RAWCS Policy Framework

Table of Contents

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 – The RAWCS Policy Framework

1.2.1   Policies at RAWCS reflect current practice, community expectations, legal and regulatory requirements that assist in ensuring our accountability and are consistent with our values.

1.2.2   This policy framework sets out the principles, scope and lifecycle of all our policies, procedures and guidelines. It is intended to set a broad framework for development of policy documents and related governance documents within RAWCS and to articulate principles for consistency in the management of these throughout their lifecycle.

1.3   Scope and Governance

1.3.1   This policy framework applies to all policy and processes developed for and on behalf of RAWCS and all of its administered funds and subsidiaries – referred inclusively within this policy as RAWCS.

1.3.2   It applies to all RAWCS staff, volunteers, Board members, committee members. Within this policy3framework all of these are represented by the term: "**our people**".

1.4   Policy References

1.4.1   Our policies exist within a broader regulatory framework and must be consistent with any requirements or restrictions imposed by higher-order instruments which include the following:

- **International Conventions and Treaties**: At an international level, we must ensure our policies comply with international agreements and commitments to human rights and sustainable development that Australia is a signatory to, such as supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Commonwealth Legislation and Regulations**: At the national level, RAWCS is governed by comprehensive Australian legislation, which includes the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* which mandates compliance with financial reporting, governance, and operational standards.

- **State and Territory Legislation and Regulations:** RAWCS needs to comply with state-specific laws affecting its operations, such as those related to fundraising, volunteering, child protection and working with children.

- **RAWCS Constitution**: All our policies must be developed in alignment with our Constitution to ensure that they reflect and support the core purpose, principles and governance framework of RAWCS.

- **ACFID Code of Conduct:** This code mandates requirements for transparency, accountability, and ethical practices in international development. By following this code, we ensure we maintain high standards of quality in practices and ethical conduct across all organisational activities.

1.5   Definitions

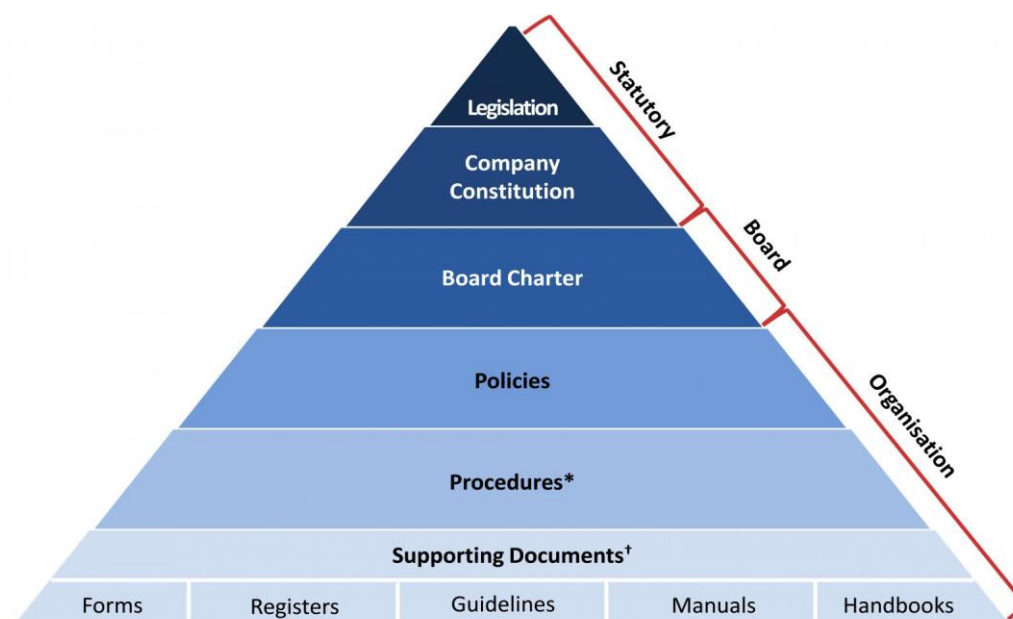| Term	Definition
Laws	Include legislation made by or under the authority of a State or Federal Parliament, such as Acts, Regulations and other Statutory Instruments.
Constitution	A governing document which is a legal requirement for not-for-profit organisations. It contains the rules of the organisation including: basic structure and processes; aims or purposes; how the office-bearers and other members of the governing body are elected or appointed; how general meetings of members and meetings of the governing body are convened and conducted; and how the organisation is, in broad terms, to be governed.
Board Charter	A document that clearly defines the respective roles, responsibilities and authorities of the board of directors (both individually and collectively) and management in setting the direction, the management and the control of the organisation.
Policy Framework	The mandated system for the development, approval, communication, implementation, and review of policy documents.
Policy	A strategic statement of the commitments, principles, intent and values governing decision-making and operations.
Procedure	Description (involving linked action steps) of how to do something, to ensure consistency of practice and compliance with policies.
Supporting Documents	Guidelines, protocols, operating manuals, toolkits, checklists, standard operating procedures, or forms.

