping to expand the legacy of SWL and inspire new ways of giving.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to National Chair, Row McGilvray, whose leadership continues to guide the SWL community with clarity and purpose. Row's efforts, particularly in advancing Member engagement through many initiatives, which have strengthened this network and deepened its impact.

Special recognition goes to our Lady Helen Munro Ferguson Members; Caroline Furlong of the Blackmore Family Foundation and Cynthia Carter. Their extraordinary philanthropic leadership continues to inspire and empower our work.



Their significant contributions are a testament to what's possible when generosity meets purpose.

As we look to the future, ARC priorities remain focused and urgent, strengthening community resilience, embedding First Nations Centrality, addressing the consequences of a changing climate, and ensuring we are prepared for what's to come. Your support is foundational to our ability to deliver on this mission.

To each Member of SWL and RWL: thank you. Your commitment exemplifies the very best of what it means to be part of the Red Cross Movement. Together, we are creating change that endures, transforming lives when it matters most.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you, united by a shared purpose, grounded in humanity, and driven by hope.

Thank you from the SWL National Chair.

ROW MCGILVRAY | FOUNDING MEMBER AND SWL NATIONAL CHAIR

As I reflect on the past twelve months, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for all that we have accomplished together. This year's success is a testament to the incredible power of our collective community.

To every one of our valued Members of SWL and RWL, and our dedicated supporters and partners at ARC, I extend my deepest thanks. Your generosity is the cornerstone of our achievements this year. Your commitment to our shared mission is what drives our progress and makes a tangible difference in the lives of the people and communities served by the programs we support.

I want to extend a special thanks to our Lady Helen Munro Ferguson Members - Caroline Furlong and her family, Marcus and Imogen, as well as Cynthia Carter and her husband Andrew, for their significant contribution to our overall funding this year. We are also deeply grateful for the leadership in philanthropy shown by Hayley Baillie, Kerry-Anne Johnston, and Nici McCarroll. These new levels of generosity are a powerful endorsement of the vital work of ARC, and they also

reinforce that contributing through SWL is a strategic and beneficial model.

All this collective action has been the foundation for our success. As Members, you have empowered our dedicated National Advisory Committee to introduce new pathways for giving and supported innovative ways of engagement that will benefit us for years to come. It is a privilege to lead such a forward-thinking and committed community.

I have been truly humbled by the warmth and support I received in my role as National Chair, especially from the SWL and ARC leadership. Their guidance and encouragement have meant the world to me and have reinforced my belief in the strength of our community. It is an honour to work alongside such a passionate and unified group.

Thank you all for making this 11th year the most impactful since our establishment in 2014. I am so proud of what we have accomplished together and am excited for all that we will achieve in the year ahead.



Rising Women Leaders reflection.

ISABEL FREUDENSTEIN | FOUNDING MEMBER AND RWL CHAIR, RISING WOMEN LEADERS

A year of purpose, partnership and progress

The inaugural year of RWL marked the beginning of an inspiring journey, one defined by purpose, partnership, and a shared commitment to making a meaningful impact.

Launched as part of the broader SWL initiative, RWL quickly became a vibrant community where women across the group came together to connect, contribute, and lead. From volunteering with ARC to participating in working groups and social events, Members had the opportunity to support humanitarian efforts while building lasting relationships.

Our partnership with ARC has been central to RWL's purpose. We are proud to stand alongside an organisation whose work uplifts communities both locally and globally.

We acknowledge the women of SWL, whose belief in the potential of RWL laid the foundation for its success. Their advocacy and leadership have created a space where women are empowered to lead with intention. In particular, we

recognise Row McGilvray, whose vision and unwavering support have helped guide RWL through its formative year.

To our Founding Members, thank you for your energy, insight, and commitment. You have helped establish a strong and inclusive culture that will continue to grow.

As we look ahead to our second year, we are excited to build on this momentum. New opportunities for Members to get involved, whether through volunteering, joining committees, attending events, or engaging with broader SWL programming, will continue to deepen the group's connection to cause.

RWL is more than a network, it's a movement. One that celebrates leadership, fosters connection, and drives meaningful change. We are grateful to every Member who has contributed to this journey, and we look forward to another year of growth, impact, and shared purpose.



Our history, our vision, our community.

More than 100 years ago, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson established ARC by engaging talented, committed, and compassionate women dedicated to a lifesaving mission. In 2014, her tradition continued when SWL was formed to unite and engage a group of generous and purpose-driven women.

Today, SWL is one of the leading circles of giving in Australia and our vision is clear – to bring together a collective of

Australian women who raise funds for ARC, reducing humanitarian suffering and building a world where vulnerable women and children feel safe, protected and empowered to thrive.

SWL is part of the Tiffany Circle, a growing global movement of female philanthropists from countries including the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and West Africa who support Red Cross National Societies.



The three images symbolise truth, hope, mercy, faith and humanitarianism—even in the middle of battle—and heroic womanhood. Their century-old history joins the women of the United States' North and South in giving aid to all peoples. This \$10,000 gift level of the Tiffany Circle represents the sum of the two \$5,000 contributions that the Women's Relief Corps of the North and the United Daughters of the Confederacy of the South gave to commission the windows.

SWL is a collective of committed women leaders and philanthropists who embrace and engage women in our communities, across the country and around the world and together we:

- Advance the humanitarian mission of ARC
- Bring together like-minded women who are making a difference
- Make a measurable impact on important issues facing our communities
- Improve the lives of vulnerable women, children, families and communities
- Build strategic alliances for change
- Lend our voice to the issues we believe in most
- Lead through philanthropy

Each year funds are pooled and at the Annual Members Meeting, SWL and RWL vote on which ARC programs these funds will support. Coming together to advance the work of ARC and advocate humanitarian support is at the heart of what we do.

Collectively, we achieve more together.



Agnes 'Anne' Carswell 1942, a highly trained nursing sister and humanitarian who worked for over 20 years for the British Red Cross, the International Committee of Red Cross and the Australian Red Cross Society. Painting by artist Gwyneth Boyce.

Just as ARC is guided by seven fundamental principles - humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality - Members of SWL are guided by seven core values being compassion, optimism, integrity, excellence, loyalty, collaboration and gratitude.

Funding.

This year, SWL raised a total of **\$838,800** through Membership donations and fundraising. Since its inception in 2014, SWL has raised **\$7,371,890** and with influenced giving, a total of **\$8,092,784**.

Allocation of total funds raised this financial year:

Night Café	\$227,000
Baby Hub	\$200,300
International Humanitarian Law	\$157,000
International Disaster and Crisis Response	\$127,000
Restoring Family Links	\$127,000
Connected Women	\$500
Total FY25 funds allocated	\$838,800

Notes:

- RWL contributed \$18,500 towards the total pledge for Baby Hub.
- Annual Membership donations are made prior to each financial year, to enable upfront funding for the following financial year. The full impact of these funds will be reported next year.



