

A call to arms: new blood donors sought

Media Statement - 25th February 2009



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Australia needs thousands of new blood donors this year to roll up their sleeves and make a difference to someone else's life.

The Australian Government has officially declared 2009 as the Year of the Blood Donor and, together with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, is celebrating Australia's current blood donors.

This is also the 80th anniversary of the provision of blood transfusion and collection services in Australia.

Currently only 1 in every 30 people who are eligible to donate blood, regularly do - this means Australia has around 500,000 existing donors, and we need about 20,000 donations each week.

Those Australians who do regularly donate blood are owed a sincere "thank you" for their invaluable and ongoing contribution.

The tragic Victorian bushfires inspired many to donate blood - we need you to become committed and regular donors in this most important national "call to arms."

Over the next 10 years Australia's need for donated blood will more than double.

The challenge for the ARCBS throughout the Year of the Blood Donor and into the future will be to attract new donors from among the least-represented groups of potential donors - particularly men and women aged between 16 and 20 and aged between 30 and 39 years and those from different ethnic and cultural communities.

The Australian Government and the state and territory governments fully fund the ARCBS for blood-related services.

In 2008-09 government will provide the organisation an estimated \$420 million for that purpose. The Australian Government's share is 63 per cent.

In 2009 the Australian Red Cross Blood Service aims to attract 160,000 new blood donors who are prepared to roll up their sleeves and make a difference to someone else's life.

The Australian Government has provided \$2 million to support the Australian Red Cross Blood Service achieve this aim.
