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First Aid, Health and Safety Services, Australian Red Cross

(1914 -)

Born 1 August, 1914

Summary

Australia's largest provider of first aid services was the initiative of a woman. In 1914, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson appealed to women and men with first aid and nursing training to enrol in voluntary first aid detachments. The service has steadily developed to become not only an important dispenser of first aid, but a major provider of first aid training. Women have played an important leadership role in the service since its inception.

Details

In August 1914 Lady Helen Munro Ferguson appealed "to the women of Australia" to "enrol men and women with first aid and nursing certificates in recognised voluntary first aid detachments". Indeed, the first Constitution of the Australian branch of the British Red Cross required the Australian Red Cross to supply the sick and wounded in war, supplement medical supplies, aid the sick and wounded "irrespective of nationality" and help in any great public disaster, calamity or need. These activities were in accord with the Geneva Convention, which formed the mandate of the international Red Cross movement, and therefore the Australian branch. By the 1960s, each State and Territory Division had a Health and Safety Education program, training volunteers in first aid and resuscitation, including first aid for industry, motorists and the home. Much of this training has been largely an activity carried out by the Divisions. In the 1980s the Emergency Care Training Program changed its name to health and Safety Education, as expert National and Divisional committees in first aid were formed to improve the service. In the late 1990s, the national Executive undertook a major strategic review of First Aid, Health and Safety Services, as amendments to the Australian Red Cross Charter and Rules allowed it to develop policy guides for areas of national significance. In Strategy 2005, the Australian Red Cross aims to become a leading developer and provider of first aid services.

Published resources

Book

50 years service to humanity, Australian Red Cross Society, [1964]

The More things change...The Australian Red Cross 1914-1989, Minogue, Noreen, 1989

Look what you started Henry! A history of the Australian Red Cross 1914-1991., Stubbings, Leon, 1992

Report

Strategy 2005, Australian Red Cross, c2002

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives

[Annual Reports of Red Cross Divisions and Blood Service](#)

[Annual Reports of the Australian Red Cross](#)

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