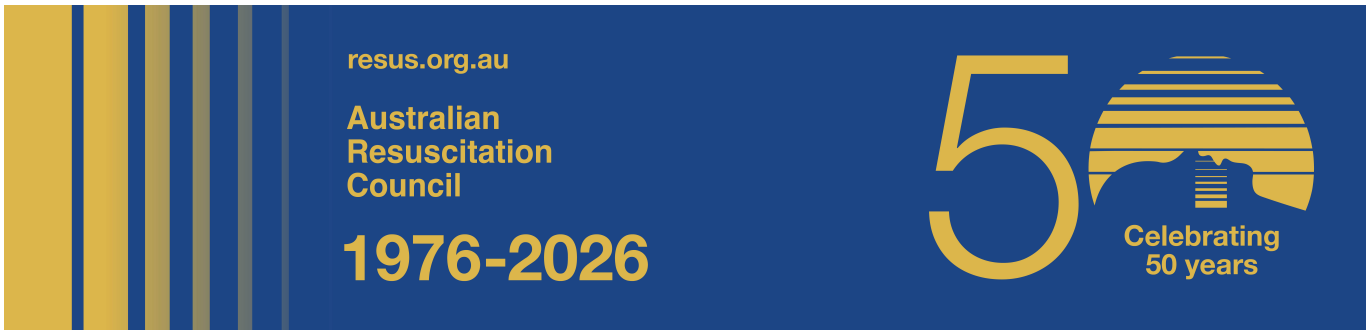
Australian Resuscitation Council

Celebrating 50 Years



1976, Members at the launch of the Australian Resuscitation Council

Our History

The Australian Resuscitation Council was established to bring consistency, collaboration and scientific rigour to the teaching and practice of resuscitation in Australia. Since its formal launch in

1976, the Australian Resuscitation Council has helped shape national guidance for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), defibrillation, first aid and emergency care.

The need for national consistency

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, public seminars conducted by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons highlighted a growing need for uniformity in resuscitation teaching and techniques. Ambulance services, community organisations, medical groups and educators recognised that consistent messages were essential if more people were to act effectively in an emergency.

Formation of the Australian Resuscitation Council

In November 1974, the Faculty of Anaesthetists convened a meeting of representatives from organisations involved in teaching cardiopulmonary resuscitation. This meeting is widely regarded as the beginning of what would become the Australian Resuscitation Council. The aim was to coordinate and share information about resuscitation equipment, techniques and education.

The Australian Resuscitation Council was formally launched on 7 February 1976 as a voluntary coordinating body. Foundation members included organisations such as the Red Cross, Heart Foundation, Defence Medical Services, ambulance services, lifesaving groups and nursing organisations, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of resuscitation practice from the very beginning.

Growing role and national influence

From its early focus on basic life support and CPR, the Australian Resuscitation Council's work expanded across the full spectrum of resuscitation and first aid. Its role has included fostering research, reviewing evidence, supporting education and promoting clear, simple and consistent terminology for use by healthcare professionals, first aid providers, workplaces and the wider community.

Collaboration across Australia, New Zealand and the world

The Australian Resuscitation Council works closely with the New Zealand Resuscitation Council through the Australian and New Zealand Committee on Resuscitation (ANZCOR). Through this collaboration, resuscitation guidelines are developed for Australia and New Zealand using the best available scientific evidence and international consensus processes.

The Australian Resuscitation Council has also contributed to international resuscitation science through involvement with the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR), helping

ensure that Australian and New Zealand guidance reflects global evidence while remaining relevant to local practice.

Continuing the mission

Today, the Australian Resuscitation Council continues to promote high-quality resuscitation practice, education and guideline development. Its work supports a shared goal: improving outcomes from sudden illness and injury by helping people recognise emergencies, respond with confidence and provide effective care until professional help arrives.