

A year
in review.
2022-2023



**Australian
Red Cross**

**SOCIETY OF WOMEN
LEADERS**



4

Thank you
from the
National Chair

6

A message
from the CEO

8

Our history,
our vision, our
community

10

Funding

12

Program
updates

20

Strategy,
planning and
leadership

23

Gratitude for
our members,
supporters and
sponsors

24

Our events and
philanthropic
opportunities

45

Standing
alongside
Australian
Red Cross

46

The power of
Red Cross

Thank you from the Chair.

SUSAN WYNNE | NATIONAL CHAIR AND MEMBER NSW

As I reflect on another passing year, one resounding theme emerges - the remarkable power of philanthropy. It was Greek playwright Aeschylus who coined the term philanthropy in the 5th century BCE meaning “love of humanity.” Even today, I don’t think there is a better meaning and one that is more in line with the Society of Women Leaders (SWL). In this year’s review, we reflect on this exceptional group of women bound by a shared purpose and the desire to make a lasting impact.

To say it is a privilege to be the National Chair is an understatement. In a world that often seems rife with challenges and uncertainties, this past year has been a testament to the remarkable power of philanthropy and collective compassion. Through our shared dedication, unwavering commitment, and the unbreakable bond of women united by a common purpose, we have not only redefined the impact of giving but also reaffirmed the transformative potential of the human spirit.

I hope for you that this Year in Review is a reminder of the wonderful journey we have been on together. A journey that transcends traditional notions

of charity and extends towards the empowerment of individuals, families, and communities in need. We know that it’s not simply about donating funds, but rather about nurturing a deep connection to the causes we support and it is this connection to cause which truly sets us apart.

I want to acknowledge the incredible Executive Leadership Team made up of Row McGilvray, Diana Cregan, Selena Spring, Barbara Fletcher and of course, our wonderful Red Cross Liaison, Rylan Turner. As National Chair, I would like to extend a warm thanks to our committee members for their passion and dedication sustaining SWL.

And lastly, and most importantly a huge thanks to you, our members, and supporters, for your unwavering support, boundless generosity, and for embracing and being part of the remarkable spirit of Australian Red Cross Society of Women Leaders.

Thank you.



A message from the CEO.

KIM PFITZNER | CEO, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS



This year Australian Red Cross has taken a critical step towards delivering a transformed humanitarian organisation.

Like other many other organisations and charities we've faced increasing and complex demand for humanitarian support and services. Fortunately, Australian Red Cross' core areas of expertise including Emergency Services, Migration, International Humanitarian Law, International Programs and Community Programs, have meant that we are well placed to respond to these compounding demands.

During this time, our organisation has been supported by the incredibly committed leaders and philanthropists within the Society of Women Leaders (SWL), something I am deeply grateful for.

SWL members have supported Australian Red Cross beyond their generous annual membership financial contribution. They have dedicated their time by hosting SWL engagements, maintaining strong governance, event planning and fundraising, as well as volunteer hours, with a shared mission to advocate the work of Australian Red Cross.

Under the leadership of National Chair, Susan Wynne, the SWL Executive Leadership Committee, National Advisory Committee, Events and Program Committees, we have seen significant growth in SWL's membership and impact over the past 12-months.

As a critical philanthropic partner of Australian Red Cross, SWL's ability to unite Australia's business community for humanitarian causes is truly remarkable. I thank each member for your unique strengths and for leveraging your professional networks, with ambitious targets that are reached time and time again.

This was certainly on display at the Business Series Lunches held in Melbourne and Sydney which were kindly hosted by Qantm IP.

SWL's International Women's Day event in March was another great example with key speaker, Australian business leader and social impact advocate, Christine Holgate addressing the audience on equality in the workplace and the strengths of the female workforce across sectors. Thanks to the generosity of those in attendance, SWL's presenting partner Prezzee,

It is with great sadness that SWL recognises the passing of Kym Pfitzner at the time of printing the Year in Review. Kym leaves behind a legacy that will live on at Australian Red Cross for many years to come. He will be remembered as a trusted confidant, inspiring leader, and dear friend.

Vale Kym Pfitzner



Shaun Bonnet and David Christie, and sponsors the Bayard Foundation and LGT Crestone, the event raised an incredible \$264,289 for Red Cross' Global Migration Lab.

SWL's support this year has also extended across several Australian Red Cross international and domestic programs voted in by members. It was a delight to host SWL members in Brisbane at the Red Cross office and for members to connect with our QLD Executive Team and visit the SWL funded program, Night Café in February this year.

At the SWL Annual Members Meeting in June, members participated in the voting process which saw the Young Parents Program, NSW and Night Cafe, QLD attract significant support. Members also discussed their continued backing for programs that serve people and communities impacted by armed conflict and natural disasters.

From an international perspective SWL's two multi-year international pledges to International Disaster Response and Disaster Management with Vanuatu Red Cross have delivered invaluable contributions to the Asia-Pacific region and beyond as the world

contends with multiple emergencies.

It has been a pleasure to see SWL's involvement in the International Tiffany Circle. As a global initiative that brings together female philanthropic communities, it highlights the unique power of collective giving and is immensely valued by Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies across the world. Thank you.

In the year ahead I'm looking forward to celebrating ten years of SWL alongside Australian Red Cross' 110-year anniversary. It's this commitment to championing the best of humanity that SWL members truly represent.

Our Movement was founded on rising to the challenge, something SWL embodies and delivers upon each and every year. Thank you for being our partners in supporting those in need now and into the future.

Our history, our vision, our community.

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

Today, SWL is one of the most successful circles of giving in Australia and our vision is clear - to bring together a collective of Australian women who raise funds for Australian Red Cross, reducing humanitarian suffering and building a world where vulnerable women and children feel safe, protected and empowered to thrive.



The three images symbolize 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 part of the Tiffany Circle, a growing global movement of female philanthropists from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Switzerland who support Red Cross National Societies. Collectively, 1,392 members have raised US\$220.73 million.

