

GOV-012
Enabling Services

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Policy

Global
Policy Owner: Technology & Business Services Director

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This policy sets out The Fred Hollows Foundation's (**The Foundation**) commitments to improving environmental sustainability and climate change action within our operations, programming and advocacy.
- 1.2. The Foundation recognises that climate change, pollution and environmental degradation present major threats to global eye health and delivery of eye health care. These threats risk undermining decades of progress in reducing the burden of avoidable blindness and vision impairment, with women and girls, people living in poverty, people with disability and other marginalised groups most impacted.
- 1.3. The Foundation equally understands that eye health services, including The Foundation's own operations and programs, have an impact on the environment by contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, consumption of resources, and production of healthcare and other waste.
- 1.4. Guided by its core values and in recognition of these risks, The Foundation is committed to reducing potential negative impacts on the environment and to developing resilience to the impacts of climate change across its work to end avoidable blindness. There are significant co-benefits for the eye care sector in taking strong action on climate change, as improved environmental conditions can improve healthcare and development outcomes.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy addresses matters of Environmental Sustainability and climate change action in the context of The Foundation's role as an eye health organisation. In that context, The Foundation will be guided by the following principles:

- 2.1. **Do no harm:** The Foundation seeks to take a 'do no harm' approach to its activities and to make positive contributions to people and the environment wherever it works.
- 2.2. **Stewardship:** Demonstrate environmental stewardship by recognising the impact that The Foundation's work has on the environment and committing to actions and ways of working that protect and minimize the negative ecological and climate impact of our work.
- 2.3. **Human rights-based approach:** Acknowledge that the rights to life and health cannot be realised without basic rights to safe water, air and land.
- 2.4. **Sustainability:** 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 approaching our response to environment in a manner consistent with the integrated and indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 2.5. **Culture:** Create and embed a culture that recognises, supports and builds staff and partner understanding of the importance of environmental sustainability within eye health, empowers them to uphold our organisational commitments, while simultaneously building their skills and capacities to integrate positive environmental actions in their work.

References

- 2.6. **Equity:** Ensure our work does not create or contribute to a situation where one group of people are exposed to greater environmental burdens and climate risks as a result of our actions.

3. COMMITMENTS UNDER THIS POLICY

3.1. Organisational level

The Foundation, in line with SDG 12 *Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production* and SDG 13 *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*, is committed to:

- 3.1.1. Identify negative environmental risks early and minimise and mitigate those risks wherever practicable.
- 3.1.2. Maintain robust environmental criteria and work towards continuously strengthen those within our ethical screening, risk assessment, Due Diligence, and supply chain management approaches.
- 3.1.3. Promote best practice procedures and building a culture of sustainability among Personnel, including ensuring staff are aware of commitments under this Policy generally and as appropriate to their role in the organization. Additionally The Foundation will promote behaviour change through education and encouraging sustainable and climate sensitive practices both in the office and in the working from home environment.
- 3.1.4. Work towards reducing overall Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across our operations and programming activities. This should include continuously improving data capturing, monitoring and periodic reporting on The Foundation's GHG emitting activities, embedding emissions reduction goals and activities in planning, and where feasible setting emissions reductions targets.
- 3.1.5. Maintain and promote compliance with our regulatory, sector and institutional donor environmental sustainability obligations including DFAT's Australian NGO Cooperation Program, ACFID's (Australian Council for International Development) Code of Conduct and Climate Action Framework.
- 3.1.6. Publish Disclosures on our actions and progress on environmental sustainability, as per commitments set out in this Policy, in our annual report and in more detail on our website on an annual basis.

3.2. Operations

Within our operations, The Foundation is committed to reducing the environmental impact of travel, energy use and waste management within our offices by:

- 3.2.1. Minimising travel and using technological alternatives wherever possible when travel incurs significant environmental costs.
- 3.2.2. Ensuring environmental sustainability, and opportunities to achieve more sustainable outcomes are considered in all stages of procurement planning and risk, selection, and management. Wherever practicable, preference sustainable options in the selection of Suppliers, where other factors are equal.
- 3.2.3. Preferring sustainable procurement options (considering energy consumption, waste reduction, use of recycled products, reduction in harmful substances, packaging, and end of life recycling) whenever practical.
- 3.2.4. Responsible and sustainable office practices through reducing resource consumption by prioritizing digital communication, minimising paper use, opting for renewable energy where possible, and encouraging active or public transport, or participating in carpooling when commuting or travelling for work.

3.3. Programs

Through its programs, The Foundation is committed to:

- 3.3.1. Ensuring environment and climate change considerations are effectively integrated into risk management, due diligence, safeguarding, and program design processes, in line with any institutional donor and regulatory compliance requirements.
- 3.3.2. Drawing on the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness' [Guide for Environmentally Sustainable Practices in the Eye Health Sector](#) and other documented good practices within the eye care sector to inform program design, and promoting these learnings with Program staff and implementing partners.
- 3.3.3. Supporting program partners to strengthen environmental sustainability and climate action practices, systems and capacities, including through sharing learning, tools and good practices, and supporting and funding pilot environmental sustainability initiatives within our program portfolio where possible and strategic.
- 3.3.4. Increasing our efforts to partner with and learn from the experience of other organisations and partners who are advancing climate change action in their work at the global, national, and local level, and leverage and build upon existing examples of good practice through our ongoing programming relationships.

