

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Last updated 1 October 2023

Key Points

Caritas Australia values human dignity by including everyone.

Caritas Australia does not discriminate.

Caritas Australia recognises that our differences make us stronger.

1. Why this policy exists

At Caritas Australia, we are committed to promoting inclusive and equitable practices and the Catholic Social Teaching principles that recognise the inherent dignity of every person. This policy outlines our commitment to work in partnership with people with whom we engage. In particular, we are committed to individuals and groups who are vulnerable, marginalised and under-represented, to help empower them to be drivers of their own development and to inform our operations, programs and partnerships.

In this policy Caritas Australia commits to respect, protect and promote internationally recognised human rights for all, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status.

This includes our organisational commitments to gender equality and disability inclusion.

2. This policy applies to

The commitments made in this policy apply to all aspects of Caritas Australia's operations, programs and partnerships, including our:

- Organisational culture and behaviour
- Development and humanitarian programs
- Learning and exchanges with Australian and international partners and other relevant people and organisations
- Work and communication with the Australian community

3. Definitions used in this policy

Below is a partial list of definitions (see Appendix 1 for a full list).

When we use ...	we mean ...
we, us, our	Caritas Australia
diversity	We understand that each individual is unique and recognise the individual differences that all people bring to Caritas Australia. In line with ACFID's definition of diversity, these can be along dimensions of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste,

	<p>gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status.</p> <p>We recognise and promote diversity within Caritas Australia and see diversity as a strength that contributes to our organisational effectiveness. Diversity is a complex issue, as identity aspects can be intersecting, fluid/changing and potentially invisible to others. Caritas Australia acknowledges that we are all different and this inherent diversity is valued as it brings opportunities and strengthens our organisation and our work.</p>
equity	<p>At Caritas Australia we define equity as fairness in access to resources and in the distribution of benefits from all the work we do. This also includes access to opportunities (that is, for career advancement, learning and knowledge building)</p> <p>We take a human rights approach by making sure we treat people fairly in all the work that we do. We believe, in line with the Australian Human Rights Commission, that human rights are not just about ‘formal equality,’ which means treating everyone the same. It also involves ‘substantive equality,’ which allows for beneficial treatment for some people, especially disadvantaged groups, so they can enjoy their human rights equally with others.</p>
inclusion	<p>Ensuring that all people, particularly those from vulnerable, marginalised and under-represented groups, actively and meaningfully participate and benefit from Caritas Australia’s operations, programs and partnerships, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class, socio-economic status or any other characteristics.</p> <p>We recognise the value of inclusion at all levels of our organisation from Board Members to grassroots participants, and enabling opportunity for participation in decision-making processes, so people are authors of their own development. Caritas Australia strives to engage with everyone in the communities we work with through the program cycle and helps to empower all participants to engage in decision making, advocacy and providing opportunities for communication.</p>

4. Guiding Principles

Caritas Australia is guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teachings and the following specific principles in the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion:

4.1 Impartiality and openness

We serve people impartially, particularly those who are experiencing poverty and are most vulnerable, according to objective assessments of their situations and the needs they express, irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status, indeed without adverse distinction of any kind.

4.2 Respect

We recognise the value, dignity and diversity of each person. We respect religious traditions, culture, structures and customs in so far as they enhance and uphold the dignity of the human person.

4.3 Participation

We ensure that people we serve are involved in the design, management and implementation of our work, including the projects we support and the associated decisions from assessment through to evaluation.

4.4 Empowerment

We help people develop and realise their full potential, and build mutually respectful relations, so they can control and improve their quality of life. Through integral human development and empowerment, we will promote active, powerful local communities with members playing a significant role in civil society.

4.5 Equality

We commit to the promotion of equal enjoyment of, and access to, rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities. To achieve equality, we will work to ensure that the interests, needs and priorities of all people are taken into consideration, and that the barriers or discrimination to achieving these are removed.

4.6 Subsidiarity

All people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. We ensure that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community.

5. Policy Commitments

As an driver of positive social change and social justice, Caritas Australia is committed to the understanding and promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion in all facets of our work – internationally, in Australia and within our organisation. For this to happen, we will be accountable and commit to the following:

5.1 Organisational culture and behaviour

5.1.1 Maintain a culture of inclusive, safe and protective environments for all, including our employees, volunteers, contractors, partners and the communities and individuals we work with, particularly those most vulnerable to exclusion.

5.1.2 Uphold a zero-tolerance to and take all reasonable and proportionate action to eliminate any forms of violence, abuse, victimisation, harassment and any form of discrimination based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or any other protected status.

5.1.3 Value, promote and increase awareness of diversity and inclusion within work practices at all levels including decision making, planning, and employment.