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

- advance the humanitarian mission of Australian Red Cross
- bring together like-minded women to make a difference
- make a measurable impact on important issues facing their communities
- improve the lives of vulnerable women, children, families and communities
- build strategic alliances for change
- lend their voice to the issues they believe in most
- lead through philanthropy



Each year members donate \$10,000 to Australian Red Cross. These funds are pooled and at the Annual Members Meeting, members vote on which Red Cross programs these funds will support. Coming together to advance the work of Red Cross and advocate humanitarian support is at the heart of what SWL does. Collectively, they can achieve so much more.

Just as Australian Red Cross is guided by seven fundamental principles, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, universality, SWL are guided by seven core values compassion, optimism, integrity, excellence, loyalty, collaboration and gratitude.

Funding.

This year, the Society of Women Leaders raised a total of \$752,086 through membership donations and fundraising. Since inception in 2014, SWL has raised \$5,768,941 and with influenced giving, a total of \$6,489,835.

The following programs have been supported this financial year.

Disaster Management with Vanuatu Red Cross	\$117,000
International Disaster Response	\$157,000
The SHAK, NT	\$16,828
Night Cafe, QLD	\$114,398
Global Migration Lab	\$264,289
Young Parents Program	\$97,570
Total FY23 funds allocated	\$767,085

Notes:

- Annual membership donations are paid before 1st June and allocated before 30th June to enable upfront funding for the next FY.
- International Disaster Response and Disaster Management with Vanuatu Red Cross received FY24 funding upfront at the end June 2023. The impact of these funds will be reported next year.
- The SHAK was pledged \$65,000 for FY23, \$48,172 was allocated in June 2022 the balance of \$16,828 was allocated in July 2022.
- Night Cafe was pledged \$65,000 for FY23, \$48,172 was allocated in June 2022 the balance of \$16,828 was allocated in July 2022. A further pledge of \$97,570 for FY24 was allocated in June 2023. The impact of these funds will be reported next year.
- Young Parents Program pledge of \$97,570 for FY24 was allocated in June 2023. The impact of these funds will be reported next year.
- The Global Migration Lab pledge of \$264,289 for FY24 was allocated in May 2023. The impact of these funds will be reported next year.

FY22-23

Collaboration pool c/f	\$14,999
Total funds raised	\$752,086
Total funds allocated	\$767,085
Collaboration pool c/f	\$0



Program updates.

Disaster Management with Vanuatu Red Cross

Funding provided in FY23 \$117,000 (Year five of a five year pledge)

Total funding by SWL \$585,000

SWL has supported the Red Cross Movement within the Asia Pacific region with philanthropic funding which has fostered the critical partnership between Australian Red Cross and Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS). Australian Red Cross facilitates humanitarian deployments and remote service for technical advice, logistical support and relief aid when the Vanuatu community is in need. The VRCS Headquarters is located in Nambatu, Port Vila and has a strategic focus on climate change adaptation, disaster management, humanitarian law, health and hygiene within communities.

Vanuatu is known as one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world with devastating cyclones, earthquakes, flooding and volcanic eruptions. Disasters are damaging to social and economic infrastructure, the environment, property and general development.

Therefore, communities are often challenged with hardship and desolation. Supporting communities with the skill and resources to reduce, and respond to, disasters is a key priority.

Disaster Preparedness aims to minimise the loss of life and damage in the event of a disaster. By pre-positioning relief supplies in each of Vanuatu's provinces, expanding our presence in remote areas, increasing community resilience and strengthening the skills of communities, we can help reduce the impact of disasters. Preparedness activities include community risk assessments, awareness sessions, first aid training, the development of mitigation and response plans, the improvement of early warning systems and the establishment of Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees.

Disaster Risk Reduction program helps communities to identify and manage local disaster risks with education and tools. Disaster Response helps to reduce the impact of a disaster and its long term effects. Relief activities carried out by VRCS in response to disasters includes but are not limited to rescue, relocation, provision of food and water, prevention of disease and disability and provision of temporary shelter.

VRSC Strategic Goals

1. Save lives and strengthen resilience to disasters and crisis
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace
4. Build a stronger, self-sustainable, accountable and diverse national society



Photos: Yamatu Red Cross Society

International Disaster Response

Funding provided in FY23 \$157,000 (Year five of a five year pledge)

Total funding by SWL \$785,000

Australian Red Cross International Response Team, comprising four female staff members, coordinates support to Red Cross National Societies across the globe to deliver assistance and operational logistics as and when disasters and emergencies occur. The response team is constantly monitoring emerging and ongoing crises, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. Australian Red Cross enables response action, as requested by local Red Cross National Societies, by mobilising financial, materials and human resources. These resources complement the 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:

- The multiple earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria
- The monsoon flooding in Pakistan
- The twin cyclones (Judy and Kevin) affecting Vanuatu

Continued situations:

- The conflict in Ukraine alongside the displacement and humanitarian response across Europe
- COVID-19 response operations across the Asia Pacific region
- The complex crisis in Afghanistan
- The growing global food insecurity crisis with a spotlight on the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia)
- The complex crisis in Syria
- The economic and civil unrest crisis in Sri Lanka
- The displacement of Myanmar refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Photo: IFRC



Türkiye earthquake response work

Case Study: Türkiye-Syria Earthquakes

On 6th February 2023, two devastating earthquakes, measuring 7.7 and 7.6 magnitudes struck the southern parts of Türkiye and the northern parts of Syria leaving thousands dead and injured, and causing significant infrastructure damage across the region. The earthquakes were the largest to hit the area in the last century and came at a time when local communities are already facing increased humanitarian needs, particularly in Syria which has endured over 12 years of ongoing conflict. Relief efforts were hampered due to the harsh weather conditions with areas of Türkiye experiencing flooding whilst in Syria, after an initial cease fire, the conflict began again.