During their visit to Ukraine, IFRC President Kate Forbes and the Regional Director personally thanked Red Cross volunteers for their dedication and service. Photo: Olha Ivashchenko/IFRC

Program updates.

International Disaster and Crisis Response

Total funding to date \$1,035,000

The ARC International Response team coordinates ARC's support to Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and partners around the globe to deliver life-saving assistance to communities affected by disasters and crises.

Funding provided by SWL supports the International Response team to lead ARC engagement in these operations by coordinating a multi-departmental task force who can mobilise financial, material, and human resources when there is a request for international support by the local National Society. These resources complement local capacity and contribute to strategic planning, evaluation and learning on disaster and crisis response operations.

In another year of compounding crises, relief aid, operational support and human resourcing has been provided to:

- Vanuatu Earthquake in December 2024
- Cyclone Yagi across northern Vietnam in September 2024
- Myanmar Earthquake in March 2025

SWL funding has also enabled the International Response team to support the following ongoing operations:

- El Niño weather related events across the Pacific and Timor-Leste 2023-25
- Landslide in Papua New Guinea in May 2024
- Floods in Afghanistan in May 2024.
- Earthquake in Morocco in September 2023
- The conflict in the Middle East which escalated in October 2023 in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) with more recent escalations and displacement in Lebanon and Syria in 2024 and Iran in 2025
- Global Hunger Crisis since 2022
- Türkiye-Syria Earthquake in 2023
- The conflict in Ukraine since 2022 and the displacement and humanitarian response across Europe
- Displacement of refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh from Myanmar and the ongoing humanitarian response in the region since 2017



A needs assessment collection activity conducted by IFRC staff during the initial earthquake response in Mandalay. Led by the Myanmar Red Cross Society, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is responding to people's urgent humanitarian needs. Photo credit: IFRC

Case Study: Myanmar Earthquake

Funding from SWL was instrumental in aiding ARC to support the Myanmar Earthquake response.

On 28 March 2025, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, with its epicentre about 17 kilometres away from Mandalay, the country's second-largest city. Just 12 minutes later, a strong 6.4 magnitude aftershock intensified the devastation, further damaging structures throughout the country and complicating rescue

efforts. Earthquake damage was recorded as far away as Bangkok, Thailand, and China.

In Myanmar, the earthquake severely damaged critical infrastructure, including telecommunications, roads, bridges, dams and airports. More than 3,700 deaths and 5,000 injuries were recorded. This earthquake is another layer to the ongoing complex crisis in Myanmar. Long-term political instability, economic downturn and armed conflict

has led to massive internal displacement and high levels of humanitarian needs. Many of the areas impacted by the earthquake are still recovering from flooding after a heavy monsoon season and Cyclone Yagi in 2024.

Funding provided by SWL supported the International Response team in coordinating ARC's response to this disaster. The Global Emergency Fund was launched the following day with a focus on fundraising for this disaster, and the Australian public contributed \$811,960 to response efforts. These funds were channeled to IFRC and ICRC emergency response operations throughout Myanmar, which are led by Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS). SWL funding also supported the surge deployment of three ARC specialist aid workers (Delegates) to assist in the response. ARC deployed one Operations Coordinator, and one Protection Gender Inclusion (PGI) Officer to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as part of Federation-wide response efforts. Additionally, one ARC Water, Sanitation and Habitat Delegate was already deployed in-country at the time of the earthquake.

MRCS is a long-term bilateral partner of ARC and has been receiving support in disaster preparedness initiatives which helped them to quickly mobilise and respond to this emergency. Preparedness initiatives included training for Emergency Response teams, simulation exercises and pre-positioning of relief stock. ARC also supported the construction of a MRCS warehouse in Magway.

The hub is located at a crucial geographical point for access to the northern and western parts of the country for this response and was one of the only Red Cross warehouses not damaged by the initial earthquake, making it a vital component of MRCS activities.

From March to June, SWL funding for the International Response team supported MRCS to reach 192,480 people with life-saving humanitarian assistance since the onset of the earthquake. Thousands of households were provided emergency shelter materials, cash assistance was provided to help families address urgent needs, and mobile health clinics, first aid, ambulance services were provided by MRCS. Water and sanitation teams distributed over 1.3 million litres of water, and food distribution helped meet immediate nutritional needs. The MRCS is the country's largest and longest-standing humanitarian organisation, with 274 township branches and more than 7,000 trained Red Cross Volunteers.

Baby Hub

Total funding to date \$572,176 (including \$50,002 from RWL)

At the northeast tip of the Northern Territory there is a small island, that is home to a First Nations community of 3,000 people. At the heart of this town, there's a special place. Baby Hub.

This unique program provides invaluable support to families in the local community of Galiwin'ku. In addition to enabling access to healthy food and baby necessities such as nappies and wipes, Baby Hub works to improve the wellbeing of pregnant women, infants and carers, and to strengthen the capacity of families to better meet their children's needs.

SWL and RWL fund the team leader role at Baby Hub, crucial to ensuring:

- Infants and children aged 0-3 are supported to maintain healthy growth
- Community Members are supported to increase knowledge, confidence, capacity and wellbeing surrounding pregnancy, birth, and parenting
- Women in Galiwin'ku have a healthy pregnancy where mum and baby are developing well
- Women with complex needs are supported with service coordination, referrals and intensive support

- Baby Hub is working effectively in collaboration with other service providers and community
- Yolŋu staff and community members have opportunities for skill and capacity building that enable more leadership in the program

This year, SWL Members participated in an immersive field trip to visit Baby Hub. You can read more about the program and their experience on page 44.



SWL Members, ARC staff, and local community members gathered outside Baby Hub in Galiwin'ku during a recent field visit, fostering connection and collaboration.

Case Study: Baby Bridget

On 6 December 2024, a beautiful baby girl was born at Nhulunbuy Hospital, located 135 kilometres east of Galiwin'ku. When Baby Hub staff had the honour of meeting the newborn, they were overjoyed to learn that the baby had been named after none other than Baby Hub's own Team Leader, Bridget.

This special gesture left everyone at Baby Hub deeply touched, as it was clear that Bridget had made a significant impact on the family. Baby Bridget quickly became a beloved presence at the Baby Hub office. Whether cradled in Bridget's loving arms or nestled in a baby bouncer at her feet, Baby Bridget has added a warmth and joy to the space. Her presence has brought an extra sense of connection and purpose to the team, reminding everyone of the important work they do every day in supporting families and children in the community.

The naming of Baby Bridget also serves as a beautiful symbol of the close bonds that have been built through the Baby Hub's work. It reflects not only the strong relationships the team has developed with the families they serve, but also the deep trust and admiration shared between Baby Hub staff and the parents who rely on them for support.