2. Policy Framework

2.1 Guiding Principles

2.1.1 Policies shall only be created only where there is a clear and justifiable need with long-term application to the RAWCS.

2.1.2 All policies must align with our constitution, comply with legal and regulatory requirements, uphold community expectations, and be consistent with other existing policies.

2.1.3 Once approved, policies will be universally binding across RAWCS (unless the policy relates to a particular group of RAWCS people.

2.1.4 Policies will clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability and transparency.

2.1.5 Each policy must support our commitments to human rights, diversity, equity and inclusivity.

2.2 Key elements of the Policy Framework

2.2.1 The key elements of this policy framework are as follows:
- **Policy hierarchy:** sets out the documentation that defines and governs our activities.
- **Policy development process**: sets out the requirements for creating policies.
- **Roles and responsibilities**: information about who is involved in the process of developing policies and what they do, as well as who has the authority to approve policies.

2.3 Policy Hierarchy

2.3.1 The policy hierarchy below shows documents included in the RAWCS Policy Framework in order of precedence. A document lower in the hierarchy must be consistent with a document higher in the hierarchy. Where it is not consistent, the higher document overrules the lower document to the extent of the inconsistency.

Legislation

Company Constitution

Board Charter

Policies

Procedures*

Supporting Documents†

| Forms | Registers | Guidelines | Manuals | Handbooks |

Statutory / Board / Organisation

* Includes Standard Operating Procedures
† Will vary depending on the organisation

2.4   Policy Development and Review Process

2.4.1   **Triggers for New Policy or Policy Review:** The following factors can trigger a policy review or a new policy development:

- the review date of the policy;
- new or changed activities;
- policy gaps which may be identified through consultation with stakeholders;
- changes to the structure of the organisation;
- external changes relevant to the core business activities; and
- review of the organisation's strategic direction.

2.4.2   The diagram below illustrates the stages for policy development and review:

2.4.3   Regular policy review and revision are an important part of the policy framework. We will establish a regular schedule for reviewing our policies and procedures.

2.5   Terminology

2.5.1   Writing style is important to ensure that the policy is easily understood:
- **Keep it simple**: Policies should be written in plain language – not legalese.
- **Minimise use of jargon:** If unavoidable include the term in the definition section.
- **Unavoidable acronyms**: If the use of acronyms is unavoidable, first spell out the words fully and then put the acronym in a bracket e.g. Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- **Keep it general**: Policies should be written broadly but with enough clarity to apply to varying circumstances and not include data that may easily become outdated. Detailed guidance can be provided in supporting documents.
- **Make it relevant**: The policy should clearly tell the audience why it exists, who it affects, major conditions and restrictions, when and under what circumstances it applies, and how it should be executed.
- **Ensure the policy can be enforced:** A policy written without intention to enforce it, or written committing to obligations without ensuring proper resources, should not be written.
- **Clearly state who does what:** Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of groups and individuals. Ensure the policy states who is authorised to make certain decisions and who is responsible for carrying out certain duties.

2.5.2   Templates have been developed for the policy document to ensure all policies are presented consistently.

2.6   Roles and Responsibilities

2.6.1   The RAWCS Board of Directors (hereafter referred to as the Board) has the primary role to provide effective governance over the affairs including strategic direction, establishing goals for management and monitoring the achievement of those goals to ensure the interests of shareholders are protected, whilst having regard for the interests of all stakeholders.