The Australian International Response Team coordinated ARC's support to the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement operation which supported millions of people affected by the earthquakes and launched the Türkiye-Syria Earthquakes appeal, which raised over AUD \$6 million. Funding for Türkiye and Syria was allocated to shelter, health and protection, gender and inclusion. ARC also deployed three aid worker delegates to Türkiye to assist the operation on the ground.

In Türkiye, ARC funding has supported the operation lead by Türkiye Red Crescent (TRCS) which has provided

humanitarian assistance to over 3 million people to date. TRCS is the responsible authority for mass feeding in the disaster area which has included serving 230 million hot meals, distributing over 15 million food parcels and over 17 million servings of soup from both field and mobile kitchens to date. TRCS have also assisted the affected populations by providing shelter support, water, sanitation and hygiene services, distribution of relief supplies as well as health and mental health support services.

In Syria, the operation has been led by Syria Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and reached 1 million people with assistance providing psychosocial support, first aid and reproductive health support, the distribution of relief supplies, and shelter support. The earthquakes occurred amidst the complex and protracted crisis in Syria.

The magnitude of the disaster and the difficulties faced mean that the recovery process will be long and complex. The RCRC Movement will continue to support communities through the response and recovery efforts following the earthquakes.

The SHAK, NT

Funding provided in FY23 \$65,000 (one year pledge) *see funding notes

Total funding by SWL \$65,000

The SHAK (Safe Hangout for All Kids) is a youth centre in the northern suburbs of Darwin that caters for young people aged 10 to 21. It is a place where children feel comfort and safety in a supervised environment and are encouraged to participate in activities. The SHAK has been operated by Australian Red Cross since 1983 and has become an integral part of the Darwin community. Activities and opportunities delivered at The SHAK aim to support the resilience, self-determination, and the social and emotional well-being of young people in the Darwin region, the majority of whom are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

The program offers service to children who are at risk and/or disadvantaged to connect with other children and the community, learn new skills, engage in mentorship, access nutritious food and most importantly, have fun.

Children and young people attend at their own free will, with no registration required and a drop-in nature that empowers young people with personal autonomy, youth lead activities and decision-making being a crucial part of what they do.

Operating Tuesday to Friday from 2-6pm and Saturday from 12-6pm with extensions in the school holidays, the program achieves the following outcomes for children:

- Access to services that meet their cultural, physical and mental health needs
- Engagement in designing, preparing and implementing SHAK activities and programs
- Support to undertake approved training and enter the workforce
- Feel stronger, healthier, and more connected to culture and the broader community
- Increased attendance at school and/or employment
- Deeper connection to community

SWL funding this year enabled:

- Increased youth workers working hours each day and increased number of casual youth workers in the staffing roster
- Collaboration with meaningful service providers
- Staff training, such as First-Aid, Youth First Nations Cultural Training and Team Workshops

Photo: Australian Red Cross



Artwork created by youth at The SHAK

- Support of staff well-being as the nature of work is impacted by the complex traumas of the youth visitors
- Youth and staff collaborated on the design and purchase of The SHAK uniforms
- To embrace and celebrate First Nations and youth ideas
- SWL funding allowed youth and staff to compete in the Annual Couch Surfing race of Darwin, which The SHAK won!

Total youth supported by The SHAK in 12 months	6,195
Average attendance	42 young people per day
Maximum	67 young people
Minimum	14 young people

Night Cafe, QLD

Funding provided in FY23 \$65,000 (one year pledge) *see funding notes

Funding provided in FY23 for FY24 \$97,570

Total funding by SWL \$162,570



Night Cafe staff and volunteers

For over 20 years, Night Cafe has been operating to serve Brisbane's youth population who are living 'rough' by providing nutritious meals, warm showers, clean clothing and referrals to services for youth to access health and well-being support, employment, housing, and financial support. Committed youth workers and Red Cross volunteers are trained to manage the complex needs of youth and provide the resources required to support the youth visitors.

Breakdown of youth who visit Night Cafe:

- 50% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

- 50% under the age of 18
- 17% from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 12% New Zealander or Pacific Islander

SWL funding this year enabled:

- Young people access Night Cafe: 189
- Occurrences of access: 1,699
- Meals: 2,503
- Referrals: 657
- Practical supports: 2,066
- Personal support: 11,062
- Volunteer shifts totaling 2,612 hours
- 10 regular visiting services totaling 222 visits in the year

Collaborative stakeholder relationships:

- Micah Projects
- Brisbane Emergency Outreach Service (BEROS)
- Clarence Street
- Maxima Employment
- Queensland Police Service (QPS)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS)
- 4 Voices

Case Studies: Night Cafe

A young person

A young person who has been visiting Night Cafe regularly for the last year is passionate about barbering, and frequently discusses his passion with youth workers. This young person wanted to start his own barbering business but was confused by the process of applying for an ABN through an online application. Night Cafe youth workers walked the young person through this process by explaining the requirements outlined in the form and assisted him to fill out the form on a provided computer. With this support, this young person successfully obtained an ABN and is looking forward to opportunities to expand his barbering business.

A workshop

A workshop was hosted at Night Cafe by three former young people who used the service and are now Night Cafe volunteers or staff. It was a strengths-based workshop that identified individual's skills and personal qualities that enabled them to get where they are today. Many of the participants expressed Night Cafe is a program that helped them grow and succeed.

“One of the biggest practical outcomes is self-confidence. I was previously unemployed and thought I couldn't get



Night Cafe lounge room in Brisbane

a job because I lacked self-confidence. I started volunteering at Night Cafe and it gave me opportunities and the belief that I could do things right, and I had a sense of capability afterwards and I could start working.”

“It gave me the belief and strong positivity that I could do something, even if I didn't think I could.”

“At first Night Cafe was a place just to hang out and get food, but then became so much more.”

“It's a place where you look after each other, and you can gather and just feel safe. You can access services you usually wouldn't.”

Strategy, planning and leadership.

