World Blood Donor Day
“Celebrating the gift of blood” 14 JUNE 2009

Seeing Red
Australia hosts World Blood Donor Day

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World Health Organization
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
World Blood Donor Day 2009

Cover: The Dome lights up Melbourne’s Federation Square for World Blood Donor Day 2009. Inside was an exhibition about the Australian Red Cross Blood Service’s 80 year history and people could also take a finger prick test to find out their blood types, tying in with the ‘It Takes All Types’ theme.
Generous Australians shine at World Blood Donor Day launch

Noah Jones, a small child with the biggest and brightest smile you’ve ever seen, defence force hero Bill Mark and leukaemia survivor Tali Dunnage-Burke were just some of the many stars of the show at the 2009 World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) celebrations held on June 14 in Melbourne, Australia.

Celebrated all over the world, but with the Australian festivities focussing on the cities of Melbourne and Sydney, the day recognised the simple spirit of giving. A screening of the Blood Service’s DVD Australian Stories in the Year of the Blood Donor, showed those present how the very simple act of donating blood can save lives. These short vignettes show ordinary Australians doing extraordinary things to save the lives of their loved ones, strangers and people in their community. It also showcased the incredible joy that blood transfusion recipients experience when receiving the gift of life.

Various dignitaries including Health Minister Nicola Roxon and Blood Service Chairman David Hamill also addressed the audience, before the ceremonial World Blood Donor Day flag was passed on to Barcelona, who will host WBDD in 2010.

Seated among the audience were 90 red painted mannequins, representing the one in three Australians who currently need blood. The mannequins were also sending an unspoken message to encourage the audience to think about becoming donors.

As 2009 was the Year of the Blood Donor the celebration was also about recognising the selfless giving of long term donors who make a significant contribution to the blood supply, many of them encouraging others to roll up their sleeves and donate.

Celebrations were also held at Sydney’s iconic Bondi Beach where shark attack survivor Glenn Orgias and six-year-old Ruby Russell, who receives regular blood transfusions for an immune deficiency disorder, posed for photographers with the world’s largest red mirror. The red reflection invited donors and recipients to pause and reflect on the lifesaving gift they give and receive.

Throughout 2009, special events were held all over Australia to mark the Year of the Blood Donor. These included the launch of an online educational tool for high school children in Adelaide called BloodBuddies, National Blood Donor Week in September, and a special trip to celebrate blood donors and the Blood Service’s 80 year anniversary on the luxury central Australian train The Ghan.
About WBDD

While June 14 is the focus of WBDD celebrations, the day is part of a wider global campaign to build public awareness of the need for safe blood and to encourage more people to donate regularly on a voluntary basis.

The day is also an invitation to governments, blood transfusion services and non-governmental organisations to join together in promoting voluntary non-remunerated blood donation as a means of ensuring that safe blood will always be available for every patient who needs a transfusion as part of their treatment.

World Blood Donor Day is sponsored by four international organisations working towards 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation: The World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion.
Stories from around the World

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated all around the globe to recognise the importance of blood donors and to encourage new ones to join the cause. This is how the rest of the world celebrated.
African Region

Eritrea

The overall objective of World Blood Donor Day is to increase public awareness about altruistic blood donation to improve blood service delivery at a national level.

Director of the National Blood Transfusion Centre Dr Yifdeamlak Tesfamariam, said the day has been established to celebrate and thank blood donors for their gift of life.

“Voluntary blood donors are not only the source of the safest blood but also the base for a continual and inexhaustible supply of blood,” he said.

Dr Yifdeamlak said the number of countries that use 100 per cent voluntary and non-remunerated blood donation has been increasing in the past few years. In 2002, only 39 countries were based on voluntary blood donations as a source and the number has grown to 56 in 2006.

Ethiopia

Colourful celebrations were held to mark World Blood Donor Day in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Red Cross Society National Blood Bank Service celebrated over two days. On the eve of WBDD day there was a huge turnout for voluntary blood donation and about 200 units of blood collected.

At the same time a press conference was held to address the challenges of developing a safe blood program.

On June 14 more than 1,500 people including invited guests, donors, representatives of various institutions, the media, Red Cross Youth Clubs, Club25 members and Red Cross staff and blood bank partners participated in a “Walk for Life” marching from Meskel Square to Black Lion General Teaching Hospital.
Gambia

The Minister of Health and Social Welfare in Gambia, Dr Mariatou Jallow, called on the Central River Region community, particularly those that use the services of Bansang Hospital to come forward and donate blood voluntarily.

Dr Jallow spoke at the official launch of the fifth World Blood Donor Day celebrations held in Gambia on June 14 at 2009 Bansang Hospital.

She said that since most of the maternal deaths in Gambia are due to sepsis and haemorrhages, it would be prudent to ensure regular and adequate supply of safe blood was maintained at all major health facilities to stop unnecessary deaths.

Dr Jallow, herself a regular blood donor, dispelled the myth that women should not or can not donate blood. She called for them to rally behind the first lady of the Republic, Madam Zeinab Yahya Jammeh, who is also a regular blood donor and currently spearheading a national campaign for the health and wellbeing of mothers and children.

These efforts, according to the Minister, inspired many secondary school students to regularly donate blood voluntarily. She then thanked all volunteers and urged them to continue donating blood as the lives they saved could be their own or that of their loved ones.

To maintain this momentum and to increase the number of blood donors throughout the country, she said that the Ministry would embark on an aggressive campaign, refocusing its efforts on new innovative approaches involving the active participation of communities and youth across the country.

According to the Hospital’s Chief Executive Officer, Mr Baboucarr Jammeh, holding the event at Bansang Hospital was timely given the high number of maternal deaths reported at the facility over the past few years.

Mr Jammeh said that since anaemia was responsible for some of these deaths, it was important efforts be stepped up to engage more voluntary donors.

Meanwhile, in recognition of their contributions donors from 11 surrounding villages were presented with certificates.

Kenya

Kenya commemorates World Blood Donor Day every year. In 2009 the national commemoratory event took place in Nakuru and included a blood drive, sponsored by Telkom Kenya that started a week before June 14.

Events on the day included a procession from the Provincial General Hospital (Rift Valley) to the Nyayo Gardens in Nakuru town.

The procession was led by the Director of Medical Services Dr Francis Kimani, Dr Margaret Oduor and Dr. David Okello. Most participants in this procession were secondary school students, Ministry of Health staff, and members of the general public.

Dr Kimani indicated that Kenya needed at least 200,000 units of blood annually in order to adequately meet its requirement and in the past few years the country had managed to collect at least 130,000 units annually leaving a shortfall of 70,000 units. He challenged everybody to eliminate that shortfall to ensure blood was always available when needed.

He urged all Kenyans to donate blood. Since 60 per cent of donated blood is currently from school children, he urged adults to take a lead in increasing safe blood supply.

