



RAWCS Gender Equity 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.

1.1 *Purpose*

1.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to articulate our commitment to the principles of gender equality and female empowerment and our expectation that our partners will adhere to these principles in all stages of the project cycle.

1.1.2 Our Gender Equality Policy is grounded in the 4 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), Gender Equality: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG #5 has 9 targets:

- to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;
- to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;
- to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
- to recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work;
- to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making;
- to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;
- to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, property ownership and financial services;
- to promote empowerment of women through technology; and
- to adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

1.2 Scope and Governance

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to RAWCS and all of its administered funds and subsidiaries – referred inclusively within this policy as RAWCS.
- 1.2.2 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**”.
- 1.2.3 The policy also extends to our partners and associated implementing organisations. It is intended to apply to all RAWCS activities.

1.3 Policy References

- 1.3.1 This policy was developed with references to the following documents:
- *The Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
 - [Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender](#)
 - Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1954)
 - Convention to the Consent of Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage, and Registration of Marriages (1964)
 - Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974)
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
 - Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)
 - Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) (2014)
 - RAWCS Code of Conduct
 - RAWCS Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
 - RAWCS Commitment to Human Rights, Humanitarian Principles and Racial Justice Statement
 - RAWCS Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
 - RAWCS Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
 - RAWCS Disability Inclusion Policy
 - RAWCS Communication and Transparency Policy

1.4 Definitions

Term	Definition
Gender	The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society assigns to masculinity or femininity.
Gender Equity	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women states that gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. These rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether persons are born male or female. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but concerns and fully engages men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for and indicator of sustainable people-centred development.

Female Empowerment	Female empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to exercise their rights, act freely and fulfil their potential as full and equal members of their society.
Gender integration	Gender integration involves identifying and addressing gender inequalities at all stages of the project cycle, including project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Our commitment to this policy is guided by the following principles:
- all people have the right to equality and to live a life free from discrimination on the basis of their gender and/or gender identity;
 - addressing gender inequality barriers is critical to creating sustainable development in communities;
 - development activities should benefit women and men equally;
 - there can be no real solution to the eradication of poverty through sustainable development without an understanding and promotion of human rights;
 - gender rights are human rights – hence, the promotion of gender justice is an essential element in the promotion of human rights; and
 - empowering women empowers communities and is of central importance in eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

3. Application of the policy

- 3.1 **Operations:** As part of our commitment to having gender equitable operations, we will:
- ensure our promotional material represents girls and women as active participants or leaders, using inclusive language, and promoting empowering messages and images;
 - ensure that individuals have no barriers to participation on the basis of gender in our programs, training, and other opportunities;
 - encourage gender-balanced representation on the Board of Directors and on all committees by working towards no more than 60% of the elected positions on the Board of Directors and two-thirds of elected/appointed positions on Committees being from one gender; and
 - handle any instance of discriminatory behaviour on the basis of gender according to our policies for complaints and dispute resolution.
- 3.2 **Programming:** As part of our commitment to gender equitable programming, we will:
- actively involve girls and women in the process of project design and throughout the delivery of the project;
 - ensure that the achievement of equitable opportunities is a key consideration when developing, updating, or delivering programs and policies;
 - implement processes to protect girls and women from unintended harm;
 - provide opportunities for leadership development for girls and women;
 - collect gender-based data to monitor and evaluate the participation of girls and women; and
 - ensure no one is disadvantaged nor denied access to programs/projects on the basis of gender.

3.3 **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning:** We will:

- establish monitoring mechanisms to track the effectiveness of gender equity measures;
- conduct regular evaluations to assess progress in implementing gender equity initiatives;
- collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data to inform decision-making and measure impact; and
- ensure stakeholder input to gather insights regarding our gender equity efforts.

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. • Informing the Board of any concerns relating to gender equity and giving progress reports.
National Manager Projects & Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all project participants are aware of, and comply with this policy. • Fostering a culture of integrity by actively promoting and supporting whistleblowing channels to report unethical behaviour or policy violations.
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.

5.2 We will ensure that all our people are made aware that they are required to follow this policy.

6. Review

6.1 We will ensure that all our people are notified of and made aware that they are required to follow this policy.

6.2 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 to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

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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