The Society of Women Leaders (SWL) recognise the trust placed in us when members, supporters and partners donate to our giving circle. As a collective, we are committed to strong governance practices, transparency, and accountability. We are committed to working closely with Australian Red Cross to ensure our strategies and messages align and most importantly, committed to investing in programs which have lasting impact.

SWL works within a governance framework called the Australian Red Cross Society of Women Leaders Terms of Reference (ToR). Our structure sees State Chairs from NSW and VIC working together and being responsible for member engagement and new member growth in their states and nationally, ensuring the core values of SWL are continually embraced. This year we welcomed Kate O'Callaghan as Governance Administrator who took on the role of maintaining and updating the ToR.

SWL continues to work closely with Australian Red Cross as we see a stronger focus on building resilience, preparedness and early intervention.

It has been wonderful to engage with Australian Red Cross CEO, Kym Pfitzner and the Executive Leadership staff. Kym has worked tirelessly alongside SWL and it has been a privilege to have him attend many of our events this year, particularly International Women's Day.

With next year marking our 10 year anniversary, our Executive Leadership Team is already planning how we will celebrate this incredible milestone. Coincidentally, and serendipitously, Australian Red Cross will be celebrating 110 years in 2024. Please continue to be informed about these two special anniversaries.

It is important to note that the Executive Leadership Team and sub-committees volunteer their time to run our giving circle and is yet another testament to what can be achieved when women come together with a common goal. We thank them for their outstanding service.

Finally, our deepest thanks to Australian Red Cross staff who have attended our meetings and events this year and for the continued partnership to ensure our giving circle delivers the greatest impact. We could not do this without them and we are so very grateful.



SWL Governance structure in 2022/2023 is as follows:

Executive Leadership Team

Diana Cregan
Barbara Fletcher (Secretary)
Kate Martin (until October 2022)
Row McGilvray
Selena Spring
Rylan Turner, Australian Red Cross
Susan Wynne (Chair)

National Advisory Committee

Diana Cregan
Barbara Fletcher (Secretary)
Kate Martin (until October 2022)
Row McGilvray
Kate O'Callaghan (January 2023)
Selena Spring
Rylan Turner, Australian Red Cross
Susan Wynne (Chair)

National Governance Sub-committee

(ceased December 2022)

Kerry Blake
Maryjane Crabtree
Diana Cregan
Kate Martin (until October 2022)
Row McGilvray
Kate O'Callaghan
Anita Pahor
Pamela Robertson-Gregg
Rylan Turner, Australian Red Cross
Susan Wynne



National Programs Sub-committee

Kerry Blake
Diana Cregan
Kate Martin (until October 2022)
Row McGilvray
Anita Pahor
Anne Spencer
Selena Spring (Administrator)
Rylan Turner Australian Red Cross
(Chair)
Australian Red Cross
Susan Wynne
Nelli Zinder

National Sponsorships and Events Sub-committee

Diana Cregan
Kate Ericson
Kate Martin (until October 2022)
Row McGilvray (Chair)
Rylan Turner
Susan Wynne

NSW Events Sub-committee

Row McGilvray
Belinda Singh
Linda Volker

VIC Leadership Team

Diana Cregan (Chair)
Kate Ericson

Gratitude for our members, supporters and sponsors.

Thank you to our sponsors, volunteers and supporters

We thank the individuals and businesses who supported the Society of Women Leaders and our humanitarian initiatives with a wonderful spirit of generosity and partnership over the last year.

- Anita Pahor, Fireside Chat VIC
- Anita Pahor, AI Fresco Lunch VIC
- Aro-Ha, New Zealand
- Bayard Foundation
- Blackmore Foundation
- Christian Louboutin
- Caroline Furlong
- Grown Alchemist
- Hayley Baillie
- House of K'Dor
- Justin Dance from JDdesign
- Kerry Blake
- Kokomo Private Island, Fiji
- LGT Crestone
- LK Group
- Paspaley, May Cocktails NSW
- Macphee's
- Mandalay Flowers
- National Australia Bank, May Connections VIC
- Pamela Robertson-Gregg
- Prezzy
- Qantm IP, Business Series Lunch NSW VIC
- Rochelle Collis, Fireside Chat NSW
- Row McGilvray
- Shareable Apps
- Susan Di Michiel, AI Fresco Lunch NSW
- The Fullerton Hotel, International Women's Day NSW
- Tom and Diana Cregan
- Vanden Media

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 Red Cross. 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.

Refugee In My Neighbourhood – Immersion tour

3rd August 2022

Three SWL members accepted the opportunity through 'Refugee Camp in my Neighbourhood' to participate in an interactive tour through a simulated refugee camp at the Whitlam Institute in the grounds of the Western Sydney University. The tour is delivered by guides from a range of refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds who provide a very personal overlay to this tour.

Makeshift camps, a hospital, a school and even a collection of crates resembling a simple boat had been set up to simulate every element of the journey. After an

initial briefing about why refugees and asylum seekers are forced to flee their homes in search of safety, we were tasked with just two minutes to write down five material items we would take with us on our journey.

Led through a door to an area enclosed by tall fencing, we were about to try and cross a border. Set upon by a man in a balaclava with a very imposing baton screaming at us in an unfamiliar language. Some of us were pushed in a line others shoved up against a wall. Each of us losing one of our valuable items as payment to get to the next stage. The experience seemed so real, I had to remind myself I was in Sydney and no matter how confronted I felt, I was safe. After the ordeal ended the man removed his balaclava apologised for the alarm caused and spoke calmly of his own experience fleeing his home country and arrival in Australia and in between the extended time he spent with his siblings in a refugee camp. His youngest sibling still there, after nine years but he hoped to be able to earn enough and complete the paperwork to be able to bring her to Australia. Understanding though that families

who are lucky enough to get out are often split up far across the globe.