South Africa


The main event was held at Maponya Mall, in Soweto, where an outside broadcast was held with a popular youth radio station YFM. As Youth Day is celebrated on June 16 in South Africa it was thought appropriate to aim the event at youth. Blood grouping was on offer and the blood donor centre in Maponya Mall had record donations. It normally averages 20 units per day, but that day collected 82 units.

Blood Donor representatives from local schools also recruited blood donors and the top three won hampers.

SANBS recently launched an Ambassador Program where well known personalities from local TV, radio and sports agreed to act as ambassadors to promote blood donation. These ambassadors attended the main event as well as other events in the Johannesburg area to raise awareness for blood donation and for World Blood Donor Day. The public responded well resulting in above target collections.

Although the main event was held in Johannesburg, support events were held in branches all over the country. This resulted in collections over the weekend of 3,804 units against a target of 3,056 - 24.5 per cent over target. Normal weekend collections are between 2,100 to 2,300 units.

With the combination of ambassador support and well organised events, this was one of the most successful World Blood Donor Day events ever for SANBS.

Ghana

Ghana’s celebrations were based on the WBDD theme - 100 per cent voluntary donation of blood and blood components.

A series of activities were lined up to mark the day including radio and television announcements nationwide which informed the audience about the day and where various functions would be taking place.

A total of 500 greeting cards were sent to voluntary blood donors across the country with the message; “June 14 is World Blood Donor Day. We join the rest of the world to salute you for being a lifeline to that someone somewhere, who received your precious gift of life – blood. We hope to enjoy your cooperation in achieving 100 percent voluntary blood donation in Ghana.”

A 10 kilometre health walk also took place on June 14 and was well publicised. Many people joined Blood Service staff to do the walk which was led by the Shukura Keep Fit Club.

At the end of the walk, Edith Andrews Annan of the WHO Office in Accra, read the Afro Regional Director’s goodwill message amid cheers from the participants.

A full page message in the Daily Graphic, a Ghanaian daily, also appeared thanking existing blood donors and urging new ones to come forward.
Sudan

Sudan celebrated World Blood Donor Day this year with the theme, All of us are Blood Donors.

The theme paid tribute to voluntary blood donors who give a precious gift freely and without any reward, to people they will never meet. The day was dedicated to celebrating these unsung heroes, who want to help their fellow citizens. The celebration took place in Gedarif State in the presence of Her Excellency the Federal Minister of Health, Dr Shokai Tabita, Dr Mohamed Abdur Rab, WHO Representative in Sudan and other federal and state officials.

During the celebration, Dr Mohammad Abdur Rab stressed the need to mobilise more donors.

“We need to achieve the target of 100 per cent voluntary blood donation, as unpaid donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply,” he said.

He also called on all partners to intensify their effort to spread the lifesaving message that any healthy person can be a donor.

The day was also marked by the inauguration of the blood component laboratory of Gedarif Blood Bank and laying the foundation of the new blood bank to be constructed in Gedarif town with financial assistance from the Global Fund.

Mauritius

To mark World Blood Donor Day, the Mauritian Blood Service held an essay writing competition for students from six different colleges aged between 16 and 18 years old.

There was also a series of blood collections in June from private corporations, government institutions, religious bodies, schools and universities, trade union organisations and the police force.

To raise awareness of the constant need for blood donations, billboards, e-media, radio announcements and plays took place across the island on the day.

Award ceremonies were held to recognise blood donors as well as sponsors and stakeholders. The Minister for Health and other cabinet ministers attended the award ceremonies, and also joined in a march organised for all stakeholders, lead by the police orchestra.
Namibia

World Blood Donor Day this year focused on the life-saving gift of voluntary blood donors whose donations are given purely for altruistic reasons.

The Nigerian National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) joined the world in this year’s celebration with the theme of 100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components.

There are 17 NBTS Centres across the country. The NBTS Headquarters and the Abuja Centre started the celebration with a press briefing by the Minister of Health at the Minister’s Conference room.

Another common feature of the 2009 World Blood Donor Day was the presentation of awards and certificates to regular donors in the various NBTS Centres (NBTS Abuja, Kaduna, Ibadan, Owerri).

The Voluntary Blood Donors Club of Nigeria (mainly youths) engaged in various activities in Namibia to spread the World Blood Donor Day message via electronic media and blood drives.

Nigeria

The Nigerian WBDD experience was full of fun. A blood drive was organised at a rally in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology on June 15 to commemorate the day.

The program started in the morning with a speech from the Minister of Health and a special guest from Nigeria’s movie industry. Both members and donors played a part in the day. Even bad weather couldn’t stop people from taking part.

Uganda


At 9am, led by a brass band, a procession started from the centre of the Mbarara Municipality with the area Member of Parliament leading the way. At the same time, open air blood donation started in the new premises of the blood bank.

Invited guests including WHO representatives and various other dignitaries arrived at the venue to entertainment provided by the brass band and performances from the donor clubs and surrounding schools.

The new blood bank was opened by the Honourable Minister of State for Health together with the CDC country director and WHO representative. A tour was given of the new blood bank afterwards.

By the end of the day, 386 units of blood were collected.
Plasma recipient Anna Melville plays at the WBDD launch in Melbourne.
Region of the Americas

Bahamas

The Bahamas Telecommunications Company Limited (BTC) held its third Annual Blood Drive on Saturday, June 13 from 10am-6pm. This event was in honour of World Blood Donor Day.

The BTC Blood Drive is held in conjunction with Princess Margaret Hospital and Doctor's Hospital. All donors will receive phone cards or cell phones as gifts from BTC for their donations. A live concert will also be held in their honour.

Last year, the BTC Blood Drive yielded an unprecedented 336 pints of blood, the largest blood donation in the history of the country.

BTC views its annual blood drive as an intrinsic part of its corporate social commitment to the Bahamian public. The company continues to participate in meaningful community initiatives and partnerships aimed at improving the quality of life for the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Cuba

The Ministry of Public Health in Cuba decided to make World Blood Donor Day a week of celebrations which ran from June 6 to 14.

There were also 45,000 donors recognised with certificates of appreciation throughout the week long celebrations.

El Salvador

World Blood Donor Day was celebrated in El Salvador on June 14 with the Red Cross Blood Centre set up in the Luis Poma Theatre in the very popular area of Metrocentro in San Salvador.

The blood drive this year was impacted by the National Emergency which had been declared as a result of the Swine Flu pandemic and which prevented the participation of the Ministry of Health, the National Health Authority and the National Blood Bank Network. However, the public’s response was generous and numerous private businesses joined in this important drive, which helps maintain adequate reserves of blood for all Salvadorians.

On July 25, the Salvadorian Red Cross held a special event to acknowledge and give awards and diplomas to all the voluntary donors and the many private companies that supported the WBDD drive and make the work of the Blood Centre possible.

During this event, voluntary blood donors were applauded as a way of encouraging new donors to come forward and give blood. This is especially important since only 40 per cent of the blood collected in the last six months comes from voluntary donors. The rest is reposition donations; Salvadorians donating to a family member in need.