5.1.4 Have in place organisational policies and practices that reflect and respect the diversity within Caritas Australia, our partners and the communities we serve.

5.1.5 Ensure all personnel understand, sign and comply with Caritas Australia's Code of Conduct and Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People.

5.1.6 Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee who will identify and prioritise diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across Caritas Australia for the purposes of improving Caritas Australia practices

5.2 Working with partners on development and humanitarian programs

5.2.1 Assess and manage the risk of exclusion and inequity in the course of our work in Australia and internationally and encourage and support partners to do the same in delivering aid and development projects. Ensure assessments, contextual analysis, management and mitigation of risk, and our monitoring of these risks, address marginalised and vulnerable groups.

5.2.2 Conduct, analyse and respond to monitoring and evaluation of our programs to track progress towards, and impact on, equality and empowerment and to ensure we avoid, at all costs, exacerbating inequalities. Incorporate data disaggregated by gender, age and other relevant diversity factors.

5.2.3 Undertake proactive analysis of equity issues across all stages of the program cycle and use this knowledge to inform program planning and design and organisational practices. Share knowledge and practices within Caritas Australia, with partners and with broader stakeholders.

5.2.4 Apply a twin track approach to programming that promotes equity and inclusion – by explicitly identifying specific actions for vulnerable people/groups in conjunction with mainstream inclusion.

5.2.5 Recognise that the promotion of the principles and commitments in this policy contributes to all four outcome areas of Caritas Australia's Integral Human Development (IHD) Effectiveness Framework: life with dignity, just and peaceful relationships, sustained economic wellbeing and resilience, and influence and independence.

5.2.6 We are committed to supporting our partners to deliver on equity and inclusion in development and humanitarian programs.

5.3 Work with the Australian community

5.3.1 Ensure all work in partnerships with, and communication to (including marketing, fundraising and advocacy), the Australian community respects the dignity of every person.

5.4 Preferential option

Provide preferential option for, and with, those most vulnerable to being excluded or unable to fully participate in Caritas Australia's operations, programs or partnerships including, but not limited to:

5.4.1 Disability inclusion. Caritas Australia recognises that disability is a complex, multidimensional development issue. We recognise that people living with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the most disadvantaged, with disability being both a cause and a consequence of poverty. As such, for disability we additionally commit to:

- Enhance the dignity, safety, well-being, resilience, influence and independence of people with disabilities.
- Work to identify and address barriers for people with disabilities, including social, physical and attitudinal.
- Engage with Organisations of Persons with Disability as the experts in identifying and responding to access barriers and support the empowerment of people with disabilities to inform, direct and lead their own development.
- Collect, analyse and respond to disability disaggregated data to inform the work we do and monitor our progress in promoting empowerment

5.4.2 Gender equality. Caritas Australia commits to the empowerment of women and girls, as we recognise this is key to redressing the power imbalances and inequalities that exist, and to achieving gender equality. We commit to:

- Adopt zero-tolerance to violence against any person based on their gender.
- Recruit and retain personnel with a commitment to gender equality. Ensure women are represented in leadership roles, decision making, planning, and employment; and training for all personnel in women's empowerment.
- Meet reporting requirements of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency or similar, if required.
- Engage with partners to ensure they have, or are supported to develop, capacity to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.
- Collect, analyse and respond to gender disaggregated data to inform the work we do. Ensure program monitoring, evaluations and reviews assess progress towards gender equity outcomes.
- We commit to equal opportunities across the organisation - ensuring this for all employees through recruitment, training, promotion and other workplace practices.

5.4.3 Child protection. Caritas Australia recognises that children are particularly vulnerable to exclusion and inequity. We commit to:

- Protect the rights of children and keeping them safe from harm and abuse, as documented in our Child Protection Policy.
- Work with children so that their voices can be heard, empower them to engage with decisions that impact them and to realise their full potential.

5.4.4 Indigenous people. Caritas Australia recognise that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices, in Australia and worldwide, contributes to sustainable and equitable development and care for our common home. We commit to:

- Recognise and promote the inherent rights, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
- Acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land where our offices in Australia are located
- Recognise indigenous people's right to self-determination and in doing so consult with them on decisions that affect them.
- Identify and address barriers that may prevent indigenous peoples from accessing and equally benefiting from our work.
- Reducing potential negative impact of our work on indigenous peoples.

Caritas Australia recognises that these identified areas can be interrelated and be compound barriers for equitable inclusion – for example women and girls with a disability are among the most marginalised. Caritas Australia recognises the importance of promoting and working to achieve equitable inclusion of these, and other, vulnerable and/or marginalised groups as a key driver to meet our organisational vision of a just world, at peace and free of poverty, where all people live in dignity.