From here we faced more difficulty queueing to submit our paperwork to enter a foreign country but yet unable to read and understand the form we needed to complete. Another person could do that for us but for another item from our treasured five. I had now surrendered my cash and medicine - crucial for my survival. I soon realised my fifth item - family photos would hold no bargaining value for me. Entering the camp, we saw a makeshift hospital and amenities block neither providing any dignity, they were nothing more than simple open tents. We were shown examples of drinking water - highly contaminated but the only water on offer. Fresher water was many miles away and many not well enough to make the journey. We held the small box of supplies expected to feed a family of six for a week, in reality it would be hard to stretch beyond one meal - starvation another issue.

We sat crowded in the makeshift boat, only some lucky enough to receive a life jacket. Our guide told us of her personal story travelling with her small baby - she had never been to sea before and for a while thought she would never see land again.

We completed this journey in a couple of hours but in reality, it takes years and has many different outcomes. We heard firsthand so many heart-breaking stories. Arriving in Australia there were further obstacles and

hardships to overcome. Without the correct paperwork people are taken to detention centres such as Villawood in NSW, where asylum seekers must stay until either a bridging visa or protection visa has been granted. The average time spent in detention in Australia is 736 days and the harsh treatment was still very much evident from our guide and also as an Australian not easy to hear. Granted a visa but with no rights to work or have access to social security payments he had no self-sufficiency relying on very small donations from organisations like Red Cross. Not even sufficient paperwork to take out a mobile phone plan.

This program aims to have us recognise and celebrate the contributions of refugees and create welcoming environments where they can fully participate and achieve their potential. Refugees are not just people in need, they are people with skills, talents, and dreams. They are doctors, engineers, teachers, entrepreneurs, artists, and athletes. They are mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. They are valuable members of our communities who bring diversity, innovation, and resilience.

In the past decade, the number of people displaced from their home has doubled, from 41 million to 82.4 million. More than half of the world's refugees are children who have experienced trauma, loss, and uncertainty, but they also have resilience, hope, and dreams for the future.

This experience had a lasting effect.



NSW members Nelli Zinder and Anne Spencer

Fireside Chat, NSW

4th August 2022

A big thank you to Rochelle Collis who hosted this year's Fireside Chat in her beautiful home. This was our first in-person Fireside Chat since 2019 (thank you Covid), and what a return to form it was... The evening was super elegant but cosy, and it typified the spirit of our SWL group - warm, inclusive, enthusiastic and as always, good fun.

Having indulged in the best paella in Sydney, National Chair, Susan Wynne led the discussions around the ongoing strategy of Red Cross SWL and ways in which we might increase engagement and growth via corporate sponsorship.

Over to Selena for a funding overview, including more details on our groups' newly selected programs - the Night Cafe in Brisbane and The SHAK (Safe Hangout for All Kids) in Darwin. Linda and Belinda presented the events calendar for the next year - there's a lot to look forward to.

The Fireside Chat is always a lovely, informal opportunity to catch up with fellow SWL members, find out more about our programs, events and volunteering opportunities. We all left feeling grateful for our friendships, with renewed enthusiasm for SWL and the usual awe for Red Cross as an organisation and a community.



VIC members Kate Ericson, Selina Williams and Alaine Ding

Fireside Chat, VIC

10th August 2022

It was a classic winter evening in Melbourne - cold and dark, but what was delightful was the distinctly fresh country air. We had arrived at Anita's country property, nestled in the foothills of Mt Dandenong about 40 minutes from the city. The Fireside Chat is always a terrific evening and much looked forward to. What was particularly exciting about this Fireside Chat was the official welcoming of two members, Selina Williams and Alaine Ding. During the evening, they were presented with their pin and bracelet amid many smiles and embraces.

Given that we had not met in person for a Fireside Chat since 2019, it really was a joy to see everyone and simply

enjoy each other's company. As is tradition in Melbourne, the Fireside Chat is about being comfortable and Anita kindly offered ugg boots to those who had forgotten their own! We had a beautiful winter warming meal from Anita's kitchen and shared a glass of wine around her dining table.

Discussions covered a range of topics and a big part of the discussions was the re-alignment of membership and what this meant for our 'membership journey'. Shifting from a calendar year to a financial year is also now represented in the order of events given voting now happens in early June.

In addition to discussing the programs we're supporting, there was also the discussion of field trips to see programs we support, as well as volunteering opportunities. The 'Raise the Age'



VIC members Kerry Blake, Diana Cregan, Selina Williams, Kate Ericson, Alaine Ding, Anita Pahor, Kate O'Callaghan and Maryjane Crabtree

campaign was discussed, and the details were shared amongst the group to support the campaign messaging to reach as many others as possible.

Given the events of the last couple of years in Victoria, it was lovely to see so much energy, enthusiasm and optimism for the year ahead!



VIC members at the Business Series Lunch.
 Right: Penny Harrison from Australian Red Cross, Craig Dower from Qantm IP and National Chair, Susan Wynne and State Chair VIC, Diana Cregan

Business Series Lunch, VIC

10th October 2022

On the 10th October, The Society of Women Leaders Boardroom Series Lunch was held in Melbourne at the State Library in the Isabella Fraser Room - named after the Library's first listed female staff member - and hosted by the CEO of Qantm IP, Craig Dower.

Penny Harrison, Chief of Staff at Australian Red Cross, spoke about the incredible work being done in Australia and around the world, emphasising the relentlessness of the past several years, through wars and refugee crises overseas, and the extraordinary series of natural disasters in Australia, starting with the bushfires of 2019 and the numerous flooding events of the past couple of years, not to mention a once-



in-a-hundred years global pandemic. Penny spoke in depth and with great authenticity about her own experience working in the field, both with Red Cross and in earlier roles with organisations such as Médecins sans Frontières.

Craig Dower talked about innovation and intellectual property, and the power and symbolism of Red Cross brand. He also discussed the role of women leaders in everyday life, and his own experience growing up with his brothers in the care of a single mum and a group of aunties, and the positive impact that has had on his life.



