

# MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA COMMITMENT TO THE PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE PERSONS



## 1. Commitment

Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) is committed to protecting the people it works alongside. MWIA recognises that the nature of its work places its staff and project partners in positions of authority and trust in relation to those it works with, many of whom are vulnerable or affected by marginalisation and exclusion.

For the purposes of MWIA's commitment, vulnerable persons are those who may be more likely to be adversely affected by a program's impacts or those more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a program's benefits.<sup>1</sup>

Those at risk of being vulnerable may change or vary with context and if someone is vulnerable at one point in time, it does not mean they have always been vulnerable or that they will be in the future. Furthermore, vulnerability may be increased for:

- People who need additional support to take care or protect themselves. This can include the elderly, the sick, children, people with disabilities, displaced persons and people living in poverty.
- People at risk of social marginalisation or exclusion. This can include women, children, people with disabilities, transgender and non-binary people, and lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- People living or fleeing from unstable or chaotic contexts. These are contexts where normal rules, institutions and social protections can be changing or missing.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Scope

This commitment applies to all people engaged under the auspices of MWIA, including board directors, committee members, employees, volunteers and contractors (collectively referred to as 'staff').

## 3. Implementation

MWIA demonstrates its commitment to protecting vulnerable persons through the:

- a) development of frameworks, work systems and practices that provide opportunity for those most vulnerable to participate in decision-making about the initiatives that affect them.
- b) use of safeguarding as a means to support the implementation of MWIA's strategic priorities by minimising the negative impacts of MWIA's work on people, communities and the environment.
- c) development of complementary policies to support the effective design and implementation its programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the [DFAT Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy](#)

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the [ACFID Introduction to Safeguarding eLearning course](#)

d) requirement that all staff and project partners to be aware of and have access to this commitment, and MWIA's complementary policies and documents.

#### 4. Guidance

The following documents support the implementation of MWIA's commitment:

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Anti-Slavery Policy (draft)

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[Child Safe Policy](#)

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[Child Sponsorship Policy](#)

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[Code of Conduct](#)

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Commitment to Human Rights

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Critical Incident Policy (draft)

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Disability Policy (draft)

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[Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy](#)

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Environmental Management Policy (draft)

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External Communications Policy (draft)

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[External Complaints Policy](#)

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Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy (draft)

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Prevention of Sexual Exploitation & Harassment Policy (draft)

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Whistleblower Policy

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Work Health & Safety Policy

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