2.6.2   The policy document shall clearly set out the roles and responsibilities. This includes:
- a clear authority for the formulation of policy (i.e., delegations of authority);
- guidance concerning how the policy is formulated, approved and disseminated;
- clear articulation of roles and responsibilities for the development of the policy, content management, review of the policy and management of the policy.

2.7   Policy Approval

2.7.1   Any new policy or material change to an existing policy requires the approval of the Board.

2.7.2   The CEO may approve minor changes and editorial updates that do not significantly change the meaning or effect of the policy document.

2.8   Policy Distribution

2.8.1   Once a policy document has been approved, the next stage is to distribute the policy to all impacted people within RAWCS and key stakeholders.

2.8.2   Policies may be published on the RAWCS website with the approval of the CEO.

2.9   Training

2.9.1   To ensure our people are compliant with the new or revised policy and effectively carry out the instructions indicated in the policy the CEO shall ensure delivery of any necessary training required.

2.9.2   Beyond training, a short assessment may (where necessary) be prepared to ensure that the participants fully understand the policy.

2.10   Regular Policy Reviews

2.10.1   Policies shall be reviewed on a regular basis at least every three years.

2.10.2   In preparation for review, the CEO will consult the key stakeholders on their views as to whether the policy is effective in its current form or whether it and/or its supporting standards or procedures need to be changed.

2.10.3   Informed by that consultation, the CEO will determine which of the following review outcomes applies:

- **No change:** If a policy document does not need changes, the CEO must advise the Board so this outcome and ensure the decision is recorded.
- **Minor changes:** Changes, other than an administrative change that do not significantly change the meaning or effect of the policy document may be approved by the CEO.
- **Full revision of the policy document:** If full revision of the content is required, the policy development cycle will commence.
- **Retire the policy:** A policy document may be retired if it is no longer needed, for example, because of legislative, strategic or compliance changes. To retire a document, the CEO must seek approval from the Board.

2.10.4   The frequency of review for the policy shall be indicated on the policy document. During policy review, all procedures associated with the policy shall also be reviewed to ensure that consistency is retained.

2.10.5   The review shall follow the same process as writing a new policy, only difference being the changes will only impact parts of the document and not the whole document.

2.10.6   The CEO shall provide a report to the Board with a summary of all policies that are being tabled for review at their respective scheduled meetings and status of any policies that have gone past their review dates.

3. Policy Compliance

3.1   To ensure policy compliance, we shall make certain that:
- policies (including procedures and tools) are created for all activities that RAWCS wants to effectively manage;
- our impacted people are trained in the policies, its requirements and the risks involved;
- sufficient resources are allocated to implement and test the effectiveness of policies;
- a central document management system is maintained for all governance documents which is easily accessible; and
- all policies are reviewed and signed off by the CEO before they are presented for approval to the Board.

3.2   Where there is a conflict between a policy or procedure issued by RAWCS and new legislative requirements, the legislative requirements will prevail.

3.3   All non-compliance of the policy requirements shall be reported to the CEO and the process for escalation followed in the issues and incident management policy and breach management policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
National Board of Directors (i.e, the Board)	• Ultimate accountability for our organisational policies including policy approval (new policy, major amendments to and/or rescission of policy). • Approving this policy framework and holding the CEO accountable to how effectively it is implemented.
CEO	• Develops or oversees the development of policy. • Consults with key stakeholders and obtains advice from legal services as required. • Establish timetable of policy reviews for board approval. • Conduct or oversee policy reviews. • Ensures new policy and major amendments to policy or rescissions of existing policy are promulgated.
All our people	• Understanding and following this policy framework.

Policy Administration Information

Name	RAWCS Policy Framework
Policy Category	Board Policy
Version Number	Version 1
Date of Compliance Sign Off	
Approval Date	16th June 2024
Details of Approval Authority	National Board of Directors
Policy Owner	Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd. (RAWCS)
Issuing Department	
Frequency of Review	Every Three Years
Next Review Date	16th June 2027

Document Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description
1.0			