NSW members Amy Low, State Chair NSW, Row McGilvray, Linda Volker and Belinda Singh

Business Series Lunch, NSW

26th October 2022

On the 26th October, Qantm IP hosted the NSW Chapter’s Boardroom Series Lunch in the Boardroom of Herbert Smith Freehills’ Sydney office. This time we had the pleasure of hearing from Kym Pfitzner, CEO of Australian Red Cross, as well as from Craig Dower, who hosted us remotely from Melbourne. Kym spoke about the transformation in progress and core pillars of direction for Red Cross moving forward, and the changing nature of how the organisation responds to overlapping crises and mobilises resources.

Our chair, Susan Wynne spoke at both events about the work that SWL is doing in partnership with Red Cross, and the important role that SWL



members play in helping to support these initiatives, and the very real and significant impacts that this has on people’s lives.



NSW and VIC members coming together for the End of Year Celebration

End of Year Celebration, VIC

11th November 2022

It was with much joy that members from Melbourne and Sydney met in South Yarra (Melbourne) for our End of Year Celebration. Given that June's Annual Members Meeting contained all the usual content that had previously fallen in November, this End of Year Celebration was just that. A celebration of the year, of the SWL and of the community that lies therein. Susan gave a brief welcome to everyone and thanked those from Sydney for making the journey down to Melbourne.

We started with some sparkling French champagne and canapes, and followed with a beautiful three course meal in the private space of the Archer Room at The Botanical Hotel. What a beautiful room!

It was wonderful to see faces we haven't seen for quite some time as well as welcoming those new to the sisterhood of SWL. The opportunity to spend time with each other and deepen our personal relationships is always such a gift and greatly appreciated. This is particularly true given the challenging few years of Covid-19. It was also a genuine pleasure to have our Red Cross Liaison, Rylan Turner join us which allowed us to get to know her just that little bit more beyond her role at Australian Red Cross.

We are all looking forward to 2023 and in particular re-connecting together again at IWD in Sydney in March.



VIC members at Al Fresco Lunch

Al Fresco Lunch, VIC

9th February 2023

Melbourne weather was kind to us on the day of 9th February when the sun was shining gloriously. We were particularly lucky given we were at Anita's country property and were seated outside under the wisteria covered patio in the shade, looking out across the beautiful gardens, orchard and petanque lawns!

It was a terrific turnout and much was discussed. It is clear there is some momentum back in the air within SWL and we are all hopeful of another year of membership growth. We discussed the various strategies to go about doing this and it was agreed with starting in March to have small, casual gatherings in each other's homes to

which we may bring potential new members so that they may get to know us and our cause in an intimate environment of small groups.

There is some excitement building for the first field visit we have been able to make since the pandemic which is to Brisbane for the Night Cafe in late February. This will be an excellent day of spending time together and visiting one of the programs SWL contribute funding towards.

Kate took us through the various events coming up for the year with the next one being the International Women's Day in March in Sydney. We are hoping for a turnout of around 200 people and to raise more than the \$200,000 raised at our last fundraiser. It is anticipated that the following IWD will be in Melbourne as a standalone Melbourne event.



VIC members at Al Fresco Lunch

Internationally, the Tiffany Circle Summit in Washington DC is being hosted on 6th and 7th October this year and our SWL members are welcome to attend if they wish.

We are also starting to get excited about the 10-year anniversary of SWL and will be calling out for volunteers to participate in the organisation of what will be a wonderful event. In addition to that, late 2024 will be the Tiffany Circle Geneva Forum. There is much to look forward to!

Given membership alignment has been implemented, it is tremendously satisfying to know that all of our financial commitments have been met. Any new membership donations will sit in the pool of funds to be voted with in June 2023.

After a beautiful meal made from produce out of Anita's garden, we sat and chatted until the reality of duty called us back to home and work.

Thank you Anita for hosting a beautiful lunch!



Dr. Melissa Phillips (Western Sydney University and former Australian Red Cross Board member), Dr. Magdalena Arias Cubas (Global Migration Lab, Senior Research Officer), Sanushka Mudaliar (Global Migration Lab, Director) with research partners Jake Moody (Atlassian) and Jonothan Srikanthan (Atlassian Foundation Director).

Global Migration Lab at Atlassian

9th February 2023

In February, SWL attended the launch of a new research report produced by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab sponsored by the Lab's corporate partner, the Atlassian Foundation. The Global Migration Lab, hosted by Australian Red Cross, is a unique initiative by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to amplify the voices, expertise and experience of migrants to guide and inform international migration policy and operations.

The new report, *Migrants' Perspectives: Building Trust in Humanitarian Action*, reports the findings of data collected

by the Lab, working with Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations globally, from more than 16,000 migrants in vulnerable situations across 15 countries in Africa, the Americas, the Asia Pacific, and Europe. SWL members participated in a Q&A with the panel of speakers who discussed the complexity of conducting research in so many different countries simultaneously, and the importance of research partnerships, such as that with data scientists from Atlassian, to improve the operations and humanitarian diplomacy of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Following the launch, SWL selected the Global Migration Lab as the recipient of funds raised during its International Women's Day event (see p. 38).



NSW members at AI Fresco Lunch

AI Fresco Lunch, NSW

10th February 2023

We were lucky enough to be guests at the beautiful home of member Susan Di Michiel for our annual AI Fresco lunch. It was a stunningly sunny day and Susan spoils us all with fabulous drinks, food and live music.

The best thing about the day was reconnecting with so many of the NSW members after the summer break. It reinvigorated our commitment to SWL and put us all on the same page in relation to our goals and events for the year ahead. It's a day like this that reminds me why I am a member - friendships, philanthropy and fun!

Thank you Susan for your generosity and hospitality. We really appreciate it.



NSW members Susan Di Michiel, Liz Keenan and Anne Pike



NSW members at AI Fresco Lunch



SWL members volunteering at the Brisbane Night Cafe. Selena Spring (left) and Krista Vendy Rodgers (right)

Night Cafe Program Visit Brisbane

23rd February 2023

One of the many reasons I have joined SWL this year was to learn and connect to the many, often silent, superheroes in our community working tirelessly to make a difference - but also a chance to roll up my sleeves and try to help somehow. On the 23rd February this year, together with 10 other SWL members, we were lifted out of our day to day lives and into the heart of Brisbane where we were reminded, deeply, of why SWL exists and why we need to grow.