Guatemala

In Guatemala this year blood donors were honoured for coming forward and helping others.

The Ministry of Public Health, in coordination with the Pan-American Organisation of Salud and the Guatemalan Red Cross, organised an event to recognise and celebrate more than 300 volunteers who donate for purely altruistic reasons in Guatemala.

In Guatemala, only five per cent of the total blood units donated are from voluntary donors. The organisers of this event sent a message of gratitude and motivation to donors acknowledging that their generosity affects the whole of our society in a very positive and life changing way. It is hoped that this message will inspire more donors to come forward and give blood.

Guyana

On Sunday 14 June 2009, Guyana joined other countries all over the world in celebrating World Blood Donor Day. This year’s event was celebrated under the theme - pledge to save lives.

The event was particularly special as attending the celebrations were over 105 representatives from the private and public sectors, who in 2007 had committed to participate with voluntary blood donations.

Through their collaborative effort, voluntary blood donations in Guyana have increased from approximately 30 per cent in 2007 to over 66 per cent by mid 2009.

The Minister of Health, Dr Leslie Ramsamy, thanked and congratulated corporate Guyana for the role it continued to play in ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply.

The Minister also indicated that working together, Guyana will achieve the target of 100 per cent voluntary blood donations and surpass 10,000 units collected (per year) by the end of 2010.

During the ceremony people gave testimonials on why they became donors, spoke of their experiences and about what it means to them. Others used the opportunity to thank all those who have saved the lives of their relatives through altruistic blood donations.
Mexico

Encouraging the many Mexicans who don’t donate blood to do so, was part of the media campaign attached to this year’s World Blood Donor Day celebrations.

Mexican Health Services, the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS), the Institute of Social Security for State Officers (ISSSTSE), Mexican Secretary of Defence (SEDENA), Mexican Oil Institute (PEMEX), National and State Centres for Blood Transfusion, Mexican Delegations of the Red Cross and the Mexican Federation and Associations of Haemophilia joined together in a partnership to organise a number of events around World Blood Donor Day.

The main media campaign was launched on May 22, with a two-pronged objective. The first objective was aimed at strengthening the existing blood service, helping to guarantee a quality service and promote trust. Audiovisual and printed materials were distributed to all blood banks with over 2,500 donors a year. Each State Blood Transfusion Centre was responsible for presenting small items to donors, such as pencils, key rings, pens and stickers. They also sought testimonies to be used in the second half of the campaign, aimed at the general public. In this phase, World Blood Donor Day was promoted on the radio from 12 cities, and advertisements appeared on buses.

On 14 June, the State of Oaxaca hosted the official celebration with the Minister for Health and other dignitaries attending from the health sector. At special events in each state, blood donors were acknowledged and thanked, and awards presented. In some states, there was a ‘wall of fame’ exhibiting pictures of regular donors who have donated many times. Thank you notes from people who have received a blood transfusion were displayed.

Other events included special attractions, such as plays, sports competitions and concerts. Community leaders donated blood on the day, and gave interviews to communicate their experience. Cell phone companies sent out text messages to their subscribers with a message about voluntary blood donation. Schools and universities formed donor clubs, and links were established with ambulance, fire and police departments, with members testifying about the need for a safe and efficient blood supply.

On May 31, the Second International Forum for Blood Safety took place at the Mexican Congress. The objective of this forum was to encourage the people responsible for the State Blood Transfusion Programmes to promote voluntary blood donation and to provide a quality service.

Sandra Fernández Valverde’s story:

In September 1999, Sandra Fernandez was told she had aplastic anaemia, a condition where bone marrow does not produce sufficient new cells to replenish blood cells. This condition can be fatal if patients don’t receive blood transfusions. Consequently she had to receive immediate and continuous blood transfusions to stay alive during the three months she waited for a Haematopoietic stem cell transplant. During these crucial months, Sandra received around 40 blood transfusions, while doctors organised the medical procedure which would save her life. Fortunately, Sandra’s relatives and friends helped her. They collaborated by donating blood and convincing their friends to do the same. Around 100 people made blood donations.

Finally, the transplant was performed successfully and Sandra’s life was saved, thanks to her twin sister having donated the stem cell and also due to blood donors.
**Suriname**

On June 13, the President of the Republic of Suriname decorated 37 blood donors, who achieved a special milestone.

In his speech, he highlighted his gratitude to these silent heroes for their 100 per cent voluntary blood donations.

In addition, the National Blood Bank gave a warm tribute to approximately 600 blood donors who were given a certificate and a present to remember their gift of life.

As a surprise, a touching letter and a dessert presented by a recipient, to show his appreciation, completed a dinner held for donors.

Finally, a cabaret performance by a blood donor capped off the festive evening.

**United States of America**

The United States of America thanked all blood donors on World Blood Donor Day 2009 and formed a special ‘Blood Donors of America’ organisation to recognise them. It is hoped Blood Donors of America will motivate people to donate regularly.

Many Americans are not aware of the importance of blood donation and how integral it is to saving lives.

America’s Blood Centres are North America’s largest network of non-profit community based blood programs and supplier of nearly half of the US blood supply. They launched ‘give’, an initiative to thank donors for giving blood and encourage others to donate on and around World Blood Donor Day.

In June, America’s Blood Centres provided donors with special edition ‘give’ bandages representing the united global celebration of WBDD and recognising everyday heroes who save lives by giving blood. The ‘give’ bandage is a message of inspiration and gratitude to all Americans.
European Region

Albania

On World Blood Donor Day in Albania the National Blood Transfusion Centre (NBTC), Albanian Red Cross (ARC), the Albanian Voluntary Blood Donors Association (AVBDA) and the Ministry of Health used the slogan, “To Donate Blood is a Human Act, but to Receive Safe Blood is a Right!”

A press conference was held with wide coverage on local Albanian radio and television stations and mobile donation sessions were held at eight branches of the Albanian Blood Service.

There were even tents pitched at mobile donor sites with beds to enable blood donors to be comfortable while they gave the gift of life.

Bulgaria

This year’s World Blood Donor Day was celebrated by the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) in close collaboration with its partners - the Ministry of Health (MH) and the National Centre of Hematology and Transfusiology (NCHT).

The main focus of the day was the official proclamation of June 14 as ‘The day of the open gates’ for all transfusiology centres and a national award ceremony for blood donors.

The honoured donors were nominated initially by the Regional Councils of the BRC and approved by a specially appointed commission with representatives of the BRC, MH and NCHT.

The 10 most dedicated donors were awarded with a specially designed memorial sign of honour and a certificate. Among those awarded was a woman who had donated 105 times, as well as a 19 year-old boy who was a Red Cross volunteer.

Similar events were held on a local level, with signs of respect and recognition to all those who gave blood and saved other’s lives.

The Bulgarian Red Cross is constantly seeking new and more successful ways to promote voluntary blood donation by raising awareness about blood donation within the population.

Denmark

Denmark had Blood Service staff visit train stations in Copenhagen to raise awareness and ask people to come forward as new blood donors on WBDD.