As Baby Bridget grows, she will undoubtedly continue to be a reminder of the love, care, and dedication that defines the Baby Hub community. For Bridget, seeing a little one named after her is a constant source of pride and inspiration, motivating her and the entire team to continue their work with even more passion and commitment.



ARC Baby Hub Team Leader Bridget, with Baby Bridget.

Connected Women

Total funding to date \$165,500

Connected Women is a volunteer-led, co-designed initiative supporting over 756 migrant and refugee women from 45+ nationalities across Darwin, Palmerston, and Katherine. Delivered by ARC in partnership with 30+ multicultural organisations, it fosters social connection, health literacy, employment pathways, and leadership in a safe, culturally responsive space. The program reduces isolation, improves wellbeing, and helps participants build economic security and community engagement.

In the past year, 7,982 people joined 245 sessions, with 90% reporting increased confidence and 70% improved job readiness.

An external evaluation found a social return of \$11 for every \$1 invested. Events like the Joy of Many Colours Fashion Show and Cultural Food Expo attracted 5,000+ attendees, promoting cross-cultural understanding. Additionally, 788 people participated in 79 leadership workshops, with 96% gaining practical skills—leading to 18 women launching small food businesses and many entering work, training, or volunteering.

ARC and SWL are here to walk alongside migrant women and their families to help them connect with their community and build their economic security, contributing to more welcoming communities.



Participants learned to create sustainable shopping bags using recycled materials, promoting environmental responsibility at the Creative Sewing Workshop.

Program Spotlight: Capacity Building Workshops



Let's Cook and Create

Connected Women members learnt authentic African cuisines, Eba and Egusi stew. During the session, participants also had an opportunity to learn about breast cancer screening from a bilingual health educator.



Eco-Printing

In January 2025, Members of the Connected Women program in the Northern Territory had the privilege of welcoming the Administrator of the Northern Territory, His Honour Hugh Heggie, and Ms Ruth Jones. They enthusiastically participated in the creative process, producing eco-printed fabric using a variety of natural materials.

National Society Partnerships: Timor-Leste and Mongolia

Total funding to date \$160,000

SWL has provided philanthropic funding to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the Asia Pacific region, contributing to vital partnerships between ARC and Timor-Leste Red Cross, also known as Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) and Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS).

Timor-Leste

Throughout 2024-2025, CVTL further strengthened its youth engagement, by organising the National Youth Assembly. Young volunteers from across the country were united to foster leadership, solidarity, and humanitarian values. A significant milestone from the assembly was the election of Miss Domingas (27) as the Youth President, whose role ensures young people have an active part in decision making within the National Society.

In partnership with the Ministry of Health, CVTL led community-based dengue prevention campaigns to raise awareness and promote hygiene practices to combat mosquito-borne diseases. CVTL identified hot spots and conducted door-to-door awareness campaigns, supporting the development of strengthened outbreak response mechanisms.

Enhancing disaster preparedness, CVTL conducted Emergency Shelter Training aimed at equipping volunteers and staff with the skills to provide safe and rapid shelter solutions in emergency situations. This included training for over 100 first responders in first aid and emergency shelter management, strengthening on-the-ground medical assistance and disaster relief efforts.

With SWL support, CVTL was able to implement more inclusive programming, including training for disaster response teams in Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), developing disability inclusion and protection against sexual exploitation policies, and implementing a risk protection reporting system. These initiatives led to strengthened collaboration with educators and stakeholders and supported a safer and more inclusive environment across the organisation.



Photo: MRCS

Mongolia

In 2024–2025, MRCS assisted six more local branches to strengthen their financial sustainability through its Seed Funding initiative. By launching innovative income-generating projects — from commercial first aid training centres and Red Cross coffee and ice cream stores to farm and hay production facilities — these branches are taking meaningful steps toward becoming financially self-sustaining. Thanks to the support from SWL, local branches are building greater resilience, deepening their ties to the communities they serve, and ensuring lasting humanitarian impact.

Over the past year, MRCS has also made significant progress in ensuring its programs are inclusive and accessible to all. By partnering with disability advocacy organisations and gender-focused groups, MRCS has identified practical ways to embed equity and inclusion into its daily work, so that no one is left behind.

Looking ahead, MRCS plans to build on this momentum with a comprehensive organisational assessment in the second half of 2025, which will highlight areas for improvement and shape a clear roadmap to further strengthen PGI efforts across the organisation.

Over the course of 2024–2025, communities also came together to protect each other from disease outbreaks. Partnering closely with the Government Centre for Zoonotic Diseases, MRCS trained 225 volunteers who quickly became local champions of health. By the end of 2024, these volunteers were achieving 70% accuracy in detecting early warning signs and working alongside provincial officers to respond swiftly to threats like rabies and tick-borne illnesses. Support from SWL has assisted volunteers to reach over 62,000 people—nearly half women—equipping communities with knowledge to prevent disease before it starts.

International Humanitarian Law

Total funding to date \$265,171

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Program supports ARC to fulfil its mandate, as a National Red Cross Society, to:

- Assist the government in disseminating international humanitarian law, and take initiatives in this respect
- Disseminate the principles and ideals of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) and assist the government to also disseminate them
- Cooperate with the governments to ensure respect for international humanitarian law
- Protect the distinctive red cross, red crescent and red crystal emblems recognised by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols

SWL generously funded the IHL Program to continue its important work to protect the distinctive emblems and develop a 'digital emblem' to signal protected digital infrastructure.

This funding has come at a crucial time for local and international humanitarian diplomacy on these issues.

At the time of printing there are more than 130 armed conflicts ongoing around the world, and the challenges confronting IHL are as numerous as they are complex. Cyber operations are a reality of armed conflict, and States are increasingly developing military cyber capabilities, conflicts are more complex, and the number of actors involved is increasing. Those protected by the emblems are under increasing attack, with 2024 being the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers, and 2025 on track to be even more devastating.

In this context, it is crucial that ARC continues work to enhance respect for IHL, including respect for the emblems and those who depend on their protection, and show that even in the most severe crisis, we must preserve humanity.

Case Study: 34th International Conference in Geneva



34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent closing ceremony in Geneva.
Photo: Ben Bachir, Jabir/ICRC/IFRC

In October, at the 34th International Conference in Geneva, Kylie Leach, Head of International Humanitarian Law at ARC presented on a panel for “Enhancing Respect for Emblems in Armed Conflict”.

The event’s impact was significant, not only in fostering dialogue with over

120 participants but also in inspiring concrete action in the form of a pledge to strengthen the protection of healthcare and the medical mission under the Health Care in Danger (HCiD) initiative, which stands as a powerful testament to the importance of the collective efforts of the Movement.