Night Cafe offers youth aged 14-24 who are sleeping rough or homeless a safe space for two hours a night, two nights a week. The space allows them to take a shower, have some food/drink, and pick out some clean clothes to wear.

There are social workers around, trained to interact specifically to the needs of young people, and work with them to find the right contacts and most importantly the confidence to seek help. By the end of the night, I think it was clear to all of us that the most important part of the Night Cafe, while not in the least discounting the food, shelter and the clothes, is the feeling of safety and community the youths get to feel when in this space. This is no doubt a testament to the people who created this as well as the large number of volunteers that have supported them and continue to support them.

For those of us who respond to statistics, here are a few sobering ones:

- 50% of young people were minors under 18 years old
- 50% of young people were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders



- 17% were from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- 5,725 meals were provided in the last two years
- Government funding only accounts for 30%
- The Lord Mayor, who until recently didn't realise all this work was done underneath his town hall and for his city, hosted a Civic Reception for the Night Cafe in May 2023 to commemorate the work they have done (aka silent superheroes).

The day itself was well-run and information rich. One of the most potent talks was given by a long-time user of the space who is currently an active volunteer. They had used the space since the age of 18 when dealing with significant health issues that required multiple surgeries. They felt so supported by the space that they felt an immense sadness when they

reached the age of 24, which is when they would have been 'aged out'. It turned out Night Cafe understood very well what it meant to them and they were given the opportunity to give back by volunteering as a Creative Arts Director. The emotional gratitude and attachment they had to the space was conveyed in their speech and was felt by all of us in the room.

I hope I can speak for all SWL members who attended the visit that it offered us a humbling yet utterly inspiring window into the challenges faced by a single project, tackling one of many issues that plague the most vulnerable part of society - the children. Suffice to say, we ended the night with our hearts heavy but full and our minds ticking away - where next from here and what can we do?



Global Migration Lab Director, Sanushka Mudliar presenting at IWD 2023

International Women's Day Sydney

6th March 2023

The annual SWL International Women's Day (IWD) lunch event was organised in partnership with Prezzee, Bayard Foundation and LGT Crestone at the Fullerton Hotel in Sydney was a remarkable gathering. Members and guests from VIC, QLD and NSW came together to recognise the importance of this year's IWD theme: "Accelerating Equality and Empowerment: How Women's Leadership and Collective Action Can Make a Difference".

During the lunch, the attendees had the honour of hearing from Christine Holgate, the CEO of Team Global Express, who spoke about

the significance of fair treatment for women in the workplace. Sanushka Mudliar, Director of Red Cross' Global Migration Lab, shared insights about the lab's research projects which focus on promoting the safety, dignity, and rights of migrants worldwide. The \$264,289 raised during this event was given in support of this vital global initiative, currently hosted by Australian Red Cross.

Numerous individuals and organisations contributed to the success of the day, including Blackmore Foundation, Prezzee, LGT Crestone, Bayard Foundation, Tom and Diana Cregan for Spanish Peaks Montana, Kokomo Island Fiji, House of K'Dor, Aro-Ha NZ, Christian Louboutin, Grown Alchemist, and Macphee's.

Photos: Vaden Media



SWL members Anita Pahor, Diana Cregan, Linda Volker, Rowena McGilvray, Kerry-Anne Johnston and Selena Spring



The presence and support of Kym Pfitzner, CEO of Australian Red Cross, and Red Cross staff were greatly appreciated.

The IWD Events Committee's dedication and hard work played a significant role in the success of the event. Their commitment and contributions were truly reflected in the memorable and impactful gathering.



Christine Holgate



Sam Hopper, Helen Clarke, Julianne Donnelly, Suzy McGavin at Civic Reception

Night Cafe Civic Reception hosted by the Lord Mayor's Office

26th April 2023

The Brisbane Lord Mayor and the Australian Red Cross Queensland Director Garry Page together hosted the celebration of 23 years of the Night Cafe at Brisbane City Hall. The event was a great success hearing from the program volunteers, and with the Lord Mayor expressing sincere gratitude for the safe space and support Night Cafe has continued to provide for young people experiencing homelessness in Brisbane.



Volunteer led meal service at Night Cafe, QLD



Australian Red Cross staff Veronica De Poi, IHL Director, Yvette Zeghagen and David Macdermott and State Chair VIC, Diana Cregan and VIC member, Kate Ericson

May Connections, VIC

10th May 2023

For the first time, the Victorian members met for “A Connections Evening”. NAB very kindly donated their Executive Boardroom for our use, and it really was spectacular! Located on the top floor with panoramic views of Melbourne’s CBD, it was a real privilege to be there. At this event, members and their guests not only enjoyed the company of each other which we always look forward to so much, but also that of some Australian Red Cross employees.

One of the unique aspects of the SWL is our very close relationship with Red Cross and getting to know some of its employees even better was fascinating.

In addition to learning a bit about their personal journey to Red Cross, we also heard about their current role, challenges they face and themes they see in the departments. A very special thanks to Yvette Zeghagen, Director International Human Rights Law, David Macdermott, Head of Philanthropic Giving and Veronica De Poi, Philanthropy Advisor. We really appreciate their willingness to come to an afterhours function, inform us of their Red Cross lives and take the opportunity to meet our members and get to know them a bit better.

Then the members headed out for a delicious meal locally where we continued to chat, catch up and discuss the upcoming SWL functions and events for the remainder of the year.



NSW member Nici McCarroll and guest Jade Coppleson

Mid-Year Cocktails, NSW

11th May 2023

SWL members and guests had the pleasure of Women Leaders (SWL) and their guests had the pleasure of attending an extraordinary event at the Flagship Store of Paspaley, located at 1 Martin Place in Sydney. The evening was filled with elegance, inspiration, and the celebration of a remarkable partnership between Australian Red Cross (ARC) and the Society of Women Leaders.