The national organisation’s campaign this year focused on young men becoming blood donors. For each man enrolling as a blood donor, two women are becoming donors, and this will eventually create an uneven donor population.

From the official WBDD poster, the Danish organisation created a poster where there are twice as many women as men around the globe. The text says: ‘The ladies are ahead 2-1!’ followed by the text: ‘Man up, man!’ and ‘Get in to the match at www.bloddonor.dk’.

This campaign is a follow up to a recent campaign by the blood bank in Copenhagen, which highlighted that there are always more female blood donors than male.

The campaign from the blood bank can be seen at www.klubblod.dk.

England

A high profile event was held in London on June 13 and 14 with His Divine Holiness Sant Anoop Singh, who is a Sikh minister.

His Divine Holiness made World Blood Donor Day the main theme of his sermons over the weekend. He spoke to more than 50,000 British Sikh’s at different venues throughout the UK as part of his world tour in 2009.

The event was held in central London with the message being ‘Give blood to help mankind - regardless of caste, colour or creed.’

The Asian media in the UK, local television channels, radio and newspapers all took great interest in the event.

With His Divine Holiness’s involvement and his personal endorsement of World Blood Donor Day the event received great exposure. He was also involved in the massive blood donation day organised by the Sikh’s in India at Anandpur Sahib, the Sikh holy place.
Finland

In Finland, WBDD was celebrated with various press covering patient stories about the importance of regular blood donations. The Finnish Red Cross Blood Service also thanked donors by advertising in major Finnish newspapers.

In Mikkeli, the Finnish Red Cross Blood Service was introduced in one of Europe’s largest relay orienteering events. Hundreds of visitors and participants took part in a ‘Wheel of Fortune’ type game presenting the various blood groups. Each participant received a small gift and information on their nearest blood donation site. The same activity was introduced during the closing event of the annual Helsinki Week. Both events were a great opportunity to meet potential blood donors and to remind people about the importance of blood donation.

Iceland

World Blood Donor Day in Iceland was celebrated on June 15, because the blood bank was closed on June 14.

A barbecue party was held by the blood bank and all blood donors were invited and received a rose as a small token of gratitude.

Afterwards a Blood Bank race was hosted by the organisation.

Italy

The World Blood Donor Day celebration in Italy this year was all about the undergraduates.

A medical team and a pool of voluntary donors travelled on a double-decker multimedia ‘Blood Bus’ all over Rome to reach out to young men and women attending the city’s many universities.

From June 8 to June 12, the blood bus stopped in front of each university to provide information and invite the students to participate in the celebrations. A medical team carried out blood-type tests for those who wanted it. These students were also given a corresponding blood-type bracelet. Their blood-type test results were then sent to the local transfusional service and mailed back to them.

The global ‘What’s Your Blood Type?’ message was advertised on the Metro, the free press daily and on Moby TV, the TV network for public transportation, a week prior to the big day. Several radio networks and internet media, such as MTV, Screenweek and Episode 39 also advertised the event.
Monaco

Monaco this year held a cocktail party to recognise all the generous donors who regularly give blood to the Blood Donors Association of Monaco.

There were about 250 donors present, as well as Prince Albert of Monaco (who is president of the Red Cross), the Minister for Health, the President of the Parliament, The Red Cross Board of Trustees.

During this event, donors who have donated blood 10, 20 and 30 times, received a pin or medal.

The press and Monaco Television Networks also covered the event.

Latvia

Following the slogan of World Blood donor day 2009 – “100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components”, the Latvian State Blood donor centre organised a campaign “Pie-dalies” which means ‘Participate and Share’.

Between May 14 and June 14, every blood donor was asked to donate money to the Clinic of Neonatology at the State Clinical University Children’s hospital.

The money raised will be used to purchase medical equipment to help newborn babies.

Companies who participated to raise funds and also donate blood were the Latvian National Bank, Swedbank, Statoil, Elko group, musical club “Godvil”, State chancellery and State Clinical University Children hospital.

The media event was held at the hospital to present medical equipment to the clinic and to distribute information about WBDD to the general public.

Poland

This year celebrations were planned to take place across Poland to draw public attention to the voluntary donation of blood.

World Blood Donor Day received coverage in both the national and local media. A variety of radio and television programs were broadcast to pay tribute to people who have already donated their blood and to encourage others to do so. Thousands of congratulatory post cards, letters, leaflets and text messages were sent out to honour and thank all individual blood donors as well as organisations such as high schools, universities, military units, industrial enterprises and all other contributors to blood donation activity.

Blood Donor Day celebrations were supported by many different local events including exhibitions, lotteries, competitions, recreational and sporting events, picnics, open air fires, fishing derbies, fiestas and auctions.

Individual blood donors were awarded medals and diplomas for their contributions and celebrities and popular music groups attended many local events.

The Blood Service also held an open day on WBDD so anyone interested in the daily work of the Regional Blood Banks was welcome to come and visit.

Netherlands

A specially designed message board left in high traffic public areas such as the central train station in Utrecht and in the square at The Hague, was the basis for the Netherlands World Blood Donor Day celebrations on June 14.

The public were invited to write notes of thanks to the many blood donors who make up the Netherlands blood supply on the message board. Bert Meerstadt, President-Director of the Dutch Rail Roads, Minister Ab Klink of Public Health, Wellbeing and Sport, and several members of Parliament also attended to write their messages.

Theo Buunen, President of the governing board of Sanquin said the messages showed people’s heartfelt appreciation to blood donors.

“Research shows that many Dutch people feel it is very important to give blood,” Mr Buunen said.

“Currently only 2.5 per cent of the Dutch population are blood donors. Because of the commitment of the population, people who are very sick or have complications in childbirth are saved on a daily basis. The message boards will be given prominent positions at blood banks so the donors can read them on their next visit.”
Portugal

In Portugal the Federação das Associações (FAS) celebrated World Blood Donor Day on June 14, along with an Annual Meeting of Blood Donors and their families, in Pernes, Santarém.

The President of the Portuguese Republic honoured blood donors through a commendation for Mr Joaquim Moreira Alves, President of FAS-Portugal. The ceremony took place on June 10 in Santarém. The President of the Portuguese Republic paid homage to the most important people in the Portuguese community including cultural, medical and political arenas.

FAS-Portugal was delighted that Joaquim Moreira Alves received such an honour, since it is recognition of the Movement of Blood Donors in Portugal.

Romania

World Blood Donor Day in Romania was quite a low key celebration this year because of budget restrictions and the Global Financial Crisis.

They promoted this important day, by ordering 50 red umbrellas which said; “I’m proud to be a donor” and made 1,500 fliers which were distributed around Bucharest by volunteers, who kept their umbrellas open to attract attention.

There was also a press conference held at the Blood Transfusion Centre launching a short promotional movie which was shown in major cinemas in Bucharest.

The short movie uses a series of pictures and the voice of a well known actor. It was made the help of students from a local film school.

