




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 8 November 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Mackay, Red Cross

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.48 pm): With Remembrance Day on Friday, I would like to reflect on the history of the Mackay Red Cross branch. It has been over 100 years since the Red Cross was formed in Mackay. Humanitarianism lies at the very heart of the organisation and its people. The Red Cross has always been out there to serve the people and this is reflected in its slogan 'People helping people'. The committee of the Mackay branch of the Red Cross was the first to be established in Queensland, just hours before the Brisbane branch. On 12 August, 1914 in Mackay a town meeting was called to get the ball rolling. Mrs Zillman was the first president.

At first, Mackay Red Cross volunteers would send hospital packages to military hospitals all over the world to help men fighting in the First World War. In April 1919, after the war ended, the Mackay branch closed, but formed again at the beginning of the Second World War and it has been serving Mackay ever since. Over this time, many and varied services have been delivered by the Red Cross in Mackay. Countless people's lives have been made a little bit better, thanks to the service and generosity of Red Cross staff and volunteers—people like Florence Flower, who during the First World War reportedly wore out shoes walking from house to house collecting money to purchase a Red Cross field ambulance that was later sent to Egypt; or Vietnam veteran Rod Hagan, who recalls watching Neil Armstrong land on the moon while making one of his 114 blood donations; or Jessica Hazelwood, who worked in a hospital in hostile and dangerous parts of Afghanistan to help children and civilians who had been injured from conflict. These are just a few examples of the countless stories of people from Mackay who so generously gave their time and energy and resources to help others. We are so fortunate that this culture of giving thrives in our community.

Today, the many varied activities of Red Cross include international tracing and refugee services, youth and education services, first aid, health and safety services, disaster emergency services, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, community care programs and aged-care programs as well as providing trauma teddies. It is a unique and admirable quality of the Mackay Red Cross that the organisation continues to drive humanitarian services in our community as well as communities around Australia. Thank you to all of the Red Cross staff and volunteers in Mackay and around Queensland for all the work that you have done for people in our local communities. You have made a truly great difference to the lives of other people and for your selfless service you should be duly proud.