



Reference Number: **2016.0054**

Collection/Series Title: **HISTORY, ROLE AND STRUCTURE**

Creator	Australian Red Cross Society, National Office
Creator's Activity/Occupation	Community organisations - Charities

Creator's Historical Note

Note: University of Melbourne Archives holds records of the Australian Red Cross National Office and the Victorian Division of the Australian Red Cross. Records of other state Divisions are not held by the University of Melbourne.

Red Cross began in Australia on the 13th August 1914 in response to the start of the First World War nine days earlier. Modelled on the British Red Cross Society and initially established as a branch of that Society, it formed at the instigation of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, wife of the Governor-General. Vice-regal patronage and a predominantly female membership continued to be features of the Red Cross throughout the twentieth century. The Australian society was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross as a national society in its own right in 1927 and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1941.

In keeping with the international Red Cross movement of which it is a part, and the Geneva Conventions which govern and vest its wartime role, the Australian Red Cross primary objectives are to alleviate human suffering and protect life and health, especially during armed conflicts and other emergency situations. Principles of humanity, impartiality and voluntary service guide its programs, which have evolved over the years in response to international and domestic needs.

The organisations development throughout the twentieth century has been extensively documented (see references at the end of this note), however the following points may assist researchers wishing to use Red Cross records held by the University of Melbourne Archives.

The organisations initial structure, still largely in place in the early 21st century, included three tiers of administration and activity. Its National Headquarters (later known as National Office) has been based in Melbourne since 1914. Divisions were established in all states and territories, most of them within weeks of the formation of the national body, and these operated with substantial autonomy until at least the 1950s and continued to be the locus of much of the organisations emergency and social services program delivery beyond this date. A Papua New Guinea Division also operated between 1940 and 1973 and subsequently became an independent national society. The third tier of the Red Cross is the extensive network of local branches which also commenced during World War I. These have been particularly active in wartime and it is through these branches that large numbers of Australians engage with and support the work of the Red Cross.

The scope and dates of operation of some distinctive Red Cross programs are:

Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs, later known as Voluntary Aid Service Corps or VACs) were first formed in 1915 to provide nursing and domestic services in Australian military hospitals and convalescent homes. In peacetime this largely female volunteer labour force has assisted during natural disasters and other emergencies. As an organisational entity VACs were phased out by the 1970s, however volunteer service continues to be integral to the organisation's delivery of many of its programs.

Services to trace the whereabouts of missing and wounded service personnel were also first established in 1915. These services operated during both World Wars and after World War II evolved into services for tracing civilians displaced from their homelands in the aftermath of war and civil unrest. By the 1960s, with the growth of Red Cross role in disaster management, registration and enquiry services were set up to respond to inquiries about people displaced by natural disaster. The units responsible for this work and have been variously known as the Wounded and Missing Inquiry Bureau, Tracing Bureau, and the National Registration and Inquiry System. Like many Red Cross programs, administration of tracing services has gradually been centralised from state Divisions to national management. Note that Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau records from World War I are held by the Australian War Memorial.

Blood transfusion services were first established in 1929 in the Victorian Division and soon after in other states. These continued to be primarily state based services until 1996 although during the Second World War a level of national coordination was introduced to facilitate the supply of blood to the armed forces. In 1996, largely in response to the AIDS epidemic, the divisional services were amalgamated to form the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, a separate operating division of the Australian Red Cross.

References and Further Information

Melanie Oppenheimer: *The Power of Humanity: 100 Years of Australian Red Cross 1914-2014* (Sydney, Harper Collins, 2014)

Australian Red Cross web site: www.redcross.org.au (accessed June 2015)

Australian Red Cross Blood Service web site: <http://www.donateblood.com.au/about-us> (accessed June 2015)

Australian Red Cross has donated 100 years of archives to the University of Melbourne:

<http://www.redcross.org.au/gift-to-the-nation.aspx> (accessed June 2015)

Australian War Memorial, First World War Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files:

https://www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search/wounded_and_missing/

Australian Womens Register entry for the Australian Red Cross:

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0715b.htm> (accessed June 2015). See also Register entries for individual women prominent within the Red Cross.

Date Range of Collection/Series	1914-1998
Size/Extent	5 units (0.85m)
Access Conditions	Access: Open

Scope and Content of Collection/Series

[Red Cross Archives series reference: NO9] Comprises documents relating to the history of the Australian Red Cross including manuscripts, reports, volunteer survey results, publications, pamphlets, posters newsletters and manuals on Australian and Britain Red Cross activities in WW2, and unpublished manuscripts by E.M. Webb "Australian Red Cross in War" and Stanley Addison "History of Service in World War Two" both of which aim to contextualise the Australian Red Crosss involvement in humanitarian activities during WW1 and WW2.

Also includes governance documents such as organisational charts, strategic plans, divisional organisation review, survey and marketing strategies, floor plans and administration.

This series has been artificially constructed by ARC Archives in 2015.

Researchers should note that under the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 protections govern the use of the Red Cross emblem. For further information see Archives staff.