Governance and leadership.



SWL Governance structure for FY24/25:

National Advisory Committee

Barb Fletcher (Secretary)
David Macdermott (Australian Red Cross)
Diana Cregan (Deputy National Chair)
Kate O'Callaghan (Governance Administrator)
Mieka Hutchinson (Australian Red Cross)
Row McGilvray (National Chair)
Selena Spring (Operations Administrator)

Executive Leadership Team

Barb Fletcher
David Macdermott
Diana Cregan
Kate Ericson
Mieka Hutchinson
Row McGilvray

National Programs Sub-Committee

Anita Pahor
David Macdermott
Diana Cregan
Kerry Blake
Mieka Hutchinson
Nelli Zinder
Row McGilvray
Selena Spring

Rising Women Leaders

Amelia Beaney
Ashlee Dorsey-Johnson
Emma Sanges
Isabel Freudenstein (Chair)
Lili Duncan (Deputy Chair)
Olivia McLennan
Rylan Turner
Saskia Neacsu

Gratitude for our members, supporters and sponsors.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the individuals and businesses that exemplified generosity and partnership in supporting SWL and our humanitarian initiatives throughout the past year. A special thank you to the gracious hosts who organised remarkable events for our Members and guests, fostering connection and collaboration within our community.

Fireside Chat

Belinda Singh – NSW
Cate White – VIC

Business Series Lunch

Amy Low
LGT Crestone NSW and VIC

End of Year Fundraising Dinner

Kerry Blake – VIC

AI Fresco Lunch

Caroline Furlong – NSW

Sky High Brunch

Anita Pahor – VIC

Annual Members Meeting Part 1

Kerry Blake – VIC
Selena Spring and Liz Keenan – NSW

Executive Lunch

David Thomlinson and Jenna Richards
Deloitte NSW

SWL App

Shareable Apps

Graphic Design

JDdesign

Baby Hub Donations

Zoë Foster Blake and Go-To

Lady Helen Munro Ferguson founded the first Australian Red Cross branch, marking a legacy of compassion and leadership in humanitarian efforts. In her honour, the Lady Helen Munro Ferguson Membership recognises SWL Members who demonstrate exceptional philanthropy, beginning with a contribution of \$200,000 or more in a single financial year.

We sincerely thank Caroline Furlong of the Blackmore Family Foundation and Cynthia Carter for their outstanding generosity.

Our events and philanthropic opportunities.

Our Members and guests are invited to bespoke philanthropy events where we hear from keynote speakers specialising in the humanitarian landscape and aid work from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). Informative, unique and enjoyable, our events are a reporting tool for Members to understand the impact their pooled funds are having on the projects and initiatives our giving circle support.

Australian Red Cross 110 Year Anniversary: Everyone. Always.

On 13 August 1914, nine days after the outbreak of the First World War, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, the wife of the Governor-General, formed a Branch of the British Red Cross at Government House Melbourne.

Very quickly, ARC became the premier wartime voluntary charity, especially appealing to Australian women across the nation. Twenty-five years later, during World War II, ARC was the largest charitable organisation in Australia, both in terms of the scale of its operations and in the support it received from the Australian people.

From a national population of seven million, nearly half a million people, mostly women, were Members of ARC during World War II. The support and the prestige of belonging to a well-respected international organisation contributed to its spectacular success.

The post-war period saw reconstruction and regeneration that focused on social welfare, national emergencies, natural disasters such as floods and bushfires, and the development of the blood service and first aid programs, which were sustained by the extensive Branch network and thousands of Members and volunteers.

ARC extended its involvement with concerns for the Movement, especially in International Humanitarian Law programs and refugee services.



On 13 August 2024, ARC celebrated 110 years. We dedicate this milestone to the people we have stood beside through crises, and everyone who continues to make our important work possible – today and tomorrow.

Together, we will continue to be there in times of disaster, to promote respect for the laws of war, to treat every human with dignity, and remain a constant for people in need across Australia and through our global movement.

RWL Event.

Founding Members of RWL proudly hosted their inaugural Blood Drive, stepping into their roles as 'Lifeblood Champions' with purpose and heart. The event marked a significant milestone, bringing together passionate individuals committed to making a lifesaving difference.

From first-time donors to seasoned supporters, the energy was inspiring and a true reflection of leadership in action. This Blood Drive not only

showcased the strength of the RWL community but also highlighted the vital role young women play in driving humanitarian efforts forward.

You can be a Lifeblood Champion too.

Book your donation today through Australian Red Cross Lifeblood and help ensure that every patient in need has access to life-saving blood. Your contribution matters now more than ever.



Founding Members, Natalya Tyler, Ashlee Dorsey-Johnson, Amelia Beaney, Rylan Turner, Lili Duncan and Saskia Neacsu at their first Blood Drive.

SWL Events.



Members Row McGilvray, Belinda Singh (host), Hayley Baillie and Liz Keenan with Belinda's dog Stella for the annual Fireside Chat in NSW.

Fireside Chat, NSW

August 2024

What a night, think moody - lights, candles, music, gorgeous food and champagne (sparkling water for those that were sensible) sprinkle in some wonderful friendships, new and old and a dash of ARC and you have one wonderful evening.

Our beautiful hostess Belinda Singh generously opened her home and provided the opportunity for NSW Members to chat about the year ahead. Together we reviewed the outcome of program voting from the Annual Members Meeting, the funding

request from ARC for the year ahead, engagement opportunities and an update from Founding Member Kerry-Anne Johnston about the breakfast event she attended to celebrate the 110 Years of ARC at Parliament House in Sydney.

A big shout out of appreciation to Barb Fletcher and Selena Spring who joined us for the Fireside Chat off the back of a four-hour SWL strategy session that day. They were able to share a little insight into the topics of conversation that will direct our next 2 years ahead.

Fireside Chat, VIC

August 2024

As is the Melbourne way, we spent an intimate evening at the warm and welcoming home of our recently returned Member Cate White. Cate has just spent a couple of years living in NY and joined the Tiffany Circle there, so it is wonderful to have her back! A small group of us gathered, with a special appearance by our National Chair, Row McGilvary.

After an enthusiastic catch-up over cheeses and champagne, we delved into all things SWL. As is typical of the VIC Members, each topic sparked spirited conversations and the sharing of thoughts and ideas.

We started the night with the acknowledgement of country and Diana provided a lovely summary of the NAIDOC theme of Keep The

Fire Burning and the parallel of how it relates to our Fireside Chats and the importance of community and connection.

We were updated on the Annual Members Meeting voting results and program funding as well as the current challenges facing ARC, including the Transformation Process which has seen some significant changes.

We discussed the upcoming Geneva trip which has an excellent contingent of Australians attending and then events scheduled for the year ahead.

