



Governance Reforms



Australian Red Cross Society
February 2025

On 14 February 2025, the National Council of Australian Red Cross Society approved comprehensive changes that ensure our new governance structure:

- ✓ Is contemporary and fit for purpose.
- ✓ Aligns with the requirements of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- ✓ Will support Australian Red Cross in achieving its vision and purpose for another 110 years.

These governance reforms are a significant development for Australian Red Cross, as it will help our National Council, Board, and Division Councils operate in a more efficient and effective way, so they can better support all Australian Red Cross People in performing our vital role as part of the world's largest humanitarian network.

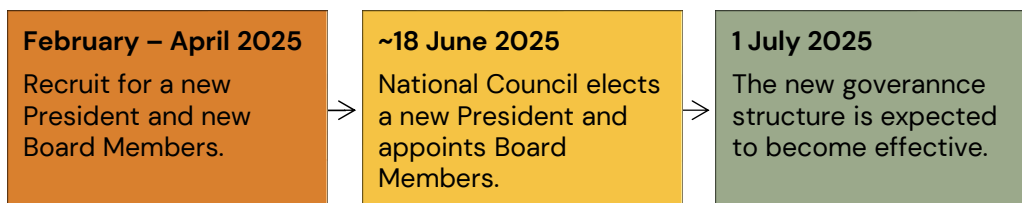
The changes follow a comprehensive review process over the last four years, which included consultation with Governance Members of Australian Red Cross, Divisional Advisory Boards, the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, the Joint Statutes Commission of the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (**IFRC**) and International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**), other National Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, and other Australian member-based organisations.

Our new governance structure is anticipated to be effective from 1 July 2025 (subject to approval by Australia's Governor-General).

For more information on the Governance Reforms, please visit redcross.org.au/governance-reforms/

Next key milestones

Work is now underway to prepare for our new governance structure, which is anticipated to be effective from 1 July 2025, subject to approval from Australia's Governor General.



Summary of the most significant changes



National Council

- ✓ **Composition:** National Council includes:
 - The President.
 - The Chair, Deputy Chair, and Youth Member of each Division.
 - Up to Six Special Councillors (eminent Members who have made significant contributions to Australian Red Cross).
- ✓ **Role:** National Council's role as the peak representative body for Members has been strengthened through:
 - Representation in the open and competitive Board Member and Board Chair appointment processes; and
 - A minimum of two National Council meetings per year.
 - Board Members no longer being on National Council to reduce any perceived conflict of interest.



Board

- ✓ **Size:** Board made up of 8-10 Board Members (reduced from 16 Board Members).
- ✓ **Member Connection:** There are four roles reserved for anyone who has been a Member for at least 12 months, who meets the skills and experience requirements. This is to ensure the Board continues to have a strong appreciation and understanding of Members.
- ✓ **Appointments:** National Council appoints all Board Members, except the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Chair, following an open, advertised and competitive recruitment process to ensure the Board has the right skills and experience.



Divisions

- ✓ **Name:** Each 'Divisional Advisory Board' will be known as a 'Division Council' which better reflects the role and will assist in role clarity for new candidates and external parties.
- ✓ **Role:** The role of Division Councils has been reinforced to ensure a clear and consistent understanding. It includes supporting Members and Volunteers in that Division with promotion and recruitment, communication and feedback, governance of local activities and advice on issues of significance to the Division.

Summary of the most significant changes



President and Board Chair

The current role of President will be split into two.

- ✓ The **President** who is elected by National Council is a pivotal ambassador for Australian Red Cross, to be held by a person of eminence within the Australian community. Their role will include:
 - Public speaking engagements and other ceremonial duties.
 - Chairing the National Council.
 - Acting as our ambassador and relationship builder.
 - ✓ The **Board Chair** who is elected by the Board (from amongst the Board Members) will lead the Board and undertake normal functions of a Board chair.
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Tenure

To ensure a consistent approach to tenure, while balancing the importance of stability and renewal:

- ✓ Role lengths for all governance roles will now be a maximum of three terms of up to three years each.
 - ✓ A minimum retirement period of three years must occur before any further service in that role.
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Members & Volunteers

- ✓ **Membership** is belonging and a right to participate in governance at Australian Red Cross.
 - ✓ **Volunteering** is the activity, which occurs across a broad range of programs and services including fundraising, community service, patient transport and emergency services (and is often done by Members).
 - ✓ Volunteers are encouraged to become a Member, so that they have the right (but not the obligation) to participate in the governance of Australian Red Cross.
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Membership Renewals

- ✓ Membership renewals will now occur at the same time each year for all Members to make renewal easier and more efficient.
- ✓ Compulsory membership fees removed to ensure membership is open to all (without discrimination), which is consistent with our Fundamental Principle of Impartiality.
- ✓ Members are welcome to make a donation instead to ensure their valued financial contribution is still contributing to the work of Australian Red Cross. This donation will also be tax deductible.

For further information please visit
redcross.org.au/governance-reforms/