Collection Category	Community and Political, organisations
This document dated	22/03/2017

To request access to records on the list below via the University of Melbourne Archives Reading Room, quote the Unit/Box reference in full.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 1	Papers on Work in Camp etc. Mr J A McCahon	1914-1918	Includes reports from Commissioners in each area, also Langwarrin Camp. File containing summary reports, statistics and correspondence.
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 2	A Short History on England	1919-1923	File copies of reports on various aspects of ARC activities in England following World War 1.
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 3	Australian Red Cross (London) - General Information	1914-1918	Folio volume with alphabetical sections, handwritten entries and type pages inserted. [5189]
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 4	Outline of War Service During WW2	1939-1945	Compiled summary of activities in sections by subject: ARCS Government, Blood Transfusion, Bureau Services (Wounded and Missing services for POW), Convalescent Homes, Finance, Field Force, Handcrafts Services, Internees, Junior Red Cross, Library Services, London Committee, Medical Services, Nutrition, overseas Relief, Peace Time planning, Prisoners of War, Publicity, Social Service, Stores, Transport, United Kingdom Unit, Women Personnel.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 5	Red Cross War Book	1939	Compilation of notes on activities of Australian Red Cross to assist Society's operations in the case of War, prepared by the Central Emergency Council, later 'Emergency Committee', effectively as a Manual. Chapters on various functions of the organisation by key personnel.
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 6	Report by the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John	1914-1921	BRCS (British Red Cross Society). Report published 1921, 821 pages, bound. [4844]
2016.0054 Unit 1	2016.0054.0000 7	Australian Red Cross Short History of France	1919	Copies of reports and correspondence regarding activities in France.
2016.0054 Unit 2	2016.0054.0000 8	Red Cross History World War 2 - draft	1945-1947	History of the part played by Red Cross during the War. Drafts of various sections and chapters of what became Australian Red Cross in War by E M Webb. Various copies with annotations and corrections. 7 files each annotated with summary of contents.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0000 9	Precis Department Notes	1939-1946	File of notes and compiled statistics relating to activities during World War II (WW2) including Civilian Relief, Field Force, etc. Includes card index from Statistical Department. [4843]
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 0	Profile Australian Red Cross Society	1970-1979	Collection of information in subject sections relating to structure and activities of Australian Red Cross. [4846]

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 1	ARCS Organisation and History	1975	Typed and bound document (rhoneo copies) outlining operational aspects of Australian Red Cross. Last entry in history section covers 1974-1975.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 2	Australian Red Cross in War by E M Webb Part 2 of 3	1946-1947	Manuscript of history of Australian Red Cross during WW2, prepared for printing but unpublished, Part 2 of 3, Chapters 1-16.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 3	Australian Red Cross in War by E M Webb Part 3 of 3	1946-1947	Manuscript of history of Australian Red Cross during WW2, prepared for printing but unpublished, Part 3 of 3, Chapters 16-32.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 4	Australian Red Cross in War by E M Webb, Part 1 of 3	1946-1947	Manuscript of history of Australian Red Cross during WW2, prepared for printing but unpublished, Part 1 of 3.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 5	NSW Division - Public Perceptions of Australian Red Cross, Top Line Findings	September 1985	Typewritten report 6 pages.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 6	Victorian Division - Public Perceptions of the Australian Red Cross	1993	Report Commissioned by the Victorian Division of the Australian Red Cross, 19 April 1993, 35 pages.
2016.0054 Unit 3	2016.0054.0001 7	Western Australian Division - Awareness and Attitudes toward Charitable Societies and in particular Red Cross	January 1992	Report prepared for ARC by The Marketing Centre Pty Ltd, January 1992.
2016.0054 Unit 4	2016.0054.0001 8	History of Service in World War II by Stanley Addison	1945	Typewritten manuscript. Various folders, generally one or two chapters to each, with summary of contents. Foreword and chapters I-VII (1-7). Subsequent chapters in Box 5.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0001 9	History of Service in World War II by Stanley Addison	1945	Typewritten manuscript. Various folders, generally one or two chapters to each, with summary of contents. 5 Folders, Chapters IX-XXII and supplementary sections.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 0	Red Cross Volunteer Research in Victoria	July 1994	Results of survey conducted by Roy Morgan Research Centre Pty Ltd, July 1994.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 1	Strategic Plan 1999-2001 'Principles and Progress', Victoria	May 1998	Strategic Plan approx. 150 pages.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 2	Strategic Plan 1999-2001, Executive Summary, Victoria	May 1998	Summary of Strategic Plan May 1998, 10 pages.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 3	Survey on Red Cross Victoria	January 1994	Results of survey conducted by Roy Morgan Research Centre Pty Ltd, January 1994.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 4	Survey on Red Cross Victoria	March 1994	Report on Survey conducted in January 1994 by Roy Morgan Research Centre Pty Ltd, dated March 1994.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 5	Survey on Red Cross Victoria Summary of Findings	September 1996	Summary Report by Grey Advertising on Roy Morgan Research Centre survey September 1996.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 6	Victorian Division - Marketing Strategy	October 1995	Report prepared by Turnbull Fox Phillips 30 October 1995, 54 pages.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 7	Victorian Division - Organisational Review	June 1994-June 1994	Review by Price Waterhouse Urwick June 1994, 79 pages, bound.
2016.0054 Unit 5	2016.0054.0002 8	Victorian Division - Strategic Objectives	1993-1998	Report produced by Public Relations Department of Victorian Division of ARC.
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