We talked about the SWL strategy meeting and provided some input into items for discussion and then there was plenty of excitement about the upcoming field trip to visit Baby Hub in Galiwin'ku.



Members Diana Cregan, Kate O'Callaghan, Row McGilvary, Kerry Blake, Kate Ericson, Caterina Nesci and Cate White (host) gather for the annual Fireside Chat in VIC.



Guests at the Business Series lunch in NSW, generously hosted by LGT Crestone.

Business Series Lunch, NSW

October 2024

At the NSW Business Series Lunch guests were fortunate to hear from Hollie Johnston, who as a Legal Adviser in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) at ARC, brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table.

Hollie highlighted innovative programs including the intriguing Game of Thrones project, which creatively engages the public in discussions around IHL. Hollie also discussed her work on protecting the distinctive emblems in Australia and an exciting new initiative that explores the potential for a digital emblem aimed at safeguarding digital healthcare infrastructure amidst armed conflict. Her insights provided attendees with a deeper understanding of how these initiatives directly impact humanitarian efforts and modern challenges in armed conflict zones.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to our hosts, Amy Low, Michael Chisholm, Michelle Inns, Julian Ughetti, and LGT Crestone, for providing not only an exquisite venue but also a lovely lunch that made the event even more enjoyable. Special thanks to SWL Member Belinda Singh for her excellent job as the MC, guiding the proceedings smoothly and ensuring that the conversation stayed engaging and relevant. Overall, the event served as a vital platform for learning and networking, leaving attendees inspired by Hollie's impactful work and the important role of IHL in today's world.

Business Series Lunch, VIC

October 2024

On a glorious spring day, SWL Members accompanied by their lovely guests, met on the 19th floor of 101 Collins in the beautiful boardroom of LGT Crestone. It was so thoughtfully organised with not only spectacular views, but a beautiful meal and friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

Our generous host invited their advisors and clients to hear from Yvette Zegenhagen, our keynote speaker and expert in IHL. Yvette shared insights into what IHL is and highlighted its relevance and tangible impact in today's world. We also heard from Amanda MacDonald Head of Sustainable Investing for LGT Crestone who has worked with the NFP sector for many years and understands our challenges well.



Amanda MacDonald, Head of Sustainable Investment at LGT Crestone and SWL Deputy National Chair and VIC Member, Diana Cregan with guest speaker, Yvette Zegenhagen OAM from ARC.

Yvette delivered an engaging presentation on IHL, sparking particular interest in the digitising of the red cross, red crescent and red crystal emblems and the collaborative efforts of ARC in this area, partly funded by SWL.

The round table discussion on the dynamic global situation regarding IHL was highly stimulating, prompting numerous questions and lively discussions. Yvette's insightful responses not only informed us but also highlighted the critical importance of this work in the current global climate.

It was a beautiful lunch, and we are very grateful to LGT Crestone for their ongoing engagement and support.

Tiffany Circle Geneva Forum

October 2024

A Memorable Journey: Co-Chairing the International Geneva Forum – by Row McGilvray

The vision for hosting the Geneva Forum was to bring Tiffany Circle Members from around the globe together and to immerse them and other attendees in the Movement. The Tiffany Circle International Council (TCIC) envisioned providing a platform for global collaboration, knowledge sharing, and networking for the Movement supporters. In 2018, the first Geneva Forum took place, this event set the precedent for future forums, building a strong foundation for international collaboration within the Movement.

As one of the three forum Co-chairs for the 2024 event, representing Australia, alongside my TCIC colleagues from Switzerland and Canada I had a wonderful experience as co-chair, and I am thrilled to reflect on what was truly an uplifting and memorable experience.

The event brought together 167 registered attendees from 20 countries, fostering learning, new friendships, and deeper connections within the Red Cross community. The energy and engagement throughout the three days was fantastic, kicked off by a warm welcome reception featuring four Swiss musicians playing authentic Alp horns. The official welcome from the President of the Swiss Red Cross, my co-chairs Dania Samawi and Anna



Members Diana Cregan, Pamela Robertson-Gregg, Mary-Jane Crabtree, Kerry-Anne Johnston, Kerry Blake and Cate White.

Hunt-Binkley, and TCIC co-chair Elanie Lylerly, set a wonderful tone. We were particularly touched by the incredible efforts made by some of our dedicated Members, including Kerry Blake, Kerry-Anne Johnston, Diana Cregan, Maryjane Crabtree, Cate White, and Pamela Robertson-Gregg, who travelled a significant distance to attend. Their commitment truly exemplified the spirit of the Forum.

A key highlight for the attendees was the enriching tour of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum and a visit to the ICRC, which provided an invaluable deeper understanding of their critical work. We also recognised and toasted the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Beyond these insights, the Forum provided a rich platform for understanding the Movement's evolving impact on our changing world. We were privileged to hear from senior representatives of both the ICRC and IFRC. A powerful moment was the panel featuring IFRC President and Tiffany Circle Member Kate Forbes, alongside four inspiring women National Society Presidents: Fatma Meriç Yilmaz (Turkish Red Crescent), Camelia Sucu (Romanian Red Cross), Liz Padmore (British Red Cross), and Natia Loladze (Georgia Red Cross and IFRC Vice President).

Another highlight included a Tiffany Circle panel led by my co-chair Dania Samawi; featuring inspiring insights from SWL Member Cate White, as well

as representatives from Tiffany Circles in the Netherlands and Canada. We also benefited from a National Society panel expertly led by Janet Johnston (CDO, CRC) and Anne McKeough (CDO, American RC). Throughout the event, a display of the Swiss Red Cross mobile tent and an ICRC 3D experience further engaged attendees.

The Forum concluded on a high note with an action-packed gala evening, attended by 194 guests, which was truly second to none. A live band serenaded guests as they took their seats, and a well-respected local Swiss artist created a beautiful interpretation of the Red Cross live on stage throughout the evening. The completed artwork was later auctioned for an impressive 19,000 Swiss Francs.

End of Year Dinner VIC

November 2024

On a balmy Melbourne evening, VIC Members gathered at Kerry Blake's home for our annual end-of-year celebration, filled with warmth and laughter. We welcomed our newest Member, Cynthia Carter, who enjoyed getting to know the VIC community. Instead of a traditional cost per head for the gathering, guests generously contributed to Baby Hub's wishlist, resulting in an impressive \$4,000 raised for their non-essential projects. We're especially grateful to Kerry for providing such a delicious meal as well as her generosity of spirit in opening her home.

We were profoundly moved by the memorable and heartfelt presentation from Ruth Jebb, our Australian Florence Nightingale award recipient, sharing her experiences from Gaza. This was followed by a musical performance and a powerful story of strength and conviction from an eleven-Member ensemble from the Afghanistan National Institute of Music. The live band then had guests dancing the night away, creating a truly celebratory atmosphere.