Russia

On World Blood Donor Day, the Red Cross ‘Club 25’ from St Petersburg adopted the Australian Red Cross Blood Service’s idea of using promotional photos with people holding up the letter of their blood type to call on people to donate blood.

Among other events, the Red Cross volunteers printed steps on the major roads in St Petersburg leading to the blood transfusion station where people could give blood following the Red Cross call.

Hundreds of people took part in the event.

Spain

At the Blood Transfusion Centre of Navarra (the Centro de Transfusión Sanguínea de Navarra) there was much participation in World Blood Donor Day.

In a touching and spectacular tribute to 345 milestone donors (who have reached their 75th donation) the Spanish Federation of Blood Donors held a ceremony to recognise the donors who came from 26 Spanish provinces to celebrate this special day.

Every year the foundation likes to recognise the regular donors and their community spirit.
Serbia

The WBDD poster, developed by the Australian team for use by all involved in the celebration, was used in newspaper advertisements for the celebration on June 14.

The celebrations gathered blood transfusion professionals, Red Cross volunteers, government officials and media representatives together. At least 189 Red Cross organisations and hundreds of volunteers took part in the celebration.

The number of new donors who come forward and donate every year as part of the WBDD blood drive increases significantly every year.

In the centre of Belgrade in Republic Square, flyers and balloons carrying a ‘thank you’ note for blood donors were distributed. It was repeated in the main streets in major cities all over Serbia.

Turkey

World Blood Donor Day celebrations in Turkey focused on thanking blood donors for their life saving contribution to the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS).

In conjunction with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey, the main theme of the events was ‘100 per cent Voluntary Blood Donation’ which tied in with the global WBDD message.

TRCS organised an annual ceremony in 15 regional Blood Centres and 44 Blood Donation Centres across Turkey.

Blood Donors were rewarded with various gifts including a plate for the 154 blood donors who have donated over 45 times, a gold medal for the 467 blood donors who have donated over 35 times, a silver medal for the 749 blood donors who donated over 25 times and a bronze medal for the 3,650 blood donors who donated over 10 times.

Various activities were organised to celebrate what the donors give to society. These included cocktail parties, picnics, Turkish classical music concerts, Latin dance exhibitions, a sightseeing bus trip, a souvenir lottery supported by a local shop owner, a marbling art show (a traditional Turkish art) and an orchestral concert.

A commemorative poster, postage stamp and an invitation card highlighting the fact that June 14 was World Blood Donor Day were also designed. Various donors were invited to the ceremonies by the invitation card which bore the special postage stamp.

Sweden

This year buses were used in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Scania in southern Sweden to recruit blood donors as part of World Blood Donor Day. Major blood centres in both Stockholm and Gothenburg opened on WBDD.

In Motala, Sweden, a ride around Vätternrundan, the largest recreational bicycle ride in the world also became part of the celebrations. This 300 km course around the second biggest lake in the country, attracted more than 18,000 cyclists this year, who took part in the event from June 12 to 13.

In Umeå, in the north of the country blood donor Giovanni Macellaro will receive the Blood Donating Award of the Year.
South-East Asia Region

Korea

To celebrate World Blood Donor Day 2009, the Korean Red Cross held various events. The objective of these activities was to express gratitude to blood donors and to promote awareness about World Blood Donor Day.

Preliminary events including ‘Run Together with Blood Donors’ were held across the country from May 31. Multiple blood donors and members of the local bicycle clubs promoted the importance of blood donation in metropolitan cities from the southern end of the country - Jeju to the heart of Korea - Seoul.

On June 13, a commemorative ceremony was held at the Yeouido Park, Seoul with 8,000 blood donors and citizens participating.

The president of the Korean Red Cross and the Minister of Health, Welfare and Family Affairs expressed gratitude to blood donors and encouraged their efforts.

The Korean Red Cross Blood Service headquarters provided blood donors with commemorative t-shirts.

To continue the celebration, an open air concert was held and aired nationwide on KBS (Korea Broadcasting System) channel 9.

Myanmar

In Myanmar, World Blood Donor Day was celebrated at the National Blood Centre in Yangon by staff giving regular blood donors the Hepatitis B Vaccination.

More than 2,000 regular blood donors were vaccinated on World Blood Donor Day.

India

An event which involved government and corporate organisations heralded the start of World Blood Donor Day in India.

At the event, Vyloppilly Samskrithi Bhavan and Dr Usha Titus officiated. There were thankyous given to donors and a blood donor ‘Greeting Card Design Contest’ winner was awarded. The card was given to 223 regular donors and Club 25 members.

Organisations who took part in WBDD included the State Bank of India, State Bank of Travancore, Canara Bank, US Technology, Deshasenahi, Center for Continuous Adult Education and KIMS School of Nursing.

A regular donor’s meeting was arranged at Hotel Horizon on the day with speeches and interactive sessions. Dr Amar Fettle spoke about Club 25.

Posters and leaflets on blood donation were distributed to the public throughout WBDD celebrations. Articles relating to the event and a blood donor camp were published in Indian Express, Hindu Deshabhimani and on television channel Asianet.
Thailand

The National Blood Centre and the Thai Red Cross Society organised the World Blood Donor Day 2009 on Sunday, June 14. It was held at the National Blood Centre with the theme of ‘100 per cent Voluntary Blood Donation’.

The day was aimed at targeting regular blood donors, young people, new donors and the general public.

Activities on the day included an opening ceremony by the Secretary General of the Thai Red Cross Society, Permanent Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Health, WHO Representative and an IFRC Representative.

There was also a Medal for Life presentation to those who donate blood regularly. The highest donation score of 445 times belonged to Mr Chalerm Charatworavuthikul.

Blood donors wrote their pledge on a Wall of Humanity for everyone to see and there was entertainment from Red Cross youth volunteers and a food fair. WBDD was organised by Red Cross chapters in more than 60 provinces throughout the country with the common objective to thank blood donors and to reach 100 per cent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation.

Tajikistan

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Health held a national blood drive on World Blood Donor Day.

Hundreds of citizens, and staff of international agencies made their way to the National and Regional Blood Centres, to voluntarily donate blood for patients in need.

The marathon was conducted to express gratitude to blood donors and to increase the number of voluntary blood donors. In this country, where the voluntary blood donation movement is in its first stages of implementation, these kind of activities are extremely important.

In 2005, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution recognising donors who donate blood regularly are important in maintaining a safe, adequate and sustainable blood supply.

The blood drive was conducted all over the country. According to the National and Regional Blood Centres 750 people donated their blood and a total of 400 litres of blood was donated on the day.

All donors were provided t-shirts and caps featuring the World Blood Donor Day logo.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka celebrated WBDD on June 15 day by launching the crest for the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society Voluntary Non-Remunerated Blood Donor Recruitment Program (VNRBDR).

The launch of the ‘Club for U & Me’ concept is taken originally from the IFRC’s Club 25 concept was also launched on the day.