5.5 Advocacy

5.5.1 Advocate – in Australia and internationally – on behalf of and with those experiencing poverty and marginalisation to bear witness to, and address, their plight and the underlying or structural causes of poverty and injustice. We will be agents of change and social transformation to promote respect for human rights.

5.6 Knowledge and understanding

5.6.1 Provide our personnel and partners with induction and ongoing training to build knowledge, understanding and awareness of:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion policy, principles and commitments.
- Caritas Australia reporting and complaints systems.
- Training and Capacity Building for our employees through providing training and resources to enhance overall understanding and awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion issues and promote inclusivity in their work wherever possible

5.7 Recruitment and employment

5.7.1 Ensure all human resource policies, guidelines, procedures and practices promote diversity, equity and inclusion, including:

- Conduct equitable and inclusive recruitment practices that promotes a diverse workforce in line with Caritas Australia's [Recruitment and Onboarding Procedure](#) , which documents our commitments to attract, hire and retain a diverse workforce.
- Provide equal employment opportunities within Caritas Australia by identifying and removing unlawful barriers to participation and progression in employment.
- We strongly encourage diverse applicant pools when recruiting for any role within Caritas Australia
- Not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies in line with Australia's federal anti-discrimination laws (see section 7.1).

5.8 Reporting, feedback and complaints

5.8.1 Maintain mechanisms for safe, accessible reporting and responding to concerns or allegations of breaches of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

5.8.2 Ensure all Caritas Australia personnel, partners and stakeholders are proactively informed of our and Procedures so any complaints or concerns in regards to employees compliance with the principles and commitments in this Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Policy are appropriately identified, reported and responded to.

5.9 Breaches

5.9.1 Treat seriously all reported incidents of alleged unlawful discrimination or victimisation.

5.9.2 Proven allegations of improper conduct and non-compliance of this Policy by Caritas Australia personnel, partners or representatives may result in disciplinary action, including termination of contract or employment and/or legal action.

5.9.3 Retaliation or adverse actions against individuals or groups of people who report discrimination, harassment or to those who participate in investigations is strictly prohibited

5.10 Accessing and communicating the policy

5.10.1 This policy will be available on our website and shared with our personnel.

5.10.2 We will ensure that all personnel are notified of and made aware that they are required to follow this policy.

5.11 Reviewing this policy

5.11.1 We are committed to continuous improvement to our policy, procedures and practices. This policy will be reviewed at a minimum every three years to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

5.11.2 Feedback on this and other policies is openly encouraged. We use this feedback, as well as emerging good practice and collaborative lessons learnt across the development sector, to strengthen this and related policies and procedures.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

At Caritas Australia, a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion starts with strong leadership.

6.1 The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Ultimate accountability for our organisational policies
- Guiding governance and culture of Caritas Australia through strategic leadership
- Approving this policy and holding the Leadership Team accountable to how effectively this policy is implemented

6.2 Leadership Team members are responsible for:

- Leading by example
- Ensuring our procedures, practices, plans and operations align with this policy
- Reporting to the Board via the CEO on diversity, equity and inclusion matters
- Ensuring their team is aware of this policy and understand their responsibilities

6.3 The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is upheld
- Informing the Board of any concerns relating to diversity, equity and inclusions, and giving progress reports
- Ensuring all senior employees are accountable to this policy

6.4 Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is the group of Caritas Australia employees who are responsible for:

- Identifying and prioritising initiatives across Caritas Australia for Leadership Team consideration
- Identifying best practice within Caritas Australia for purposes of improving Caritas Australia practices
- Identifying learning opportunities for all staff, including delivering training on various diversity, equity and inclusion - which includes promoting overall awareness and understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace
- Developing and monitoring of short- and long-term metrics

- Maintaining a focus on developing, reviewing and extending strategies that support equity

6.5 Personnel (including you) are responsible for:

- Understanding and following this policy and related procedures
- 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. However, if it is a sensitive complaint, you must report it to the Complaints Focal Point via either:
 - a) confidential@caritas.org.au (Complaints Focal Point)
 - b) 1800 02 44 13 (in Australia) and asking for the Complaints Focal Point or
 - c) Any in-country Caritas Australia office who will elevate your concerns to the Complaints Focal Point
 - d) Stopline external whistleblower service

We have a shared responsibility to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion are at the forefront of all decisions and interactions of our work.

