

Disability Inclusion Policy

Document Number:	1.00
Effective Date:	15 March 2023
Document Status:	Approved
Audience:	Internal / External

1. INTRODUCTION

The Loreto Province of Australia and South East Asia is committed to recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of all people, including those who live with disabilities.

This policy is grounded in the Province's fundamental belief in, and commitment to, the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*, namely, that human rights are for everyone, including people with disabilities. Disability also intersects with and exacerbates other factors contributing to marginalisation, most notably gender inequality.

This policy demonstrates the Province's commitment to working inclusively with those who are marginalised, especially women and girls with disabilities.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

This policy defines the Province's explicit intention to include people with disabilities by:

- establishing principles and practices to ensure the Province is committed to embedding an inclusive culture for all participants, especially women and young females with disabilities.
- articulating the Province's roles and responsibilities in promoting recognition of the needs, interests and discrimination faced by people, especially women and girls, living with disabilities.
- defining and communicating clear commitments and consistent messages within the Province and to external stakeholders.
- strengthening efforts to include people with disabilities within the Province and its ministries.
- enabling us to work inclusively, in collaboration with others, building on each other's strengths, experiences and multiple points of view.

3. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all people engaged under the auspices of the Province and its ministries, including members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (sisters), board directors, committee members, employees, volunteers and contractors (collectively hereafter referred to as 'personnel').

This policy excludes Loreto schools and associated schools in Australia as each has its own policies and procedures.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Disability	<p>Australia's Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) defines disability as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or• total or partial loss of a part of the body; or• the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or• the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or• a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or• a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour. <p>In Australia, discrimination against people with a disability is prohibited under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</p>
Exclusion	<p>Exclusion is the process that prevents certain individuals or groups from fulfilling their rights. Exclusion is caused by inequality in the distribution of resources and power, by inequality in the value assigned to different groups, and by the social norms that perpetuate these differences. These causes are interlinked and compound each other. It is most often those that are not valued whose rights are not realised.</p>
Disability inclusion	<p>Inclusion is about bringing people into a process in a meaningful manner. It is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society and to fully enjoy their rights. It requires addressing the root causes of exclusion and understanding how intertwined the roots of different forms of exclusion are. Disability inclusion involves improving the opportunities available to people with disabilities, in particular those who are vulnerable and excluded.</p>
Reasonable adjustment	<p>Changes that employers, educational authorities and goods and services providers are required to make under Australian state legislation so that a person with disability can do their job, participate in education or access goods and services.</p>

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 Disability Inclusion Statement

The Province takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal access and opportunity to engage with and benefit from its operations, and that all Province projects and activities respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of people with disabilities.

Disability is part of human diversity, with the majority of people likely to experience disability at some stage in their life.¹ All communities have people with disabilities who experience varying types of disability and with varying impacts.

Disability is a human rights issue, with people with disabilities being subject to multiple violations of their rights, including acts of violence, abuse, and prejudice because of their disability, which often intersects with

¹ World Bank and World Health Organisation, World Report on Disability, 2011

other forms of discrimination.² In particular, women with disabilities face additional disadvantages, even in comparison to men with disabilities and women without disabilities.³

5.2 Disability Inclusion Commitment

5.2.1 The Province is committed to promoting, protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promoting respect for their inherent dignity.⁴

5.2.2 The Province is guided by the eight principles set out in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*:

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- b) Non-discrimination
- c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- e) Equality of opportunity
- f) Accessibility
- g) Equality between men and women
- h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities⁵

5.3 Management of Disability Inclusion

5.3.1 Each Loreto ministry to which this policy applies must:

- a) commit to applying this policy in all that it does;
- b) comply with laws relating to disability discrimination in Australia and other jurisdictions in which it operates;
- c) support and develop systems that maintain an environment that facilitates implementation of this policy;
- d) create a safe, supportive and secure environment to report breaches of this policy; and
- e) ensure their personnel understand and comply with this policy.

5.3.2 Each person to whom this policy applies must:

- a) know, understand and comply with this policy;
- b) champion good practice and maintain an organisational culture that prioritises disability inclusion; and
- c) report any disability inclusion concerns to their manager.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Including people with disabilities is a shared responsibility of all who work under the auspices of the Province and to whom this policy applies. The Province is committed to ensuring that all persons associated with the Province, its ministries and associated entities and to whom this policy applies are aware of their obligations under this policy.

