

**Mr Ian Holland
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600**

15 June 2005

Dear Mr Holland,

On behalf of Australian Red Cross I am pleased to forward a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health. ARC appreciates this opportunity, and the extension of time permitted.

The submission has been prepared with my support by the Tasmanian Division of ARC, which has pioneered an innovative and, we believe, ground-breaking community based mental health support programme. The programme, MATES (Mentally Ill People and their Equal Supporters), has a strong emphasis on volunteer support and involvement which makes it cost effective and a valuable model for building social capital.

We would encourage the Committee to investigate this Australian Red Cross initiative as a potential model for action across Australia, and would be pleased to provide further information and evidence.

Should the Committee wish to hear further evidence from ARC concerning our work, the Society would be represented by myself as Chief Executive Officer, Ian Burke (Executive Director Tasmanian Division) and Ann Hughes (MATES Programme Manager).

The first suggested point of contact is Mr Ian Burke, who can be contacted in Tasmania on phone (03) 6235 6077, by fax on (03) 6231 1250 or email at iburke@redcross.org.au

On behalf of Australian Red Cross I commend the submission to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

**Robert Tickner
Chief Executive Officer**