Donor appreciation events followed and a blood drive was organised for local and foreign staff and volunteers of the Red Cross in Sri Lanka, with 141 donors giving blood for the first time.

The national event was funded by the German Red Cross, sole donors of the VNRBDR program.

Vietnam

A range of activities were held to honour blood donors in Vietnam on World Blood Donor Day from June 11 to 17.

In Hanoi, a week entitled ‘Humanity heart – blood donation to save lives’ was held as well as a festival to honour donors. More than 4,000 volunteers participated in the festival from many of Vietnam’s social organisations. A blood drive was part of the event.

The common message of the World Blood Donor Day 2009 is ‘Towards 100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components’ to affirm the deep humanitarian significance of a blood donation. In Vietnam, the message ‘Blood donation – Please do not forget it’ will continue to be sent to the community, to encourage people to donate. By raising awareness the Vietnam Blood Service hopes that healthy people in the community will continue to come forward and donate.
Eastern Mediterranean Region

Pakistan

The Hamza Foundation hospital and blood service is a well known organisation in Pakistan. It provides safe, healthy and screened blood to patients with blood disorders and is also engaged in raising public awareness about giving blood.

On June 14, Hamza celebrated World Blood Donor Day by honouring the precious donors who give the gift of life.

Pakistan is a developing country and about 70 per cent of the country’s population is under 29 years of age. So raising awareness to these young citizens will help with future voluntary blood donations.

The Hamza Foundation arranged a special program on June 14 to salute blood donors with an organised walk, a press conference and a blood donor ‘camp’, where large numbers of volunteers donated blood.

Children held up display cards and banners, highlighting the importance of giving blood. At the press conference Hamza Foundation Chairman, Mr Ijaz Ali, said it was vital that healthy blood continue to be voluntarily donated.

“The Hamza Foundation had 534 registered patients with thalassemia, haemophilia and blood cancer. It also provides screened blood to other patients in different hospitals free of cost,” he said.

In 2009, the global theme for World Blood Donor Day placed a renewed emphasis on improving the safety and sufficiency of blood supplies through the achievement of 100 percent voluntary non-remunerated donation of blood and blood components.

This year, three major events were held, an opening ceremony and a seminar on voluntary blood donation and a major blood drive.

Afghanistan

A celebration was held in Afghanistan to raise awareness of the need for safe blood transfusions and the importance of blood donations.

It was an occasion to thank donors and acknowledge those volunteers who have responded to a world-wide increase in demand for donations of blood and blood components.

World Blood Donor Day is now an annual event and each year it receives support from government leaders, royalty and celebrities in Afghanistan. It focuses on the life-saving gift of voluntary donors whose donations are given purely for altruistic reasons.

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Saudi Arabia

As part of WBDD in 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia launched a three-day blood donation campaign at its headquarters in Riyadh in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

The campaign embodies humanitarian concepts and raises awareness among the diplomatic corps in disseminating health awareness among its staff and the wider community.

The Ministry’s blood donation campaign wants to raise awareness of the importance of donating blood, targeting everyone from students to embassy staff.

United Arab Emirates

Educational talks were given at Mosques on World Blood Donor Day in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Community leaders spoke of the importance of blood donation and encouraged everyone to donate regularly.

One million SMS messages were sent in both Arabic and English by mobile phone company Etisalat Co.

Shopping Centres all over the Emirates also participated by having mobile displays from the Blood Service to answer people’s questions and encouraged them to become donors.

There was also blood drives through UAE and various merchandise such as balloons, caps, mugs, t-shirts and pens were distributed to push the World Blood Donor Day message.
Western Pacific Region

Cambodia

World Blood Donor Day celebrations were held in the capital Phnom Penh and two outlying provinces Battambang and Kampong Cham.

To mark the occasion, certificates and medals were presented to outstanding blood donors and there were WBDD displays and banners placed in public locations to encourage new donors to come forward.

Cambodia is also running a Blood Donor Recruitment campaign in 2009 aimed at targeting Buddhist monks, students and teachers.

The project is run by dedicated staff and uses Red Cross volunteers and youth workers to highlight the need for giving blood at high schools, universities, schools, religious groups and at Bible schools.

The campaign is officially supported by the South Korean Red Cross.

Recruiting new donors is urgent in this country where blood is in desperately short supply.

“Each year many people in Cambodia need blood transfusions for dengue haemorrhagic fever, landmine accidents and haemorrhaging during child birth,” the President of the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) said.

“Due to our critical need for blood, the CRC considers it an obligation to increase the number of voluntary blood donors.”

The Cambodian Red Cross also organised a mobile blood donation drive which attracted new donors to the campaign.

The celebrations were held with the help of the Cambodian Ministry of Health.

China

China thanked its voluntary blood donors on World Blood Donor Day with a festival of culture and art performances, movies and a donor reception.

A large number of show business stars, including popular Chinese celebrities also served as ambassadors for voluntary blood donation, and actively participated in WBDD campaigns.

Minister for Health, Chen Zhu, thanked donors for their contribution towards saving the lives of others. World Blood Donor Day awareness campaigns were run throughout the country.

Blood centres were also open to educate people in Shanxi, Hubei and Fujian.

Fiji

A march through the Fijian town of Savusavu in the North of the country on World Blood Donor Day aimed to raise awareness about blood donations and get more people to give blood.

Josefa Boluqace, the National Coordinator of the Fiji National Blood Service said it was important to recognise donors for their lifesaving contributions.

“We need to constantly raise awareness and celebrate that people give their time to do this to save the lives of others,” he said.

Chief guest on the day was Northern Commissioner Inia Seruiratu. Commissioner Seruiratu called on the nation to work together with the Ministry of Health to collect more blood.

“Let us work together to save a life and let’s do it with passion. I challenge everyone in the North to come forward and support this cause of saving a life through blood donation,” he said.

The Fiji National Blood Service along with the Ministry of Health presented awards and certificates to schools, businesses, individuals and villages in honour of their donations.

School challenges have become common place in Fiji with schools seeing who can donate the most blood.

Businesses, villages, church groups and schools were recognised for their donations throughout last year.
**Hong Kong**

The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) organised a series of activities to celebrate and promote World Blood Donor Day this year. To echo the WBDD 2009 theme – ‘100 per cent voluntary non-remunerated blood donation’, the BTS specially organised this year’s Annual Donor Award Ceremony to publicly acknowledge and recognise our regular donors.

Donors who have reached 25 donations or more were invited to attend the ceremony and receive an award presented by an invited guest. In 2008/09, the total number of donors eligible for awards has reached a new high of 2,161, which included 754 donors who donated 50 times or more – a six per cent increase compared with previous year. For the first time, BTS held the ceremony at a grand Chinese restaurant where the blood donors and their families were also served a Chinese dim-sum lunch.

Invited guests and patients who had received blood transfusion therapy were also invited with their families to share their experiences and appreciate blood donors for their generous gift of life. A student band and a youth orchestra gave performances.

**Kiribati**

Positive messages about the importance of blood donation were heard on Kiribati’s airwaves to mark World Blood Donor Day.

