

AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES RAISE THE BAR; SETTING NEW STANDARDS FOR CLIMATE ACTION, RACIAL JUSTICE AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP

October 19th, 2023

Almost 130 Australian international NGOs, who are members of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) yesterday ratified revised and strengthened best-practice standards for the Australian development and humanitarian aid sector. The standards cover climate change, racial justice, and prioritising supporting local leadership in development.

The standards will lift the bar on Australian INGOs' international development and humanitarian programs in 85 countries, representing \$1.89 billion turnover across the 129 member organisations.

On Wednesday 18 October 2023 ACFID members approved amendments to the ACFID Code of Conduct at the ACFID Annual General Meeting, following a year of consultation and review.

The amendments include strengthened standards in the areas of:

- **Climate change:** As a critical global issue which will have disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities around the world, ACFID members have committed to identifying and responding to the impacts of climate change in their work overseas and their own organisations. Members will be encouraged to adopt a climate justice approach and establish organisational targets to measure environmental impact.
- **Anti-racism and racial justice:** ACFID and its members are committed to building greater representation, participation and access to decision making with peoples of varied cultural and racial origins and intersections. The amendments commit ACFID members to the pursuit of racial justice, by addressing their own power structures, and working to improve the diversity of workforces, leadership, and governance bodies.
- **Local leadership:** ACFID and its members recognise our shared responsibility to invest in the leadership and long-term capacity of our partners overseas, to create a more just aid and development system. The amended Code of Conduct requires ACFID members to commit to addressing power imbalances and respond directly to the priorities of local partners.

This milestone is a significant step forward for ACFID and its members in their collective mission to improve the effectiveness of Australian INGOs and the outcomes for the communities they serve.

The ACFID Code of Conduct provides the Australian public confidence in the effectiveness of ACFID member organisations across a range of important areas, including human rights, fundraising, environmental sustainability, critical safeguarding and more.

The Code represents the agreed standards to be met across the significant breadth and diversity of ACFID's 129 full member organisations, enhancing their transparency and accountability.

ACFID CEO Marc Purcell said:

“Responding to climate change, tackling racism and prioritising local leadership in developing countries will now be the hallmark of ACFID's members.

“For 25 years, Australian INGOs who are ACFID members, have chosen to regulate their work through the ACFID Code of Conduct and we believe they are more effective, efficient and accountable as a result.

“This latest review has seen the sector continue to raise the standards in response to key global issues including climate change and racial justice – using our collective power to create better outcomes for the people and communities we work with.”

Addressing ACFID members, Chair of the independent Code of Conduct Committee, Alan Cameron AO said: “The review has been an important moment to pause and celebrate the ongoing commitment of ACFID’s members to transparent, accountable and effective practice.”

As a voluntary self-regulatory system, the ACFID Code of Conduct demonstrates the collective commitment of the sector to best practice.

Read more about the [ACFID Code of Conduct](#) and the [amendments](#).

The [Australian Council for International Development](#) (ACFID) is the peak body for Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in international development and humanitarian action. Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 129 full members and 22 affiliates operating in more than 90 developing countries. Our vision is Australia acting with compassion and fairness for a just, sustainable and equitable world.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact media@acfid.asn.au or call 0401 721 064.