Reference Number: **2015.0030**

Collection/Series Title: **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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 organisations 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	1915-2004
Size/Extent	4 units (0.7m)
Access Conditions	Access: Open

Scope and Content of Collection/Series

[Red Cross Archives series reference: NO37] The National Council of the Australian Red Cross Society established a Finance Committee in 1915, initially comprised of one representative of each state and territory division and additional office-bearers from national headquarters.

This series complements series 2015.0028 (Minutes and Meeting Papers of the National Council). For the pre- World War Two period there is some duplication between the two series, and some Finance Committee minutes which are missing from this series may be found in 2015.0028.

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	12/04/2017

Box/Unit	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2015.0030 Unit 1	2015.0030.00001	Central Council Finance Committee Minutes Meetings 1-68	1915-1920	Typed Minutes bound into a volume, no index. Red Cross Archives previous control number: 4651
2015.0030 Unit 1	2015.0030.00002	National Council Finance Committee Minutes	1975-1990	no index. Red Cross Archives previous control number: 4654
2015.0030 Unit 3	2015.0030.00003	National Council Finance Committee Minutes	1939-1958	at the front. Red Cross Archives previous control number: 4652
2015.0030 Unit 4	2015.0030.00004	National Council Finance Committee Minutes	1958-1975	Typed minutes pasted into pages, no index. Red Cross Archives previous control number: 4653
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00005	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1991	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5069
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00006	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1992	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5070
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00007	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1993	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5071
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00008	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1994	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5072
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00009	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1995	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5073
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00010	Minutes - National Office - Special Meeting Executive & Finance Committee	1996	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5074
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00011	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1997	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5075
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00012	Minutes - National Office Finance Committee	1998	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5076
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00013	Minutes - National Office Finance/Audit Committee	2001	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5077
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00014	Minutes - National Office Committee Finance & Audit Committee	2002	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5078
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00015	Minutes - National Office Finance & Audit Committee	2003	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5079
2015.0030 Unit 2	2015.0030.00016	Minutes - National Office Finance & Audit Committee	2004	Red Cross Archives previous control number: 5080

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