A road show was also held across the country with volunteers from local Blood Services performing a play that raised awareness about donating blood.

Blood typing was carried out so people could understand what their blood types were. They were encouraged to give blood, if they could. There was also a blood recruitment workshop and posters placed in hospitals, banks and supermarkets to raise further awareness of the day.
New Zealand

World Blood Donor Day 2009 was held on June 12 in New Zealand. One of this year’s themes ‘It takes all types’ presented some challenges. The theme suggested all types really could donate blood encouraging those who were not suitable donors to also come forward.

Media stories were developed with Patient Advocacy Groups such as IDFNZ and the Leukaemia & Blood Foundation. This resulted in a number of excellent media stories.

Events were held at 11 of New Zealand’s Blood Service Donor Centres. Milestone donors were invited to the celebrations and the media covered many of these donor recognition events.

A tactical and targeted media campaign resulted in a very high level of media coverage. There were 102 separate Radio, TV and print media pieces.

WBDD is the major public relations event of the year for the New Zealand Blood Service and was again very successful in 2009. General inquiry phone calls also increased dramatically over the three recorded weeks. In the week commencing June 8, they received twice as many as the previous weeks. Visitors to www.nzblood.co.nz also rose substantially in the same week from 1,482 to 2,799.

Phillipines

The 2009 World Blood Donor Day celebration in Naga City, Bicol Region, Philippines, was a resounding success.

The results of the celebrations were both unprecedented and phenomenal with 1,299 people donating. This is a national record for the Philippines for a day-long, locally initiated mobile blood donation (MBD) activity.

Among the notable results of the WBDD event is the high participation rate of government officials, with seven of 14 (50 per cent) elected city officials (from City Mayor to Councillors); nine of 27 (33 per cent) village chiefs; and five of 27 youth leaders giving blood. Two former national legislative officials also participated along with a number of heads of government offices and community leaders.

Great results considering the Naga City Blood Program only started in January 2009.

The Department of Health (DOH), particularly its Philippine Blood Centre (PBC), was particularly happy with the Naga City WBDD event. The City of Naga was honoured to have been invited to share its ‘best practice’ during the third Philippine Blood Summit held on June 16, at Baguio City.

But the Naga City Blood Program still has a long way to go. While Naga City, has already surpassed the one per cent minimum required stocks of blood (1,605 units). The ultimate aim of its blood program is to saturate information to all residents so many more people become regular donors.
Singapore

In Singapore, World Blood Donor Day 2009 was celebrated on June 14 and 15. Blood donors were invited to a carnival theme event at the Singapore Jurong Birdpark and three champion donor recognition ceremonies were held to recognise the contributions of regular blood donors who achieved their milestone.

This year, a total of 1,633 donors received the medallion and certificate, and 41 blood mobile organisers received the merit and gold awards for their regular contributions and support to the National Blood Programme from the Minister of Health, Mr Khaw Boon Wan.

This year the Singapore Red Cross celebrates its 60th Anniversary. To commemorate this celebration, Chairman, Mr Tee Tua Ba launched the Singapore Red Cross Medal for Life award for blood donors who have given 200 donations and more.

A half day scientific symposium was also organised for the blood bank community by the Health Sciences Authority Blood Services Group on June 15. Two eminent experts in the fields of biomedical ethics and organ transplantation spoke about the ethics of blood and organ donation.

In Singapore blood donation is 100 per cent voluntary and non-remunerated, there is a need to reiterate the importance of voluntary blood donation and to encourage more people, especially young people to make blood donation an integral part of their lives. With the launch of the Singapore Red Cross Medal for Life award, it is hoped the ‘Together for Humanity’ message of serving humanity and saving lives will be heeded.

Tuvalu

The Tuvalu Red Cross worked in partnership with the Health Department to organise the program for World Blood Donor Day in 2009.

Its aim was to target locals to donate their blood on a voluntary basis by way of a week long campaign which included radio programs, a radio drama and a blood donor drive.

The main objective was to raise awareness to people who don’t understand the importance of donating blood. World Blood Donor Day t-shirts were given out to those who were involved in the drive and to regular blood donors as a thank you.
With our thanks

World Blood Donor Day reports have also been received in languages other than English from the following countries: Morocco, Mali, Egypt, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti and the Netherlands – we sincerely regret insufficient time and resources to enable the translations of these reports but we extend our thanks to all countries for contributing.
Students set to become BloodBuddies

An online education package encouraging students to become blood donors was launched as part of Year of the Blood Donor in Adelaide, Australia by Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mark Butler MP.

At the launch, Woodville High School students were taught about the science of blood and who needs it.

Developed by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, the online package is a first for Australia. It relates directly to the school curriculum and will help students and their teachers in secondary school Years 7 to 10 understand and learn all about blood.

Mr Butler said: “With the need for blood and blood products rising each year, Australia will be relying on more and more donors to keep the nation healthy. BloodBuddies aims to inspire our next generation to become future blood donors by helping them understand why blood is such a vital resource.”

“Funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, BloodBuddies will be used by teachers and students in lessons such as: civics and citizenship, science, maths, English, information and communication technologies and health and physical education.”

The package also includes a virtual tour of a donor centre, the history of blood services in Australia and quashes myths about donating blood.

Students who have used BloodBuddies said that it looks funky, is fun and the video clips are cool.

The educational tool makes the science surrounding blood and genetics easier to understand.

The Chief Executive of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service Jennifer Williams said: “BloodBuddies is a first for the Blood Service, bringing science to life and engaging with young Australians. The package is part of our Year of the Blood Donor 2009 activities and we hope it helps to make students excited about giving blood.

“Maybe in the future we’ll see some of these students working as doctors, nurses or lab staff for the Blood Service. We certainly hope to see them giving blood once they reach 16 years-of-age.”

At a time when the new national science curriculum is in development, interest in BloodBuddies has led to the Curriculum Corporation, a company owned by all Education Ministers, reviewing the education package with a view to providing access to all Australian schools via the national Learning Federation online curriculum content initiative.

BloodBuddies includes lots of pictures and digital stories, but no actors were used. Real staff, donors and patients are featured, giving the package an authentic feel.

The educational tool was short-listed for the eLearning Industry Excellence Awards in the Kindergarten to Year 12 sector.

The Australian Red Cross Blood Service turned 80 in 2009 making it one of Australia’s most iconic organisations.

To celebrate the anniversary, the Blood Service partnered another Australian institution, the Ghan train, which takes three days to travel through the centre of Australia from Adelaide in the south to Darwin in the north.

Blood donors were asked to enter a competition telling the Blood Service why they wanted to get on board and what donating blood meant to them.

Two winners were chosen out of hundreds of entries.

For 80 years, hundreds of thousands of Australians have generously given blood, and this was the Blood Service’s way of saying thanks on behalf of the millions of people whose lives they have saved.

