Environmental Sustainability Policy

*Last updated December 2021*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Policy number | [insert number] | Version | [insert number] |
| Drafted by | [insert name] | Approved by Board on | [insert date] |
| Responsible person | [insert name] | Scheduled review date | [insert date] |

### Introduction

* 1. [Organisation]recognises that climate change is real and is affecting many weather and climate extremes across the globe.[[1]](#footnote-2) According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other leading organisations,[[2]](#footnote-3) it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Strong, rapid and sustained changes in human decisions, actions and behaviours are required to limit human induced climate change.
  2. [Organisation]is committed to giving further consideration to its individual, collective and systemic practices in order to respond to the challenges posed by climate change to the environment.
  3. [Optional: please consider whether your organisation has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy (such as a Reconciliation Action Plan) and whether it wishes to include this paragraph 1.3 and the like paragraphs set out throughout this policy and the related procedure]In mounting a response to the challenges of climate change and its impacts on the environment, [Organisation] is also committed to effectively listening to and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ ways of knowing, being and doing. [Organisation] acknowledges and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ connection to country and the ongoing protection and custodianship of the lands and waters of this continent for thousands of years.

### Purpose

* 1. The purpose of this policy and its procedures is to guide [Organisation] in:
     1. responding to the challenges of climate change;
     2. integrating a philosophy of sustainability in its activities and standards;
     3. embedding and promoting sound environmental practices in all operations, services and products; and
     4. fostering responsible, sustainable and climate-conscious decisions and behaviours at an organisational level, including among management, staff, volunteers, [our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with], stakeholders and suppliers.
  2. This policy will better enable[Organisation] to apply a sustainability lens to its activities and operations. As the causes of climate change and its impacts on the environment are widely understood by the IPCC and the world’s leading scientists and organisations, it is the aim of [Organisation] to consider, find and implement meaningful ways to minimise its impact on the environment and contribute to solutions that seek to limit climate change.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the definition of:

* 1. **sustainability** encompasses sustainability of the environment, ecology, people and economy; and
  2. **social justice lens** encompasses considering the impacts of climate change on different or vulnerable sectors of the community, as contemplated at paragraph 4.1.4 of this policy.

### Policy

[Organisation] is committed to minimising its impact on the environment, fostering sustainability, repairing past harms and seeking improved future outcomes by:

* + 1. [Optional: see also paragraph 1.3 above of this policy] acknowledging and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ ways of knowing, being and doing in caring for country;
    2. fostering an organisational culture of sustainability, where responsibility to the environment, climate, climate system and ecosystems is understood and put into practice;
    3. supporting and allowing management, staff, volunteers, [our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with] to:
       1. better understand the interrelationship between their roles or activities and climate change impacts; and
       2. engage meaningfully with their emotional responses to climate change and its impacts;
    4. applying a social justice lens when considering the impacts of climate change on different or vulnerable sectors of the community [and our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with];
    5. identifying, analysing, evaluating, prioritising and addressing the physical, transitional, adaptation and liability risks associated with climate change and establishing [board / committee / management]-level mandates for climate risk oversight, monitoring and reporting;
    6. avoiding the use of products and practices that contribute to climate change, while promoting and favouring the use of products and practices that are at a minimum climate-neutral or, as a preference, have positive impacts on the environment;
    7. enhancing awareness within [Organisation] and among [our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with], stakeholders, suppliers and the wider community about our actions in seeking to operate in an environmentally responsible manner;
    8. using reasonable endeavours to conduct audits and self-assessments of [Organisation]’s compliance with this policy, in order to continually improve our environmental management systems and responses to climate change; and
    9. maintaining an open and honest dialogue with [our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with], suppliers and the wider community about [Organisation]’s performance against this policy.

## Environmental Sustainability Procedures

*Last updated Dec 2021*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Procedure number | [insert number] | Version | [insert number] |
| Drafted by | [insert name] | Approved on | [insert date] |
| Authorised person | [insert name] | Scheduled review date | [insert date] |

### Responsibilities

* 1. It is the responsibility of **the** [**board / committee / management**]to establish and maintain policies and procedures and to bring these procedures to the Environmental Sustainability policy into effect.
  2. It is the responsibility of **the CEO and other executive officers** to ensure the implementation and ongoing observation of these procedures to the Environmental Sustainability policy.

### Processes

* 1. [Optional: see also paragraph 1.3 above of the policy] [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ perspectives on climate change, including through:
     1. inviting elders or representatives to share their wisdom at training sessions, functions or events;
     2. encouraging staff to attend relevant workshops; and
     3. promoting the reading of relevant research, books and reports.
  2. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to develop guidelines for staff, volunteers and [our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with] (as the context requires) to adopt sound environmental work practices that incorporate:
     1. [Optional: see also paragraph 1.3 above of the policy]Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ perspectives;
     2. a social justice lens that considers the impacts of climate change on different or vulnerable sectors of the community and [our members / the clients we serve / the people we work with]; and
     3. the latest in research on the causes, impacts and solutions to climate change.
  3. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to ensure:
     1. appropriate and relevant training is provided;
     2. appropriate time, funds or resources are allocated; and
     3. best practice psychological and behavioural change approaches are adopted,

to ensure sustainability practices are embraced and embedded across all areas of the organisation.

