



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

Policy Number:	10	Version: 2
Updated by:	Paul Taylor	Approved by Board on: 29 November 2023
Reason of Review:	Scheduled Review	Scheduled review date: As per schedule

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2000, Mercy Works Limited (MWL) is the development arm of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

We work in partnership with vulnerable communities and local organisations domestically and in the Asia Pacific region. We work with the people of these communities and organisations to build capacity, dignity and self-reliance.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

(a) state MWL's recognition of the importance of transparency and accountability, and to outline the steps that are taken by MWL's Board and staff, to ensure the development and implementation of appropriate transparency and accountability measures.

(b) ensure that MWL complies with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct requirements, in particular:

- 5.3 We invest in the effectiveness of our collaborations and partnerships
- 7.3 We are accountable to our stakeholders.

MWL values its relationship with its clients, its members, its donors, its volunteers and other stakeholders who partner with it to enable it to achieve its purpose. It realises the importance of transparency in its operations and wishes to withhold from public scrutiny as little of its operations as is possible. Furthermore, it recognises that transparency and accountability build trust and help those relationships to flourish.

Any exemption to this Policy must be applied for in writing, for approval by the Executive Director. Any exemption granted by the Executive Director must be in writing.

2. SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to MWL workers in relation to their work with/for MWL.

To meet the regulatory requirements, MWL has reasonable processes in place to ensure the procedures and tools for seeking informed consent meet ethical guidelines, are made available in the local languages of PNG (Tok Pisin) and Timor Leste (Tetum).

3. DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Terms used in this Policy are:

Accountability - Accountability exists in a relationship between two parties where one has expectations of the other, and the other is obliged to provide information on how they have met these expectations.

Transparency – Organisations are transparent when they enable others to see and understand how they operate in an honest way. Transparency enables accountability.

Workers - MWL Board Directors, committee members, employees, contractors and volunteers

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 MWL Executive Director

It is the sole responsibility of the Executive Director to:

- own and administer this policy
- ensure the MWL website has published only relevant documentation
- review new and emerging transparency risks and ensure effective remediating controls
- report quarterly to the Board on the status of MWL's transparency risks.

Also see Annexure A below.

4.2 The Board

It is the responsibility of the Board to:

- review, approve and monitor the implementation of all policies governing MWL's systems of internal control
- review and approve the transparency risks as part of MWL's risk profile at least annually and whenever there is a substantive change to any aspect of these parameters
- review and approve this policy in accordance with the revision schedule.

5 APPLICATION

5.1 Commitment

MWL is committed to

- being transparent in its work and accountable to its stakeholders and community
- disclosing timely, relevant and accurate information in an accessible format.

There are a number of ways (detailed below) by which MWL holds itself accountable to its members, its stakeholders and the Australian public.

a) The Annual Report

MWL will prepare a written annual report, which will be made available to its stakeholders including its members, employees, volunteers, supporters, partner agencies, and members of the public. The MWL annual report will include the following:

- a description of purpose, objectives and values
- a plain language summary of income and expenditure and overall financial health

- a description of the most significant aid and development activities undertaken during the reporting period and their impact
- information about evaluations into the effectiveness of and the learning from aid and development activity MWL has conducted during the year
- a report by MWL Board and the Executive Director (ED)
- financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian accounting standards and Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) requirements
- a statement of commitment to full adherence to the ACFID Code of Conduct
- identification of the ability to lodge a complaint against the organisation and a point of contact
- identification of the ability to lodge a complaint for breach of the code with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee as a point of contact.

b) The Financial Report

The MWL annual financial report will be prepared in accordance with Australian accounting standards and ACFID guidelines. The executive director will ensure that in any references to financial performance, stakeholders are made aware of their right to access the full financial reports.

MWL is committed to transparency and integrity in its financial management. This is demonstrated by external auditing of MWL's finances by a registered company auditor. The resulting annual financial report is reviewed by the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and approved by the Board. The signed financial statements are presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of its members and made available to all stakeholders on MWL's website. This is also uploaded into the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC) charity portal.

c) The MWL Website

The MWL website www.mercyworks.org.au will be a prime source of information and accountability for its donors, its partners and its stakeholders.

5.1 Client Records

MWL will deal with client records in accordance with its privacy law obligations.

5.2 Staff Records

MWL will deal with staff records in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), and its privacy Policy and privacy law obligations.

5.3 Member and Donor records

MWL deal with client records in accordance with its privacy policy and privacy law obligations.

5.4 Access to Minutes of General Meetings and the Members Register

Access to minutes of general meetings and the Members Register will be provided in accordance with the terms of the constitution.

5.5 Organisational Policies

MWL shares organisational policies that are relevant to stakeholders external to the organisation.

5.6 Request for information

A request for information can be made by any of the following methods:

Email: mercyworks@mercyworks.org.au

Phone: +61 2 9564 1911

Mail: PO Box 2023 North Parramatta, NSW 1750

Contact a local office or partner.

MWL will respond to requests for information in the following way:

- Acknowledging the senders request for information once received (this may be by an email notification)
- confirming that the information requested is on the approved list for distribution
- collating information and send to the requester.

6 BREACH

A breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action that may involve severance from the organisation.

7 AUTHORITY

This Policy is approved and reviewed by the Board.

8 RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Other organisational policies, legislation, and codes etc that should be read in conjunction with this Policy and with MWL's ethical value principles include:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Management of Concerns, Complaints & Commendations Policy
- Fundraising Policy
- Risk Policy
- ACFID Code of Conduct - Commitment 5.3 and 7.3
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Annexure A- Transparency and Accountability Procedure

9 CONTACTS

Executive Director
Mercy Works Ltd
Level 3, 6 Victoria Road
Parramatta NSW 2150
029564 1911

mercyworks@mercyworks.org.au

10 REVIEW

Review of this Policy, related forms and resources will be undertaken every three years by the Executive Director and approved by the MWL Board.

11 REVISION/MODIFICATION HISTORY


Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
2 September 2020	1	Transparency & Accountability Policy	New	2 September 2020	3 September 2020
16 November 2023	2	Transparency & Accountability Policy	Standardisation, Contact details updated,	29 November 2023	29 November 2023

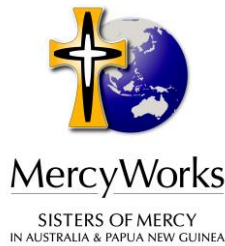
12 APPROVAL DATE/REVISION SCHEDULE

Approved by: Board, Mercy Works Limited

Date: 29 November 2023

To be Revised: November 2026

Board Chair Signature	
Date	29 January 2024



ANNEXURE – A-

Transparency and Accountability Procedure

Responsibilities

In order for the Board to facilitate accountability and transparency with stakeholders, there needs to be good internal documentation and reporting.

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that there are systems and processes in place to capture, record and analyse the information necessary to enable the Board to perform its reporting functions. This includes reporting regularly to the Board on the operations of MWL.

The Executive Director will also ensure that privacy and other policies are in place to govern the access and use of documents including client records, staff records, member and donor records, and minutes of general meetings, in accordance with the Board's transparency and accountability Policy.

Staff are responsible for implementing and adhering to the policies and procedures developed by the Executive Director.

MWL will work with partners to ensure they also have standards for transparency, similar or as appropriate to their organisation and in line with the partnership.