The 2024 Geneva Forum was a significant step forward in strengthening the global Red Cross and Red Crescent Philanthropic Movement and creating a space for collaboration and inspiration within the Tiffany Circle.



Deputy National Chair, Diana Cregan presenting Lady Helen Munro Ferguson Member, Cynthia Carter with her Tiffany bracelet.



SWL Liaison, Mieka Hutchinson highlights ARC's operational approach during an international disaster.

AI Fresco Lunch, NSW

February 2025

Members of SWL gathered for the annual NSW AI Fresco Lunch at the beautiful home of Founding Lady Helen Munro Ferguson Member, Caroline Furlong. The afternoon provided the perfect setting to reconnect after the holiday break and set the stage for an inspiring year ahead.

National Chair, Row McGilvray, shared exciting plans for 2025, energising Members with a vision for the future. She also introduced SWL Liaison, Mieka Hutchinson, who offered valuable insights into the critical role of ARC in international disaster response and what takes place when an appeal is launched.

As Members enjoyed a delicious AI Fresco meal, Kerry-Anne Johnston and Pamela Robertson-Gregg reflected on their experiences at the Geneva Forum, sharing powerful stories that underscored the vital humanitarian work of the ICRC and IFRC.

The afternoon concluded with a renewed sense of connection and purpose, as Members looked forward to another year of advocacy, philanthropy, and impact. A heartfelt thank you to Caroline for her generous hospitality and for hosting such a memorable gathering.

Al Fresco Lunch, VIC

February 2025

SWL welcomed back its VIC Members with a special event, the Sky-High Brunch, hosted at the stunning home of past National Chair and Founding Member, Anita Pahor. The gathering set the tone for an exciting year ahead, celebrating connection, collective giving, and the impactful work of ARC.

Deputy National Chair, Diana Cregan opened the brunch with a heartfelt Acknowledgement to Country, honouring the Traditional Owners of the land. In a thoughtful nod to Valentine's Day, the phrase *Nghindu nguyaguyamilang*—meaning “I love you” in a First Nations language—was shared, embracing the spirit of love and community.

As Members enjoyed an elegant sit-down brunch, National Chair, Row McGilvray provided insights into what 2025 holds for SWL, highlighting our continued commitment to advocacy and funding of critical programs. Also touching on the transformative work of ARC, including the launch of its Humanitech Initiative and its first-ever Extreme Heat Awareness Day, addressing climate-related challenges.

Cate White and Diana Cregan also shared reflections from their recent trip to Geneva for the Tiffany Circle Forum, this event happens every four years and offers Tiffany Circle Members from around the globe a deeper understanding of the work of the ICRC



VIC Members enjoying their Sky-High Brunch in Founding Member, Anita Pahor's home.

and IFRC. The discussions highlighted the significance of collective giving—not only in strengthening ARC's humanitarian efforts but also in fostering meaningful connections among Members.

With a shared vision of empowerment and philanthropy, SWL Members look forward to another impactful year, continuing their mission of championing vital causes and supporting the invaluable work of the ARC. Thank you, Anita, for hosting Members and for the beautiful touch of red on Valentine's Day with your homemade plum jam from Rapale.



Delegates Maryse Dodard, Ruth Jebb (second from left), Yvonne Sat Yee Lo, Raxaa Khelifi Alami at European Gaza Hospital.

International Women's Day

March 2025

This year, our International Women's Day event embraced an exciting new format as a global webinar featuring the remarkable Ruth Jebb. With an impressive 26 years of experience as a Registered Nurse and Midwife, along with accolades including the Florence Nightingale Medal and the International Service Medal, Ruth captivated our international audience with her inspiring account of her deployment with ARC to Gaza in May 2024.

Listening to Ruth share her experiences was both deeply moving and incredibly

insightful. Her journey provided a glimpse into the realities faced by humanitarian workers in conflict zones and underscored the critical need for their compassion and resilience in challenging circumstances.

In addition to her professional insights, Ruth offered personal reflections on balancing her demanding but rewarding career with her life in Brisbane, where she lives with her partner and their two young boys. Her ability to navigate such a fulfilling professional life while cherishing her family further exemplified Ruth's strength and humanitarian spirit.

Australian Red Cross opens new Victorian state office

April 2025

ARC invited SWL Members to attend the opening of its new Victorian state office located at 637 Flinders Street, Docklands Victoria.

Marking an exciting new chapter in the organisations 110-year history, the new office was officially opened by Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria.

“As Patron of Australian Red Cross in Victoria, it is a pleasure to officially open the new Australian Red Cross Victorian office – marking a fresh chapter in this organisation’s longstanding mission to support those in need,” said Her Excellency.

ARC Victorian State Director, Nichola Krey said the new centrally located office would further strengthen the organisation’s connection to community.



Smoking ceremony at the new Victorian state office opening.

“Our new office has been designed to be more sustainable, accessible and fit for purpose to ensure we can continue to serve the community effectively,” she said.

As the primary location for ARC members, volunteers and staff based in Victoria, the new office is set to support the organisations work in emergency services, migration support, international programs, international humanitarian law and community programs.



Special guests and ARC staff at the new Victorian state office opening.



VIC Members at Kerry Blake's home.



NSW Members in the Pallas Capital Boardroom.

Annual Members Meeting Part 1 - Programs Update

May 2025

This year's Annual Members Meeting Part 1 was open to anyone interested in joining the group and fostering the impact of collective giving not just current Members.

The event adopted a hybrid format, welcoming attendees both in person and virtually from Kerry Blake's home in Melbourne, workplaces, and the Pallas office in Sydney. It was a delight to welcome representatives from the RWL to sit alongside SWL Members and their guests.

The gathering opened with heartfelt remarks from National Chair Row McGilvray, who thanked Members for their ongoing commitment and contributions. These messages set the tone for the meeting, emphasising the

importance of empowering women and supporting communities through united efforts.

Row McGilvray summarised the year in review which marked significant growth and impact for SWL, reflecting deepening community ties and philanthropic innovation. As part of the global Tiffany Circle network, Australia co-chaired the Geneva Forum, where our delegation was prominently involved—including nurse and Florence Nightingale recipient, Ruth Jebb, who delivered a powerful keynote on her deployment to Gaza.

Australia's contributions, such as the youth-led RWL initiative and the introduction of an app used for communication and advocacy.

SWL continues to thrive through the dedication of its Members and leadership, driven by a shared sense of purpose and generosity.

Next, we heard directly from Program Leads on the following SWL and RWL funded programs from FY24/25:

- International Disaster and Crisis Response
- Baby Hub
- Connected Women
- National Society Partnerships: Timor-Leste and Mongolia
- International Humanitarian Law

ARC program leaders delivered detailed updates on how Member contributions have been used over the past year.