* 1. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that [**board / committee / management**] members are:
     1. appropriately inducted and trained in their responsibilities for climate risk oversight, monitoring and reporting; and
     2. cognisant of their ongoing responsibilities to identify, analyse, evaluate, prioritise and address the physical, transitional, adaptation and liability risks associated with climate change.
  2. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to ensure its:
     1. banking and finance providers do not invest in fossil fuel industries; and
     2. investments are not in fossil fuel industries.
  3. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to conserve energy, including by improving energy efficiency.
  4. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that its operations, events, services and products are efficient in their use of energy and protective of the environment.
  5. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to avoid the unnecessary purchase of materials.
  6. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to reuse and recycle materials, purchase recycled materials and use recyclable packaging or other similar materials.
  7. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to prevent air, water or other pollution and dispose of waste safely and responsibly.
  8. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to monitor, consider and reduce supply chain emissions.
  9. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to give preference to renewable over non-renewable energy sources when feasible.
  10. [Organisation] will consider any carbon-offsetting opportunities that may be available.
  11. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to utilise its particular knowledge and experience to contribute to environmentally sustainable techniques, technology, knowledge and methods.
  12. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to contribute to the maintenance and increase of biodiversity through its management of its property.
  13. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to meet or exceed all applicable government requirements and voluntary requirements generally observed in its field.
  14. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to conduct audits and self-assessments of its compliance with the Environmental Sustainability policy and these procedures in order to continually improve its environmental management system.
  15. [Organisation] and its management will maintain an open and honest dialogue with staff, volunteers, stakeholders and the community about the environmental sustainability performance of its operations, services and products.
  16. [Organisation] will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that staff, volunteers and suppliers are informed of and expected to follow (as the context requires) the Environmental Sustainability policy and these procedures 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.

### Related Documents

<link> Going green: putting policies and procedures into practice <link>

About this document

This policy sample has been developed by the [Institute of Community Directors Australia](https://www.communitydirectors.com.au?utm_campaign=policybank&utm_medium=doc&utm_source=website&utm_content=template) (ICDA), in conjunction with [Maddocks](https://www.maddocks.com.au/), and is free for any not-for-profit organisation to download and use, so long as it is for a non-commercial purpose and that the organisation is not paying a consultant to carry out this work. [See here](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/general/general_article.jsp?articleId=2153#16) for our full copyright guidelines.

### Important notes

You should not rely on these sample policies and procedures alone. They are a starting point only. You need to adapt the sample policies and procedures to suit your own language and the specific requirements of your organisation.

Most samples include both policies and procedures. The policies are designed to provide guidance on standards, while the procedures give instructions on implementing the standards. We recommend adopting policies at a board level, while procedures can be developed and signed off by the organisation's CEO.

We use the term ‘Board’ to cover boards, committees of management, or anybody that has final authority in your organisation. The term ‘CEO’ extends to executive directors, or your chief administrator. You should change the terms in these policies to match the terms used by your organisation.

### Other policies

There are a number of policies available on the [Community Directors website](https://communitydirectors.com.au/tools-resources/policy-bank). You can search for what you need with our site search function.

### Make a deposit into our Policy Bank

If you have some policies that your organisation believes would be of benefit to other groups, email them to [service@ourcommunity.com.au](mailto:service@ourcommunity.com.au). We will review them, amend them so that they are applicable to the greatest number of not-for-profit organisations as possible, update them into our format, and upload them to our Policy Bank as an easily accessible resource.

### Join us!

ICDA is a best-practice governance network for the directors serving on Australia’s 600,000 not-for-profit boards, committees and councils, and the senior Workers who support them. ICDA members get access to a range of educational, capacity building and networking opportunities that build knowledge, connections and credentials.

If you appreciated this free policy, we would appreciate your ongoing support by joining ICDA from only $65 per year.

### The benefits of membership

1. Receive ‘responsible person’ status – ICDA members are recognised by the ATO under ‘responsible person’ rules, provided (among other things) that the member is not:
   1. a founder of the organisation;
   2. a donor to the organisation who has contributed more than $10,000; or
   3. an associate of a founder or a donor who has contributed more than $10,000 to the organisation.
2. Recognition – three membership post-nominal options, providing community and professional recognition for educated and engaged not-for-profit members;
3. Capacity building publications – including current trends, issues and emerging areas of risk via member-only newsletters and governance help sheets;
4. Policy alerts – receive notification when changes are made to governance, human resources, financial management, values and communication policies which have previously been downloaded through the Policy Bank;
5. Preferential member pricing – members receive discounts for the Festival of Community Directors events and online Compact Courses;
6. Alumni events – access to deep connections and a vibrant network of believers and doers. There is an online forum, as well as regular invitations to events such as the Communities in Control Conference;
7. Access to forums, networks, information and opportunities – boost your confidence (and competence) and open career doors; and
8. Budget-friendly – for as little as $65 a year you get all the benefits outlined above and so much more.

### Legal advice at a pre-agreed price

Please note that this is a template policy for guidance only. For assistance in tailoring this policy to suit your organisation, or for legal advice at a pre-agreed price or training in this area, please do not hesitate to contact Our Community’s preferred legal supplier [Maddocks](https://maddocks.com.au).

E: [NFPHelp@maddocks.com.au](mailto:NFPHelp@maddocks.com.au) | W: <https://maddocks.com.au>

1. IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Including the IPCC, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)