The event commenced with a warm welcome for our gracious host Richard Broug, General Manager of Paspaley. His presence and genuine enthusiasm for the evening was evident and it was clear that the entire Paspaley team has put considerable effort into ensuring the event's success.

One of the highlights of the evening was the insightful speech delivered by Kate Miranda, State Director, NSW of ARC. Kate shared with us the profound impact of the partnership between the ARC and SWL. Her words emphasised the importance of philanthropy and the positive change that can be achieved through successful collaboration for a common cause. Her speech was both inspiring and informative, leaving guests with a deep appreciation for the work being done by SWL.

As the evening progressed, everyone was treated to a truly unique experience—the Pearl Room tour. Led by knowledgeable and passionate staff, we were guided through the world of pearls, learning about their history, cultivation, and significance. It was a captivating journey that allowed us to



Susan Broug with her guest at Paspaley. Right: NSW member Irina Al Muderis and guest Karlie Unger

develop a deeper understanding of the craftsmanship and artistry behind Paspaley's exquisite pearl collections.

To our delight, we were also given the opportunity to try on some stunning pieces from the current collection. The intricate designs and the radiant beauty of the pearls left us in awe. It was a beautiful experience, making us feel very fortunate to be adorned with such magnificent jewellery. Paspaley's commitment to quality and elegance was evident in every piece we had the pleasure of wearing.

Furthermore, the evening took on a special significance as we warmly welcomed new members Susan Broug, Monika Tu, and Amy Low. Their presence further enhanced the sense of camaraderie and unity within SWL, ensuring a bright future for our

collective giving circle.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Annamiek Gray, the Partnerships and Events Manager at Paspaley, for her exceptional efforts in organising this wonderful evening. Her meticulous attention to detail made the night an unforgettable experience for all. Additionally, the generous donation of 10 percent of sales from the evening by the Paspaley family showcased their unwavering commitment to giving back to the community. SWL look forward to future collaborations with Paspaley.

SWL AMM and Program Pitching

5th June 2023

This year's Annual Members Meeting (AMM) included Program Pitching for new programs to be funded in the new financial year which meant there was full agenda. The event proved to be meaningful as we reflected on the past 12 months and optimistically looked to the future.

We had a strong member presence across Sydney in the Red Cross office and in Melbourne via Zoom at the offices of Commonwealth Private (thank you Kate O'Callaghan for facilitating), as well as members who joined virtually.

We were delightfully hosted by our National Chair, Susan Wynne and welcomed by ARC CEO, Kym Pftizner. Red Cross program staff from Night Cafe, The SHAK, Disaster Management with Vanuatu Red Cross and International Disaster Response delivered informative presentations about the impact of our funding and the challenges faced on the ground and out in the field.

In the second half of the meeting, we heard terrific pitches from the Young Parents Program, Night Cafe, the Pillowcase Program and Wallaga Lake. All program speakers provided us detailed information and were able to answer our questions about the programs.

Photo: Australian Red Cross



Care packages in the Sydney Red Cross office for families in the Young Parents Program

These programs were equally deserving of SWL funds which made it tough to decide when we voted online that afternoon.

Beyond the program presentations, we discussed the events calendar for 2024 including the momentous 10 Year Gala and welcomed a new member. It is so special to come together nationally for the AMM, despite living in different states. It reminds us of the spectacular collective we are and just how valuable our support for Australian Red Cross is.

Standing alongside Australian Red Cross.



SWL members at the Night Cafe Program Visit

Society of Women Leaders is proud to stand alongside Australian Red Cross and to advance the mission of humanitarian action as we work towards a future where all women and children feel safe, supported and empowered.

Australian Red Cross mobilises the power of humanity to bring people and communities together in times of need and builds on community strengths to achieve outcomes when Australia experiences disasters and emergencies.

Australian Red Cross is there for people who are displaced and migrants transitioning across regions, and promoting international humanitarian law to limit the effects of armed conflict. Australian Red Cross supports First Nations people in Australia, individuals involved in the justice system and community services.

Australian Red Cross is a member of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement with millions of members and volunteers in over 190 countries.

The power of Red Cross.

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

Photo: IFRC



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

National Societies embody the work and principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent 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.

Red Cross and Red Crescent 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.



Australian Red Cross 2022/23:

18,450 members and volunteers acted for humanity.

1,639 staff who helped and supported people.

423 Australian Red Cross branches and groups led by members inspired social connection in communities.

70 member-run activities took place at 48 locations across Australia.

324,000+ people received support during and after disasters.

33 emergency activations across the country.

4 million+ people accessed information from disaster preparedness campaigns.

53,000+ people trained in first aid.

19,700+ people from 125 countries helped through our migration support programs in Australia.

10,000+ people accessed our new Work Right Hub website.

8,256 people participated in “In Search of Safety” community education sessions.

216,000+ hours of support from volunteers to connect with older and vulnerable people.

153,000+ meals delivered to older people.

7,788 tonnes of humanitarian aid products provided across the globe.

66 Australian international aid workers deployed to 33 countries.

Photo: IFRC



7 First Nations communities in five States and Territories engaged to co-design programs reflecting community aspirations and priorities.

190 countries can access our open online course International Humanitarian Law for Business.

\$95 million in donations and philanthropic gifts supported our humanitarian work.

6.8 million donated items sold through Australian Red Cross shops.

2,750 tonnes of quality clothing that may otherwise been prematurely sent to landfill, sold in Australian Red Cross Shops.

9,150 tonnes of carbon emissions and 917 megalitres of water saved as a result of quality used clothing diverted from landfill.

1.6 million individual donations of blood, plasma and platelets by Australian donors.

4,000 litres of breast milk delivered to support some of Australia's most vulnerable babies.



Women leading through philanthropy.

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