

**Australia Red Cross**  
**Submission to**  
**Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council**  
**(PESRAC) – Tasmania**

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***For 106 years, Australian Red Cross (Red Cross) has stood with Australians through disasters, emergencies and the other challenges life throws at us; COVID-19 is no exception. Red Cross continues to support people and communities experiencing vulnerability through natural disasters, emergencies, conflict, migration, and contact with the justice system. We also continue to prioritise work with First Nations communities.***

In this submission we outline:

- Our deep commitment to work in partnership with the Tasmanian government to provide the critical humanitarian support that will be needed throughout this crisis
- Our current emergency response and humanitarian capabilities, that are already being mobilised, to support the Tasmanian Community
- Our potential capacity to increase these capabilities in partnership with the Tasmanian Government,
- the needs of communities that were already vulnerable (namely vulnerable migrants, individuals and families connected with the prison system and Aboriginal communities), who are now experiencing increasing vulnerabilities in the face of COVID19.

#### **Tasmanian Red Cross Response to COVID 19**

1. Delivery of over 20,000 hotel quarantine wellbeing outreach calls by 179 Red Cross volunteers to support those in quarantine contracted by Department of Communities. The service began March 30 and is continuing as long as it is required. Not only has it provided a friendly ear to those in quarantine at a stressful time but has also contributed to the hotel quarantine program by regular data and identification of emerging needs.

*'I would like to pass on my appreciation to all the Red Cross callers who have supported us in the last two weeks. The calls really helped us to get through the two weeks of isolation, and we want to say thank you'. Jane from Hobart*

2. Thousands of additional check in calls to older people by Red Cross volunteers who are isolated at home or in aged care facilities.
3. Delivered meals service ensured continuity of supply and met increased demand including during the North West outbreak with new rapid volunteer onboarding to replace aged workforce.
4. Providing targeted support for vulnerable migrants to provide emergency relief support and coordination with other providers as not covered by job keeper and distribution of commonwealth and philanthropic emergency relief funds.
5. The bicultural health program immediately pivoted to disseminating COVID public health messages in language and by audio recordings to multiple communities by peers in partnership with Department of Health
6. Red Cross peer support prison volunteers responsible for displaying public health messages and good hygiene practice in prison at early stages of outbreak.

### **How we mobilised: Red Cross Response in an Emergency Event**

**Each of our COVID initiatives benefit from Red Cross experience and understanding in emergency service structures and adoption of agile ways of working to implement an emergency activation response. We are able to share this experience with other community organisations.**

This experience resulted in:

- Early development of pandemic and business continuity planning, stand up of incident management team and agile management approaches, rapid onboarding of new partnerships to sustain volunteer workforce to meet surge requirements, implementation of new technology to enable safe outreach calling, implementation of workforce wellbeing protocols, provision of weekly issues register to identify emerging needs with Government and monitoring state, national and international evidence and data collection.

### **Scenario Planning: Opportunities to Leverage from Our Current Response**

**As a trusted recognized community organisation, with extensive experience in meeting humanitarian impacts during emergency events we seek to work as an auxiliary to government and contribute to minimizing community impact by contributing to Government planning for possible future COVID scenarios.**

This could consider activities such as the following:

- Outbreak in institutions – Aged care residential facility, prison, - The provision of Psychological First Aid support to impacted families.
- Outbreak within specific vulnerable communities – Peer community leaders to support community communication in different languages with trusted recognized organisation and brand
- Major community outbreak - Community wellbeing outreach, community connection and referral to community supports – Surge activation with rapid escalation, phone outreach response with online platform able to cover any region and collect and report on data.
- Support for general public messaging – community mobilisation supporting social cohesion, social inclusion and community responsibility.

### **Priorities for COVID Recovery: Key Recommendations**

Red Cross recommends that when developing the FY21 budget, the Tasmanian Government take special consideration to:

#### **1. Facilitating socio-economic participation of migrants in the Tasmanian community by investing in:**

- Support for migrants to gain stable, dignified employment and addressing employment barriers
- Specific support for migrant women's economic participation in the community, including during the recovery from COVID-19;

- Increased support to a wide range of agencies to undertake prevention, awareness raising and indicator trainings with communities, front line staff and business around labour exploitation and modern slavery.
- 2. Building on the strengths within First Nations communities and amplifying community voice and decision-making to determine their own futures by investing in:**
- Community-led partnership approaches between the Tasmania Government and First Nations peoples enabling sustainable long-term outcomes to increase Indigenous economic participation and community well-being;
  - Addressing the digital divide among First Nations communities, including in partnership with the business sector; and
  - Further education, skills development and capacity building in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to facilitate positive socio-economic outcomes.
- 3. Building community resilience and strengthening Tasmanian communities' ability to prepare, respond to and recover from disasters by investing in:**
- Enhancing preparedness and resilience to disasters/emergencies particularly at the household and community levels;
  - Addressing the psycho-social dimension of disaster mitigation as a significant enabler for recovery;
  - Recognising the value of community led responses – enable ongoing opportunities for community mobilization;
  - Building stronger relationships between community service sector and government emergency management structures; and
  - Facilitating community led recovery – facilitation and enablement of development of community resilience and preparedness for future events.

**Red Cross capability to contribute to COVID Recovery in Tasmania:**

**Red Cross is able to contribute to the TAS Government COVID recovery planning and implementation and draw from our experience in responding to emergency events across all hazards, enabling community led recovery and building the capacity of others to engage within emergency conditions.**

Red Cross strengths cover the following areas:

- Red Cross experience in emergency management across all hazards including pandemics, collective trauma events and natural disasters.
- The public trust of the Red Cross brand can provide value as an auxiliary to government during extreme events.
- Build community capacity to respond to extreme events with response and Psychological First Aid training, evacuation centre management and emergency management preparedness activities
- Facilitation of integrated place based responses involving both community stakeholders and local community champions to deliver collective projects using a strength based community development approach that empowers communities and builds resilience and readiness
- Capability to engage specific needs groups including vulnerable migrants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities and those involved in the justice system
- Ability to provide services to scale with emerging technology, including phone outreach, volunteer deployment and outreach, community facilitation, development and engagement.
- Development and access to resources to support community mobilisation, social cohesion and increased social inclusion and participation
- Innovating new approaches to address humanitarian impacts of climate change and adaptation and preparedness for natural disasters
- Management of emergency assistance and distribution of community funds in partnership with government (experience both at National level and in Tasmania in Dunalley).

**Tasmania's recovery from COVID-19, both economically and socially, directly relates to the speed with which we can anticipate and respond to the needs of all communities and the degree to which recovery includes everyone in Australia. Beyond the immediate response, Red Cross stands ready to work with communities, governments, sector agencies and businesses to ensure recovery responses leave no one behind by:**

- 1. Ensuring recovery is led by and adapted to meet the needs of communities;**
- 2. Increasing opportunities for vulnerable people to participate in the economic recovery; and**
- 3. Not exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, risk factors and barriers to economic participation**