



RAWCS Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Policy

JUNE 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 *Who we are*

1.1.1 Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd (RAWCS) is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). We back doing good by supporting and facilitating a broad range of humanitarian and development projects, both in Australia and in developing countries. RAWCS administers three Tax Deductible funds:

1. **Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund (RAOAF):** This fund supports efforts by Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts and other partners to deliver humanitarian assistance in developing countries. RAOAF focuses on both sustained development and immediate disaster response, working collaboratively with communities to deliver impactful, sustainable projects to meet identified needs.
2. **Rotary Australia Benevolent Society (RABS):** RABS supports Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts and other partners to respond to specific community challenges within Australia. It offers an avenue for wider community involvement through tax-deductible donations. The Rotary Australia Compassionate Grants Projects within RABS uses matching funds from donations, such as those provided by Dick Smith's Trust, to assist Australians facing hardship.
3. **Rotary Australia Relief Fund (RARF):** This fund is dedicated to responding to national appeals and efficiently disbursing funds to appropriate aid projects. RARF's focus is on mobilising rapid support during national crises, such as natural disasters, providing a structured channel for public generosity to be transformed into effective aid. This fund acts as a hub for contributions from both Rotary and non-Rotary sources, ensuring swift and effective aid delivery to disaster-affected areas.

1.2 *Purpose*

1.2.1 RAWCS recognises the importance of environmental sustainability and climate change. We believe that protecting and conserving natural resources and maintaining ecosystems is fundamental to sustainable development and integral to social and economic prosperity. This policy will better enable us to apply a sustainability lens to our activities and operations.

1.2.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we:

- reduce the environmental impact of our domestic and international activities and adapt our operations, including support to partners, to mitigate against and adapt to climate change;
- promote sustainable management and conservation of the environment in all its programs and activities through sound environmental management practices;
- ensure communities we work with are supported, where relevant, to identify and respond to, the impacts of climate change in order to build resilience and foster sustainable development outcomes.

1.3 *Scope and Governance*

1.3.1 This policy applies to RAWCS and all of its administered funds and subsidiaries – referred inclusively within this policy as RAWCS.

1.3.2 This policy applies to all RAWCS staff, volunteers, Board members, committee members, suppliers and contractors. Within this policy all of these are represented by the term: “**our people**”. It also extends to all our partners.

1.4 Policy References

1.4.1 This policy was developed with references to the following documents:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- ACFID Code of Conduct
- RAWCS Code of Conduct

1.5 Definitions

Term	Definition
Sustainability	Encompasses sustainability of the environment, ecology, people and economy.
Environmental Stewardship	The responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being.
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	The universal commitment to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure prosperity for all. Adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, the Agenda is made up of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – a roadmap for global development efforts to 2030.

2. Principles

2.1 Guiding Principles

- 2.1.1 We seek to take a ‘do no harm’ approach to our activities and to make positive contributions to people and the environment wherever we work.
- 2.1.2 **Stewardship:** We demonstrate environmental stewardship by recognising the impact that our work has on the environment and committing to actions and ways of working that protect and minimise the negative ecological and climate impact of our work.
- 2.1.3 **Human rights-based approach:** We acknowledge that promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot be realised without basic rights to safe water, air and land.
- 2.1.4 **Sustainability:** We recognise the cross-cutting nature of environmental sustainability and climate change with other matters affecting vulnerable and marginalised populations in the advancement of sustainable development, and we approach our response to environment in a manner consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- 2.1.5 **Equity:** We ensure our work does not create or contribute to a situation where one group of people need to carry a greater environmental burden as a result of our actions.
- 2.1.6 **Continuous Improvement:** Our activities will be based on the principle of continuous improvement and where environmental impacts cannot be avoided, we will mitigate them.

3. Policy Commitments

- 3.1 We recognise the critical importance of protecting the environment to ensure a sustainable future for all. Our commitments to environmental stewardship and sustainability outlined below, reflect our dedication to ethical practices, community service, and global responsibility.
- 3.1.1 **Sustainable Practices:** We commit to integrating sustainable practices into all our projects and operations. We aim to reduce environmental impact by using resources efficiently, reducing waste, and adopting green technologies.
- 3.1.2 **Education and Awareness:** We will enhance awareness and understanding of environmental issues among our members and the communities we serve. We will promote active participation in sustainability initiatives through educational programs and advocacy.
- 3.1.3 **Community Engagement:** We will collaborate with local communities, governments, and other organisations to develop and support projects that promote environmental conservation and sustainable development.
- 3.1.4 **Conservation Efforts:** We will support and initiate projects that conserve natural resources, preserve biodiversity, and restore natural habitats and ecosystems.
- 3.1.5 **Climate Action:** We will actively participate in efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Our community-based projects will focus on promoting renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions, and other eco-friendly practices.
- 3.1.6 **Responsible Partnering:** We will choose partners and suppliers who demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. We will ensure that all our collaborations align with our environmental goals.
- 3.1.7 **Monitoring and Reporting:** We will regularly monitor, evaluate, and report on the environmental impact of our projects and operations. Our goal is continuous improvement in our sustainability performance.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
National Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations. Approving this policy and holding the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) accountable to how effectively this policy is implemented.
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for ensuring this Policy is upheld and will inform the Board of any concerns relating to environmental sustainability that may present risk to RAWCS and its reputation, operations or other activities.
All our people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and following this policy. Ensuring that your actions are in line with this policy, and that your work reflects the Guiding Principles and Policy Commitments above Not encouraging others (directly or indirectly) to breach this policy Reporting any breach to your manager/supervisor.

5. Policy Distribution

- 5.1 This policy will be available on our website and shared with our people. We will ensure that our people are informed of and expected to follow (as the context requires) this Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Policy and to report any environmental concerns to management. Management will use reasonable endeavours to consider any reported concerns and take appropriate action as it sees fit.

6. Review

- 6.1. We are committed to continuous improvement to our policy, procedures and practices. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the CEO and approved by the National Board of Directors to ensure it is working in practice and updated as required.
- 6.2 Feedback on this and other policies is openly encouraged from our people, partners, stakeholders and the communities we work with. Feedback, as well as emerging good practice and collaborative lessons learnt across the development sector, will be used to strengthen this and related policies and procedures.

7. More information

- 7.1. If you have a query about this policy or need more information, you can contact us via:
- email: info@rawcs.org.au
 - phone: +61 2 8833 8306
 - post: Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd
25/1 Maitland Place
Maitland Place
Norwest NSW 2153
Australia

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