These presentations illustrated the real-world impact of our collective giving, reinforcing the value and reach of SWL's initiatives.

The meeting concluded with a reminder that Annual Members Meeting Part 2, is where Members will turn their focus to the year ahead and vote on the next round of funding — one of the most meaningful ways we activate our collective voice.

National Reconciliation Week at Night Café

May 2025

In ARC's ongoing commitment to reconciliation, Auntie Louisa Bonner, volunteers and young people from Brisbane's Night Café came together to co-create a meaningful art piece that celebrates culture, connection, and community.

The Acknowledgement to Country artwork pays tribute to the Traditional Owners of the land—the YAGGARA people—and stands as a vibrant expression of shared learning and respect. This collaborative project reflects the spirit of reconciliation and the power of creativity to bring people together across generations and backgrounds.



Artwork created by Auntie Louisa Bonner with support from ARC volunteers, and young people at the Brisbane Night Café.

The unveiling of the artwork was a moment of pride and reflection, highlighting the importance of recognising First Nations voices and fostering inclusive spaces where stories and traditions are honoured.

Executive Lunch: Deep Conversations, Stronger Connections

May 2025

An inspiring and warm Executive Lunch was hosted by Deloitte Partner, David Thomlinson at Deloitte's Quay Quarter Tower in Sydney. The event brought together key figures from SWL and ARC for a candid discussion on humanitarian efforts.

Against the stunning backdrop of Sydney Harbour, attendees included ARC CEO Andrew Colvin, ARC Deputy CEO Penny Harrison and ARC Board Deputy President, Annette Ruhotas. They were joined by prominent SWL Members and partners, including Caroline Furlong, Marcus Blackmore, Kerry-Anne Johnston, Nici and

Simon McCarroll, Barb Fletcher, and Mieka Hutchinson.

Row McGilvray, SWL National Chair, opened with an Acknowledgement of Country and warm personal introductions. The roundtable format fostered open dialogue, allowing participants to speak freely about the impact, priorities, and future of humanitarian giving. It was a unique opportunity to exchange ideas, share insights, and truly strengthen connections.

A central theme emerged: while the Red Cross boasts an expansive footprint, simplifying how its diverse programs are communicated is crucial. As Simon McCarroll noted, "The general public sees Red Cross as humanity's helpers, but the full scale of programs remains largely unknown."



Attendees engage at the Executive Lunch, generously hosted by Deloitte.



Back row: SWL Liaison, Mieka Hutchinson, Deloitte Partner, David Thomlinson, and SWL Member, Barb Fletcher. Front row: ARC Board Deputy President, Annette Ruhotas, and SWL National Chair and Founding Member, Row McGilvray.

Caroline Furlong echoed this sentiment, emphasising the immense trust in the organisation - “We feel safe giving our money to Red Cross. There’s enormous trust but the story can be clearer.”

Ideas flowed on how to foster long-term supporter engagement. Nici McCarroll proposed a tiered event model, linking more exclusive experiences with higher giving levels. Kerry-Anne Johnston highlighted the importance of nurturing RWL to build lifelong connections with the humanitarian movement.

The group also explored strategies for the ARC to diversify its funding beyond government support, focusing on the need for reliable income streams.

Row McGilvray and Andrew Colvin discussed endowment funds as a pathway to long-term sustainability, a concept met with strong support from the table. Practical suggestions surfaced for educating donors on tax-deductibility and creating clear factsheets to communicate the tangible impact of donations.

Penny Harrison and Andrew Colvin showcased innovative partnerships, citing Uber’s collaboration on modern slavery initiatives, Australia Post’s community referral pilot, and various retail partnerships. Guests agreed that early connection is vital, suggesting that linking with school programs like Duke of Edinburgh could plant the seed for lifelong passion and support.

Throughout the robust conversation, one overarching theme resonated, because ARC is profoundly trusted it is principled, far-reaching, and effective. As Caroline Furlong powerfully articulated, “We never have to worry that our contributions will be wasted.”

Penny Harrison closed the discussion with a poignant story of an unexpected bequest from a family previously supported by ARC decades earlier, a moving testament to the enduring impact of their work.

This Executive Lunch successfully deepened relationships, sparked fresh ideas, and powerfully reaffirmed the value of creating intimate, intentional spaces for conversation with our most dedicated supporters.

Baby Hub Field Trip

June 2025

Walking Alongside: Reflections from Galiwin'ku and the Baby Hub.

A group of SWL Members travelled to Arnhem Land to visit Baby Hub in Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, a program that SWL and RWL have proudly supported through their collective giving for many years.

SWL Members and ARC staff gathered for a group dinner in Darwin on their first night. Early the next morning, the small group boarded their flight to Elcho Island, with a fuel stop in Maningrida along the way.

The anticipation was palpable as the plane touched down on the red earth of Galiwin'ku with the Arafura Sea stretching to the horizon.

At Baby Hub the women were welcomed by local Elders and ARC program lead Bridget with generosity and warmth. The women spent the day listening, learning, and seeing firsthand how the Hub serves as a lifeline for mothers and their young children. Far from being a clinical service, it is a safe space where help is offered freely, without judgement, and always with respect.



Founding Member, Kerry Blake with Patricia Djanawu Wanambi and Vera York, learning how to make bread.



Founding Member and Lady Helen Munro Ferguson Member, Caroline Furlong with Baby Tyreek Wunungmurra.



The group on a cultural hunting trip with Vera York, gaining firsthand knowledge of the local land and traditional practices.

“Though the problems facing the Galiwin’ku community appear to be almost insurmountable, SWL is making a huge difference to the lives of mothers and their children in such a harsh environment. The Baby Hub is truly a space where help is given freely with warm respect. We felt very welcomed and appreciated by all. Bridget, Vera and Serafina are doing an amazing job with their limited resources. It was a privilege to be included and, though very confronting, I have learnt so much about the realities of the locals’ everyday lives from their perspective, not the media’s.” – Caroline Furlong

The following day the women were invited to join a hunting trip, a rare privilege. Under the guidance of community members, they spent the day on country: fishing, gathering, and

sharing food prepared in traditional ways. This was more than an excursion; it was a window into culture, history, and connection to land.

On the final day, the group visited the Elcho Island Arts Centre, where local artists keep alive the ancient stories and techniques of Yolŋu art. Before departing, there was a final visit to Baby Hub, a fitting bookend to the time spent in the Galiwin’ku community.

The trip was confronting at times for the women, but above all it was hopeful. It affirmed to all of the Members that our collective giving is thriving in the hands of Bridget, Vera and Serafina, and in the lives of mothers and children in Galiwin’ku who now have a place to belong, to grow, and to be supported.

