



**In Memoriam
Major General Paul Cullen AC, CBE, DSO*, ED
1909 - 2007**

It is with great sadness that Austcare farewells our founder and inaugural President, Major General Paul Cullen, who passed away peacefully on the morning of 19 September, aged 98.

Austcare was founded in 1967 and Major General Cullen's peers immediately invited him to be the new organisation's President. He spent the next 23 years leading the Australian-based aid organisation and championing the cause of the world's refugees.

Under his guidance Austcare became a fundraising power house and matured from simply raising money for other member organisations to operating programs directly with displaced communities.

Paul Cullen's lifetime commitment to refugees was widely recognised, and in 1981 he received the highest accolade of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) when he was awarded the coveted Nansen Medal. Funding from that prestigious award allowed him to form the Refugee Council of Australia, of which he was also the founding President. In 1983 Paul Cullen was awarded the RSL ANZAC Peace Prize for Austcare's work on behalf of the world's refugees. In recognition of his efforts, Austcare appointed him as President Emeritus in 1990 when he officially stood down from his leadership role.

Austcare's current CEO, Major General Michael Smith AO (Rtd), describes Paul Cullen as: "A true humanitarian warrior. An incredible Australian who left a lasting impact on everything he did and everyone he met. His true legacy is in the hearts of those he touched, and in the many organisations he created or in which he served. He has left the world a better place."

As a distinguished soldier, financier and grazier, Paul Cullen's community spirit and endeavours went beyond Austcare and the Refugee Council. He also served as president or chairman of a number of organisations including the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, the Royal Blind Society, the United Nations Association of Australia, and the Australian Overseas Disaster Response Organisation.

Long time campaigner and Austcare Ambassador for Landmines, John Rodsted, summed up the feelings of many when he said: "It's never possible to put a good light on death, but to say Paul lived an incredible life and, more importantly, he made a real difference. There are so many who owe their very existence to him and his life was truly lived. It was an honour and privilege to know him."

Austcare's Vice-President Miles Hedge, who knew Paul Cullen for many years, added that "Paul never looked backwards, only forwards. He never saw problems, only opportunities, and always inspired us to do our best."

In honour of Paul Cullen's lifetime of giving to the community Austcare will continue to bestow the "Paul Cullen Humanitarian Awards" on the most worthy recipients, and hopes to establish a permanent trust bearing his name.

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