7. Related Documents

This policy supports Caritas Australia's compliance with the following:

7.1 Legislation (Australian Federal Laws):

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex discrimination Act 1984
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Fair Work Act 2009

7.2 International human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (ILO 111)
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- International Covenant of the Rights of Indigenous People
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons

- Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, and
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

7.3 Caritas Australia governance documents:

- Code of Conduct
- Speaking Up Policy
- Development and Humanitarian Policy
- Recruitment Guidelines
- DEI Guidelines for Programs and Partnerships

8. Appendix List

- Appendix 1: Definitions

9. Information about this policy

Can be accessed by	Anyone via website
Can be shared with	Internally and externally (including with other organisations)
Distributed to	Any person doing paid or unpaid work for, or on behalf, of Caritas Australia including Australian-based employees, in-country employees, Board of Directors, Diocesan Directors, volunteers, partner organisations or anyone doing relevant work
Document Owner	People Director
Approved by	Board of Directors
Commencement Date	01 Oct 2023
Next Review Date	01 Oct 2026
Document number	SI-DI-POL-v1.1

How this policy has changed over time

Version	Approval Date	Summary of changes
v1.0	26 Jun 2020	Replaces previous policies such as Gender Equity Policy and some parts of the Disability Inclusive Development Guidelines. Rewritten to merge several documents that cover organisation and program principles and requirements. Includes aspects of former Anti-Discrimination Policy, Disability Inclusion Policy, Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and Gender Equality and Diversity. Specific requirements for staff behaviour are now in the Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook.
v1.1	18 Nov 2020	Put in new format
v1.2	25 May 2021	Added the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workplace Committee as a key aspect of driving positive organisational change in regards to diversity Approved by Board Meeting today.
v2.0	1 October 2023	Reviewed as per policy review process. Minor changes made for clarity.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Gender equality	<p>Gender equality between men and women refers to women, girls, men and boys' equal enjoyment of, and access to, rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, and that the barriers or discrimination to achieving these are removed.</p> <p>Gender equality, more broadly (including people who do not identify as male or female), is that all people have equal enjoyment of, and access to, rights, responsibilities, resources and opportunities.</p>
Gender identity	<p>Gender identity refers to a person's deeply held internal and individual sense of gender, which may or many not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth. This could include:</p> <p>Transgender*: The term 'trans' is a general term for a person whose gender identity is different to their sex at birth</p> <p>Intersex*: The term 'intersex' refers to people who have genetic, hormonal or physical characteristics that are not exclusively 'male' or 'female'. A person who is intersex may identify as male, female, intersex or as being of indeterminate sex.</p> <p>(*as defined by The Australian Human Rights Commission)</p> <p>It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status under Australian federal law.</p>
Integral Human Development (IHD)	<p>We view development as based on a holistic understanding of the human person, within the context and experience of the family and the wider community, embracing spiritual, psychological, emotional, physical, material and economic elements. Wherever we work we strive for the development of the whole person and the whole community, and transform unjust social systems. In our work we ensure strong and consistent links between the relief, rehabilitation and developmental components.</p>
Barriers	<p>Barriers are physical/environmental, institutional, attitudinal, communication or economic obstacles to full inclusion in society.</p>
Disability	<p>Disability includes long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.</p>
Discrimination	<p>Discrimination can be direct or indirect.</p> <p>Direct Discrimination is where a person is treated unfavourably because of certain personal attributes, including the persons race or ethnic background, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical features, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding requirements, social origin, parental and carer responsibilities, industrial activity, political or religious beliefs.</p> <p>Indirect Discrimination occurs where an unreasonable condition or requirement is imposed on a group that, on its face is neutral, but</p>

	<p>which disproportionately adversely affects members of the group because of any of the above attributes.</p>
Personnel	<p>Any person doing paid or unpaid work for, or on behalf, of CA including Australian-based employees, in-country employees, Board of Directors, Diocesan Directors, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants</p>
Sexual harassment	<p>Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>Sexual harassment can take various forms. It can involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing; • staring or leering; • suggestive comments or jokes; • sexually explicit pictures, screen savers or posters; • unwanted invitations to go out on dates or requests for sex; • intrusive questions about an employee's private life or body; • unnecessary familiarity; • insults or taunts based on your sex; • sexually explicit emails or SMS messages; • accessing sexually explicit internet sites; • behaviour which would also be an offence under the criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications. <p>Sexual harassment is not sexual interaction, flirtation, attraction or friendship which is invited, mutual, consensual or reciprocated.</p> <p>Sexual harassment is a legally recognised form of sex discrimination. Sexual harassment and sex discrimination are both unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The term 'sexual orientation' refers to a person's emotional or sexual attraction to another person, including, among others, the following identities: heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or same-sex attracted.</p>
Twin track	<p>Twin track as an approach explicitly identifies specific actions for vulnerable people/groups in conjunction with mainstream inclusion.</p>
Universal design	<p>Universal design principles are used in the built environment, education, communication and other areas where it is important to create a space accessible and useable for all. Universal design is the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Victimisation includes treating a person unfavourably because of the person's involvement, in whatever capacity, in any complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment</p>