

## FOREWORD

Australian Red Cross is proud to be involved in this special issue of the *Melbourne Journal of International Law* marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Australian Red Cross Chair of International Humanitarian Law at The University of Melbourne.

The establishment of the Chair ten years ago created a unique and supportive relationship between The University of Melbourne and Australian Red Cross. United in our shared vision of promoting respect for international humanitarian law, the ongoing work of the Chair and the significant achievements of the Foundation Chair and incumbent, Professor Tim McCormack, have provoked a richer understanding of humanitarian law within groups directly and indirectly involved in armed conflict.

The past decade has seen Australians involved in conflicts challenging the very contours of international law. The establishment at The University of Melbourne of the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law in cooperation with the Australian Defence Force Legal Service, reflects a unique collaborative relationship between a university and national defence force. The Centre's promotion of the rule of law has resulted in the greater understanding, and respect for, the laws of conflict within the Australian Defence Force and militaries in the Asia Pacific Region. The Centre acts as a crucial link between militaries, academics and Australian Red Cross. It promotes cooperation between the development and practice of international humanitarian law, and Red Cross' provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of war.

The Chair also significantly promotes and strengthens the work of Australian Red Cross within the Australian government and community generally. This invaluable collaboration over the last decade has greatly contributed towards Australia's support for two major international treaties reinforcing the continued relevance of international humanitarian law; the *Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court* and the *Ottawa Treaty* prohibiting anti-personnel landmines.

The Chair, and The University of Melbourne's continuing commitment to international humanitarian law is a source of inspiration to a new generation of Australian youth as they enter their professional lives equipped with a greater awareness of international humanitarian law. This commitment is also reflected in the establishment of the *Melbourne Journal of International Law*, which provides an invaluable forum for the scholarship and debate of current international law issues facing the world today. Students, academics and the wider community are greatly enriched by such forums, and the Australian Red Cross congratulates the Chair and the University for their valuable and varied contributions to the field of international humanitarian law over the last decade.

I look forward to Australian Red Cross, the Chair and The University of Melbourne continuing to work together to promote respect for human dignity and international humanitarian law in times of conflict.

ROBERT TICKNER  
CEO, Australian Red Cross  
October 2007