



RAWCS Disability Inclusion Policy

JUNE 2024

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION 3

2. PRINCIPLES 5

3. POLICY COMMITMENTS 5

4. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY 6

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 7

6. POLICY DISTRIBUTION 7

7. REVIEW 7

8. MORE INFORMATION 7

DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY 8

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 This policy outlines our commitment to disability inclusion across all our activities and within our own organisation. It provides a clear vision and consistent messages regarding our approach to disability in our humanitarian and development programs.

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.

1.3 Policy References

This policy supports RAWCS's compliance with the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Fair Work Act 2009
- ACFID Code of Conduct
- RAWCS Code of Conduct
- RAWCS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- RAWCS Gender Equity Policy
- RAWCS Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
- RAWCS Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure
- RAWCS Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- RAWCS Recruitment Policy and Guidelines

1.4 Definitions

Term	Definition
Ableism	The systemic exclusion and oppression of people with disability by people without disability.
Disability	Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Disability Inclusive Development	The aim of achieving equality of human rights for people with a disability as well as full participation in, and access to, all aspects of society.
Organisations of People with Disabilities	Organisations managed by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.
Barriers	Barriers are physical/environmental, institutional, attitudinal, communication or economic obstacles to full inclusion in society.
Disability-specific initiatives	Initiatives targeted to meet specific needs of people with a disability.
Disability-inclusive initiatives	Seeking to mainstream disability into development programs, to include a disability perspective so that all aid interventions and programs are made accessible to people with disabilities.
Reasonable Accommodation	Any form of assistance or adjustment that is necessary, possible and reasonable to reduce or eliminate barriers for people with disability to ensure they enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis to others.
Carer/Caregiver	A carer or caregiver is commonly defined as a person (a family member or paid helper) who regularly looks after a child, a sick person, an older person, or a person with a disability. Rights based actors tend to prefer the term 'support', rather than 'care', when speaking of adults with disabilities (for example, personal assistance, peer support, support person).

2. Principles

2.1 *Guiding Principles*

- 2.1.1 **Human rights:** We are committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion to achieve our goal of making a positive impact on communities in need, both in Australia and developing countries.
- 2.1.2 **Inclusion and participation:** People with disabilities have the right to access opportunities and engage in full and meaningful participation on an equal basis with others. Women and girls with disabilities frequently face additional barriers to participation, and it is necessary to account for this through gender sensitive approaches to development.
- 2.1.3 **Empowerment:** We support empowerment which enables people to determine and control their own lives. Effective disability inclusive development requires that people with disabilities take an active and central role in decision making and are empowered as agents of change.
- 2.1.4 **Respect diversity:** People with disabilities are a diverse group of people, and this diversity must be respected and considered when planning and implementing disability inclusive projects and programs.

3. Policy Commitments

3.1 *Promoting meaningful participation*

- 3.1.1 RAWCS is committed to achieving active participation of people with disabilities and organisations of people with disabilities to ensure we integrate disability inclusion in our project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- 3.1.2 Our ongoing efforts focus on making all our projects and programs fully accessible and inclusive, ensuring that no person is disadvantaged in accessing our projects and programs.
- 3.1.3 We will ensure people with disabilities can participate and be involved at all levels within RAWCS.
- 3.1.4 We will seek advice and collaborate with organisations of people with disabilities when we devise strategies for engaging with people with disabilities in our partner communities.

3.2 *Removing barriers*

- 3.2.1 We commit to identifying and dismantling any attitudinal, environmental, and institutional barriers that inhibit the full participation of people with disabilities within our organisation, our projects and our programs.
- 3.2.2 We are committed to ensuring that all individuals have access to our services, including necessary specialised resources and assistive technologies at affordable costs.

3.3 *Empowering people with disabilities*

- 3.3.1 We will identify opportunities to empower people with disabilities through targeted capacity-building initiatives.
- 3.3.2 Within our resource limits, we will provide training and tools that enhance their capabilities and leadership in humanitarian contexts, ensuring people with disabilities can make meaningful contributions to our operations.
- 3.3.3 We will ensure all our people and partners have appropriate training on the specific needs and rights of people with disabilities to improve their inclusion and safety in all our activities and projects.

3.4 *Enhancing data-driven inclusion*

- 3.4.1 We are committed to the ethical collection, analysis, and application of data concerning persons with disabilities, ensuring confidentiality and informed usage to improve accessibility and inclusivity in all our projects and programs.

3.5 *Commitment to inclusion*

- 3.5.1 We commit to disability inclusive practices within our organisation, through our partnerships with other organisations, and within the projects and programs that we deliver.
- 3.5.2 We will ensure that people with disabilities are recognised as integral participants and contributors to our humanitarian work.
- 3.5.3 Within RAWCS, we will:
 - implement disability-inclusive recruitment to ensure equal employment opportunities;
 - provide reasonable accommodations to support the employment and engagement of people with disabilities;
 - maintain a work environment free from discrimination;
 - monitor the composition of the RAWCS Board of Directors to include members with lived experience of disabilities, enhancing governance inclusivity;
 - consider accessibility and reasonable accommodations in the planning and hosting of events;
 - ensure all communication materials, whether electronic or print, are accessible to people with disabilities as much as possible;
 - develop and enhance the capacity of our people to implement disability-inclusive development through regular and appropriate training, support, and resources; and
 - conduct regular monitoring and evaluations to assess adherence to the principles of disability-inclusive development.

4. Failure to comply with this Policy

- 4.1.1 We treat seriously all reported incidents of alleged unlawful discrimination or victimisation.
- 4.1.2 Proven allegations of improper conduct and non-compliance of this Policy by our people, partners, or representatives may result in disciplinary action, including termination of contract or employment and/or legal action.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
National Board of Directors	• Ultimate accountability for our organisational policies • Guiding governance and culture of RAWCS through strategic leadership • Approving this policy and holding the CEO accountable to how effectively this policy is implemented.
CEO	• Ensuring this policy is upheld • Informing the Board of any concerns relating to diversity, equity and inclusions, and giving progress reports • Ensuring all our people are accountable to this policy
National Manager Projects & Volunteers	• Ensuring all project participants are aware of, and comply this policy. • Fostering a culture of integrity by actively promoting and supporting whistleblowing channels to report unethical behaviour or policy violations.
All our people	• 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 supervisor/manager

6. Policy Distribution

- 6.1 This policy will be available on our website and shared with our people.
- 6.2 We will ensure that all our people are notified of and made aware that they are required to follow this policy.

7. Review

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2 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.

8. More information

- 8.1 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
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