“Although I’ve travelled through rural Australia, this was my first experience in a truly remote community—and I arrived with a mix of curiosity and apprehension. Questions swirled in my mind: Would I feel safe? How would I communicate, knowing many locals speak little or no English? Yet within hours of arriving, those concerns melted away. I felt surprisingly at ease—almost at home. Meeting the incredible people involved with Baby Hub was a turning point. I came to understand that Baby Hub is far more than a support service for mothers with young children—it’s a vital thread in the fabric of the community. This visit reminded me that remote communities are not defined by their challenges, but by their resilience, wisdom, and potential. I left Galiwin’ku with a deep sense of respect and a renewed commitment to listening, learning, and supporting meaningful change.”

– Pamela Robertson-Gregg



Baby Sama is delighted with her new Sud Bud!

A warm thank you to Zoë Foster Blake and the Go-To team for their generous donation of products to Baby Hub. Their support brings joy and care to families in the community, and their kindness and commitment to making a difference is deeply appreciated.



SWL Members joining a Baby Hub playgroup session with Priscilla Lorenz and Tyreek Wunungmurra.



Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) volunteers have been visiting affected communities to arrange psychological first aid following the earthquake that struck the country on 17 December 2024. This disaster, compounded by aftershocks and resulting landslides, is a stark reminder of the growing vulnerabilities faced by Pacific nations in the face of natural and climate-induced hazards. Photo: VRCS

Annual Members Meeting Part 2 – Pitching Possibility, Honouring Leadership

June 2025

SWL and RWL Members gathered in person in VIC and virtually across the country for Part 2 of our Annual Members Meeting (AMM). While Part 1 focused on reflecting on our impact, AMM Part 2 looked ahead. It was time for vision, shining a light on generosity, and collective decision-making.

We began by acknowledging the powerful role of every Member, recognising those who have walked alongside ARC for 3, 5, and 10 years, our inaugural \$30K tier Members, and the remarkable Lady Helen Munro-

Ferguson Members Caroline Furlong and Cynthia Carter. These contributions are not only generous; they are transformative. It is the collective effort and unity of all of us together that truly drives our group forward. Members dedication, passion, and support are what makes this community so special.

We also paid tribute to outgoing Deputy National Chair, Diana Cregan, whose thoughtfulness, leadership and steadfast presence have helped shape SWL. We welcomed Cate White into the role of Victorian State Chair, a leader who has brought her energy to SWL from visits to Timor-Leste to Geneva to New York.



Delivered by ARC volunteers and staff, Pillowcase Workshops encourage children in Year 3 and 4 (aged 8-10) to be active participants in their own emergency preparedness. Each student is then given a pillowcase to decorate and take home, to start their own personal emergency kit. Photo: ARC

Financials, Governance and a Growing Movement

We heard from CEO Andrew Colvin on ARC's strategic priorities and received an update on our growing financial footprint. With membership numbers and funds raised on the rise, our group continues to deliver on its mission to support humanitarian work both in Australia and around the world.

Updates from Selena Spring and Kate O'Callaghan confirmed that our governance frameworks are evolving to meet this growth, with new tier structures and a two-year trial of enhancements to ensure sustainability, equity, and transparency.

Program Pitches: Insight and Inspiration

The heart of AMM Part 2 were the program pitches, seven diverse and

compelling programs seeking support. Program leaders joined us to present on the funding requirements needed for FY26. We thank Bridget Woods, Giselle DiPaolo, Carolyne Doherty, Hollie Johnston, Adrian Prouse, Mat Orr and Nic Batch for their time and powerful presentations. Voting opened after the meeting concluded at noon, to determine which programs receive priority funding ensuring we maintain our 50/50 commitment to both national and international humanitarian efforts.

Looking Ahead

As we looked to the future, Members were invited to get involved in new working groups and committees, and to join upcoming engagement opportunities. Together, we are building not just a giving circle but a movement for change, led by women, powered by trust, and focused on impact.

The power of the Movement



The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is a global humanitarian network of 80 million people that helps those facing disaster, conflict, health and social problems.

The Movement is an impartial, neutral and independent organisation whose exclusive humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war, disasters and other situations of emergency and to provide people with assistance.

Made up of three components including the International Committee of the Red

Cross (ICRC), 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

National Societies embody the work and principles of the Movement in 191 countries and 14 million volunteers give their time and expertise to make their communities safer, more resilient, and more inclusive. This is the power of humanity, and it is unstoppable.

The red cross, red crescent and red crystal emblems are protective symbols and are central to the laws of war. They mean 'Don't shoot - we are not part of the fight' in every language.



ARC delegate Jean-Phillipe (JP) Miller on the ground in Gaza, where he's worked alongside local teams as an emergency nurse. Photo: ICRC

Standing alongside Australian Red Cross.



ARC team member Belinda Davis at the Townsville Stadium Recovery Centre, providing support and guidance to community Members impacted by the floods in 2025. Photo: Chris Healy/ARC

Australian Red Cross is a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with millions of members and volunteers operating in 191 countries.

Here at home, ARC provides relief in times of crisis, whether it's a natural disaster or a personal emergency. ARC is there for children who go to school hungry, elderly Australians who live at home alone, lonely teenagers sleeping on the streets and families who have

fallen on tough times. It is working together with communities, both in Australia and overseas, to ensure they are productive, safe and resilient.

As a community of committed women leaders and philanthropists, SWL and RWL are proud to stand alongside ARC and will continue to advance its mission by embracing and engaging women in our communities, as we work towards a future where everyone feels safe, supported and empowered to succeed.

Australian Red Cross 2024/25

16,949 Australian Red Cross members and volunteers acted for humanity.

1,387 Australian Red Cross employees helped and supported people.

408 Australian Red Cross branches, units, clubs and Friends of Red Cross initiatives.

40 member-run services took place across Australia.

139,168 hours of volunteers connecting with older and vulnerable people through our Telecross and Telechat programs.

281,923 people received support before, during and after disasters.

32 emergency activations across the country.

3.8 million + people accessed information from disaster preparedness campaigns.

32,551 people from 129 countries helped through our migration support programs in Australia.

11,481 people accessed our Work Right Hub website.

7,739 people participated in "In Search of Safety" community education sessions.

3.6 + tonnes of humanitarian aid products provided across the globe.

57 Australian international aid workers deployed to 25 countries.

60+ people enrolled in two editions of our International Law and Humanitarian Action in Conflict course.

5 First Nations communities in four states and one territory were engaged to co-design programs that reflect community aspirations.

70,000 + students completed first aid training through the Australian Red Cross.

144,964 meals delivered to 1,499 older people.

7 million + donated items sold through Australian Red Cross shops.

2.8 million + of quality clothing that may otherwise been prematurely sent to landfill, sold in Australian Red Cross Shops.



Women leading through philanthropy.

For further information regarding the Society of Women Leaders,
please contact swl@redcross.org.au