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Youth and Education Services, Australian Red Cross

(1914 -)

Born 19140101, New South Wales Australia

Summary

The Australian Junior Red Cross was founded in New South Wales in August 1918 by Mrs Eleanor MacKinnon, initially with the aim of involving children in the support of recuperating soldiers who were using existing Red Cross facilities, and then extending to concern about the needs of the children of soldiers. Over the years, the Junior Movement's aims have evolved to focus on the development of an humanitarian ethos amongst young people, through education programs, and activities that encourage active citizenship and community participation.

Details

The Australian Junior Red Cross shares the honour, with Canada, of being the first of their kind. Established in August 1914, the Australian Junior Red Cross was founded by Mrs Eleanor MacKinnon in New South Wales. Initially Juniors supported soldiers using existing Red Cross facilities. Gradually the movement supported children of soldiers, children who were sick, and children in need in their own right. The first movements were formed with the aims of improving health, preventing disease and mitigating suffering. This increasingly extended to personal health, an ethos of citizenship and service, and international friendship, over the years.

The School Circles of the Junior Red Cross, run by their own office-bearers and led by a patron, were affiliated to their nearest branch of the British Red Cross Society. In 1919, the Junior Red Cross received a national mention through the annual report of the New South Wales Division. In the 1930s, all States became involved and membership expanded. With more than 120,000 members in 1936, a national publication was planned, a "Younger Set" ran recreational clubs, and the Junior Red Cross was providing children's homes and an almoner for patient after-care, depending on the State.

The Junior Red Cross expanded in World War II, again contributing to soldiers' comfort. By 1946, plans were underway for a national secretary of the Junior Red Cross and a Links of Service to retain school graduates. By 1964, the Junior Red Cross was thriving in Papua New Guinea, then an Australian territory, and had a branch of the air in Western Australia. In the 1970s, it changed its name to Red Cross Youth and sought to make young people more central to the organisation as a whole, leading to greater Asian-Pacific and international initiatives. In 1995, Junior Red Cross and the Student Community Initiative Project became part of the new Youth and Education Service (YES) Department. Focusing on people under 30 years of age, the Department currently encompasses Red Cross Community Action, the Red Cross Community Challenge, the Red Cross Community Leaders Program and the Youth Connect Unit. Youth is a focus of Strategy 2005.

Published resources

Book
Australian women at war, Adam-Smith, Patsy, 1984

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
Australian Red Cross Society Reports, Australian Red Cross Society, c. 1973

Report to the 21st International Conference Istanbul, Australian Red Cross Society, 1969

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives
Publications - Junior Red Cross and Australian Red Cross Youth

Annual Reports of the Australian Red Cross

Minutes and Meeting Papers, National Council

Annual Reports of Red Cross Divisions and Blood Service

Junior Red Cross and Australian Red Cross Youth Records

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