The legendary Ghan shared the celebrations also commemorating 80 years of service in Australia on the 2,979 kilometre journey between Adelaide, Alice Springs and now Darwin. This once vital outback transport link to the ‘red centre’ is now a national treasure and one of Australia’s top tourism attractions.

Red Cross Blood Service Chief Executive, Jennifer Williams, said it was time to recognise the role played by the 570,000 Australians who give blood which is essential for the treatment of cancer, heart, stomach and bowel disease, accident or trauma or to address complications in pregnancy and childbirth.

“One-in-three Australians will need blood, but only one-in-thirty give blood,” Ms Williams said.

“But just as The Ghan travels through the heart of Australia, it is blood donors who really keep the hearts of Australians pumping.

“We all believe that blood will be there if we need it, but right now the health of the population is riding on a very small percentage of people and it’s time to say thanks.”

The Blood Service’s Executive Director Operations Pip Hetzel with National Marketing Director Alyson Pearce
Looking forward to World Blood Donor Day 2010

Australia has now handed the flag to Barcelona for World Blood Donor Day 2010.

Their focus will be on young donors - with the slogan, “New blood for the world.”

This highlights the need for blood is increasing throughout the world. Young people can make an important contribution by donating blood and by recruiting their friends to become donors.

Many activities are planned around the world to focus on the role of young people in ensuring a safe blood supply.

Since 2004, World Blood Donor Day has been jointly sponsored by four core agencies: The World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (IFBDO) and the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT).

Each year, these core agencies identify a host country for a global event for an international media campaign. The event is also designed to support national level blood transfusion services, blood donor organisations and other non-governmental organisations in strengthening and expanding their voluntary blood donor programmes and to reinforce national and local campaigns.

The 2010 global event will take place in Barcelona, Spain. It will be hosted by the Spanish and Catalonian Health Care Authorities, the Spanish and Catalonian donor associations and the Spanish Red Cross.

The scale and volume of World Blood Donor Day events increases every year. Support from government leaders and celebrities, along with media campaigns and community-based activities, results in a celebration of the selfless individuals who donate their blood and plasma to save the lives and improve the health of people whom they will never meet.

Further details about plans for World Blood Donor Day 2010 can be found on www.wbddd.org.

Australia wishes Barcelona good luck!
The Blood Service’s Rebecca McIntyre in the Dome at the WBDD launch
Contacts

World Health Organisation (WHO)
WHO Headquarters
Dr Neelam Dhingra
Coordinator, Blood Transfusion Safety
Department of Essential Health Technologies
World Health Organisation
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland
fax: +41 22 791 4836
email: bloodsafety@who.int
web: www.who.int/bloodsafety

WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
Dr Nabila Metwalli
Regional Advisor, Blood Safety, Laboratory and Imaging
WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
Abdul Razzak Al Sanhouri Street
PO Box 7608, Nasr City
Cairo 11371
Egypt
tel: +202 2 276 5314
email: metwallin@emro.who.int
web: www.emro.who.int/asd/programmeareas-bloodsafety.htm

WHO Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Organisation
Dr Jose Ramiro Cruz-Lopez
Regional Advisor, Blood and Laboratory Services
Pan American Health Organisation
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
USA
fax: +1 202 974 3610
email: cruzjose@paho.org
web: www.paho.org/spanish/ad/ths/ev/blood-spa.htm

WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
Dr Rajesh Bhatia
Regional Advisor, Blood Safety and Clinical Technology
WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
World Health House
Indraprastha Estate, Mahatma Gandhi Marg
New Delhi 110 002
India
fax: +91 11 2337 0197
email: bhatiaraaj@searo.who.int
web: www.searo.who.int/en/section10/section17/section53/section478_1671.htm

WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
Dr Gayatri Ghadiok
Technical Officer, Essential Health Technologies Adviser
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
Manila
Philippines
tel: +632 528 9848
fax: +632 521 1036
email: ghadiok@wpro.who.int

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Peter Carolan
Senior Officer, Health and Care (Blood)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
PO Box 372
1211 Geneva 19
Switzerland
tel: +41 22 730 4409
fax: +41 22 733 0395
email: peter.carolan@ifrc.org
web: www.ifrc.org

International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations (IFBDO/FIODS)
M. Niels Mikkelsen
President of the IFBDO/FIODS
c/o Bloddonorerne i Denmark
Vesterbrogade 191
DK 1800 Frederiksberg C
Denmark
tel: +45 7013 7014
fax: +45 7013 7010
mobile: +45 4011 9556
email: mikkelsen@bloddonor.dk
Jean-Marie Durant
Secretary General
Rue du Château de la Devèze 1
F 34500 Beziers
France
tel: +33 4 6776 5279
fax: +33 4 6776 9533
mobile: +33 6 8751 0834
e-mail: jean-marie.durant@federation-donnesang.asso.fr

Continental delegate for Africa
Mr. Farid Belouafi
délégué africain de la FIODS
Association Marocaine der Donneurs de Sang
c/ Centre National de Transfusion Sanguine
Avenue Alla Fassi, Madinat Alirfan,
BP 180 Rabat
Maroc
tel: +212 3777 3997
tel: +212 3777 5148
mobile: +212 6115 7848
fax: +212 3777 4997
email: f.belouafi@menara.ma ou
f_belouafi@hotmail.com

Continental delegate for Asia
Ramakrishna Rajkumar
Asian delegate of the IFBDO
Association of Voluntary Blood Donors of Tamilnadu
Cathedrak Road 6
600 086 Chennai
Tamilnadu, India
tel: +91 44 2811 3176
tel: +91 98 4106 0853
mobile: +91 98 4182 1994
fax: +91 44 2811 2353
email: blooddraja@gmail.com

Continental delegate for Europe
Prof. Filippo Drago
European delegate of the IFBDO
Via G. Basile 10
95024 Catania
Italia
tel: +39 095 738 4236
mobile: +39 34 02 72 45 73
e-mail: fdrago@tin.it

Continental delegate for North America
Jean-Pierre de Beaumont
Québec
Canada
e-mail: JPdeBeaumont@cegepoutaouais.qc.ca

President of the International Youth Committee:
Ms. Marion Duclos
President of the I.Y.C. (and Secretary of the European Continental Committee)
44 Rue du Capitaine Marchal
F 75020 Paris,
France
tel: (+33)6.7043.8915
e-mail: duclosmarion@gmail.com

International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT)
Judith Chapman
Executive Director
Secretary General
ISBT Central Office
Jan van Goyenkade 11
1075 HP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
fax: +31 20 673 7306
e-mail: isbt@eurocongres.com
web: www.isbt-web.org

Continental delegate for South America
Leticia Cortes Ferreira
Administrative Director, Associac_o
Brasileira de Voluntarios do Sangue
Rua Aligusta, 41 – Vila Nova Mazzei
S-o Paulo/SP
Brazil
tel: +55 11 6203 3066
mobile: +55 11 1811 250371
e-mail: leticiaverreir@ig.com.br
web: www.voluntariosdosangue.org.br

Contact details of voluntary blood donor organisations are available at www.fiods.org