3.4. **Advocacy**

To promote and influence greater action on environmental sustainability and climate change, The Foundation is committed to:

- 3.4.1. Advocating within our sphere of influence, including within the eye health sector, the international development sector, and to our Implementing Partners, including Government Partners, to take greater action on environmental sustainability and climate change. This includes documenting and promoting learnings and effective practices in environmental sustainability and climate resilience from The Foundation's programming and operations with these stakeholders.
- 3.4.2. Supporting a local-global advocacy approach, including informing and empowering local partners to advocate for strengthened environmental sustainability and climate resilience within local and national health systems.

4. **LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

This Policy is informed by the principles set out in:

- 4.1. The Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goals 1 (No Poverty), 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production), 13 (Climate Action).
- 4.2. Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy.
- 4.3. The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Governance Standards and External Conduct Standards.
- 4.4. The Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct, and ACFID Climate Action Framework.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES & ACCOUNTABILITIES**

5.1. **Chief Executive Officer**

- 5.1.1. The CEO is responsible for ensuring this Policy is upheld and will inform the Board of The Foundation of any concerns relating to Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change that may present risk to The Foundation, its Personnel, beneficiaries, partners, reputation, operations or other activities.
- 5.1.2. The CEO will ensure progress in relation to Environmental Sustainability across The Foundation is included in standard reporting to The Board.

5.1.3. The CEO will hold relevant Senior Leaders accountable to this Policy.

5.2. Senior Leaders

5.2.1. Senior Leaders will promote the existence of this Policy to all Personnel.

5.2.2. Senior Leaders will ensure Foundation and Divisional procedures, practices, plans and operations align with this Policy and that all relevant Personnel are aware of, and understand, this Policy and their responsibilities under it.

5.2.3. Divisions are encouraged to put in place procedures and action plans to implement the commitments set out in this Policy. However, this Policy will prevail to the extent of any ambiguity or inconsistency between this Policy and those procedures and action plans.

5.2.4. Senior Leaders are responsible for monitoring and responding to any Environmental Sustainability risks or concerns arising within The Foundation's business activities. Senior Leaders will include risks and incidents on the Divisional risk register and seek the advice of the Policy Owner on issues of contention.

5.3. Policy Owner

5.3.1. The Policy Owner is responsible for ensuring the Policy complies with The Foundation's obligations and contemporary practice and will update this Policy as required.

5.3.2. The Policy Owner will be responsible for addressing any issues arising in relation to this Policy and will be arranging a point of contact for all Personnel for any issue of contention.

5.3.3. The Policy Owner will assist the CEO prepare the reporting set out in 4.1.6 and 5.1.2.

5.3.4. The Policy Owner will inform the CEO of any key risk to The Foundation regarding environmental sustainability and will record risks and incidents on the organisational risk register.

5.4. All Personnel

5.4.1. All Personnel will adhere to the principles and commitments under this Policy and any related procedures and action plans and will take all reasonable care to ensure that their actions or omissions are not in breach of this Policy nor directly or indirectly encourage others to breach this Policy.

5.4.2. All Personnel are responsible for identifying and responding to any Environmental Sustainability-based risk or concerns arising within The Foundation's business activities. Any matters of contention must be reported to the Policy Owner.

5.4.3. Personnel may raise any conduct of concern in relation to environmental sustainability to their manager, anonymously to speak-up@hollows.org or otherwise under The Foundation's [Speak-Up Policy](#).

5.5. All associated stakeholders

All associated stakeholders operating with or on behalf of The Foundation are responsible for understanding and abiding by the principles and relevant commitments under this Policy and advising the primary contact point within The Foundation of any issues that may arise.

6. MONITORING

6.1. A report on the implementation of this Policy will be submitted to the Board no less than annually across The Foundation's business activities, including the countries in which we work. The Policy Owner is responsible for compiling this report and submission to the CEO.

6.2. This Policy will be reviewed every three years and the Policy Owner is responsible to undertake this review.

6.3. The Enabling Services Division has oversight for all Organisational Policy and will ensure the Policy is listed on the Policy Register and provide support to Policy Owner to ensure monitoring and reporting obligations are met.

References

7. DEFINITIONS

Unless specified otherwise, terms used in this Policy have the meaning given to them by other policies of The Foundation.

Climate change refers to changes in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the average and/or the variability of its properties and that persist for an extended period, typically decades or longer.

Climate Resilience is the ability of human or natural systems to prepare for, withstand, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Disclosure refers to how The Foundation will publicly report on its progress in implementing the commitments under this policy, including through the Annual Report.

Due Diligence is a process to identify potential social, environmental and economic gaps of an organisation's activities that may have adverse impacts on how they operate, with the aim to address the issues presenting the highest level of risk.

Emissions reduction targets are specific, quantifiable goals for decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by a certain percentage from a baseline year, aiming to limit global warming.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are the release of gases into the atmosphere which trap heat, mimicking a greenhouse to warm the planet and drive climate change. Human activities like burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and agriculture release excessive greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Implementing Partner means an organisation engaged by The Foundation to work with us in furthering our fundamental goals of ending avoidable blindness.

Personnel means a person who carries out work in any capacity for The Foundation which includes paid employees, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants, work experience students or volunteers.

Supplier means an organisation or sole trader engaged by The Foundation to supply goods and/or services in exchange for payment, including goods in kind, which is not a recognised Implementing Partner.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) is a global framework outlining 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 framed by 17 global goals.

CONTROL OF DOCUMENTATION

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References

Policy owner(s)	Technology & Business Services Director		
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References