² www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health

³ Background Paper for Informal Session on Women with Disabilities, Note by the Secretariat, Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

⁴ www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-1-purpose.html#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20present,respect%20for%20their%20inherent%20dignity.

⁵ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/guiding-principles-of-the-convention.html>

The following specific responsibilities exist in the application of this policy:

Role	Responsibility
Province Council	Approves and supports this Disability Inclusion Policy for the Province and its associated entities
MWIA Board and Loreto Ministries Board	Endorse the Disability Inclusion Policy for approval by the Province Council.
EO (MWIA) and CEO (Loreto Ministries)	<p>Recommends the Disability Inclusion Policy be endorsed by the MWIA Board and Loreto Ministries Board.</p> <p>Instructs and oversees the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>Works with key management personnel to operationalise the policy and ensures all requirements are followed.</p> <p>Notes feedback and opportunities for improvement within the Disability Inclusion Policy.</p> <p>Facilitates a regular review of the Disability Inclusion Policy.</p>
Key Management Personnel EO (MWIA), Manager, HR & Policy, Supervisors	<p>Key management personnel must ensure that all personnel understand and comply with this policy.</p> <p>The Manager, HR & Policy is responsible for recruitment, induction as per section 10.1 of this policy, and monitoring and reporting as per section 10.4.1 of this policy.</p> <p>The MWIA EO is responsible for the implementation of section 10.2 of this policy, and monitoring and reporting as per section 10.4.2 of this policy.</p> <p>Supervisors are responsible for individual personnel management to ensure the implementation of the policy.</p>
Committee Members, Contractors, Employees, Sisters and Volunteers	<p>Are familiar with the content of this Disability Inclusion Policy and the Province's commitment to disability inclusion in each entity's operational activities.</p> <p>Inform project partners and beneficiaries of the Province's commitment to disability inclusion.</p> <p>Champion good practice and maintain an organisational culture that supports disability inclusion.</p>

7. RELATED POLICIES, LEGISLATION & COMPLIANCE

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

[Fair Work Act \(2009\)](#)

[Discrimination Act 1991 \(ACT\)](#)

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Anti-Discrimination Act 1992 (NT)

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)

Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)

[Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

[ACNC External Conduct Standard 4 - Protection of Vulnerable Individuals](#)

[Loreto Child Safe Policy](#)

[Loreto Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Loreto Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#)

[MWIA Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)

[MWIA Commitment to Human Rights](#)

[MWIA Commitment to the Protection of Vulnerable Persons](#)

[UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

MWIA ACFID Compliance Requirements

Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct, Good Practice Toolkit, Quality Principle 2, Participation, Empowerment and Local Ownership, specifically: [Commitment 2.4 We promote the empowerment of people with disabilities.](#)

- [Compliance indicator 2.4.1:](#) Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- [Compliance indicator 2.4.2:](#) Members' planning process includes consultation with people with disabilities and contextual analysis of the barriers to social inclusion and participation.
- [Compliance indicator 2.4.3:](#) Members promote opportunities for people with disabilities and/or their representative organisations to participate in decision-making.
- [Compliance indicator 2.4.4:](#) Members monitor and evaluate their progress in promoting the empowerment of people with disabilities.

8. POLICY GOVERNANCE

Action	Detail
Policy Owner	Province Leader
Approved	Province Council
Approved Date	10 March 2023
Effective Date	15 March 2023
Review Date	15 March 2026

9. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Amendment details
1.0	15 March 2023	First publication of policy

10. PROCEDURE

10.1 Human Resources

The Province and its ministries will operationalise its commitment to disability inclusion by:

- 10.1.1 Creating Human Resources policies and practices that support and enable disability inclusion, and include the Province's commitment to access and equality for people with a disability, and the provision of a workplace free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- 10.1.2 Providing reasonable adjustments for personnel with disabilities, whether the disability is an existing or an acquired condition, or of a temporary or permanent nature.
- 10.1.3 Providing adequate resources to ensure that appropriate equipment and support services are available to personnel with a disability, where reasonably possible.
- 10.1.4 Endeavouring to make workplace information and communication more accessible for people with a disability.
- 10.1.5 Maximising the accessibility and usability of the Province's workplace environment(s) and making reasonable adjustments as required, for personnel with a disability.
- 10.1.6 Having regard for each person's right to privacy and confidentiality when seeking information about their disability for the purpose of making reasonable adjustments.
- 10.1.7 Taking measures to prevent and respond to all forms of disability inequality and exclusion by promoting awareness and providing effective systems for monitoring and reporting.
- 10.1.8 Creating a culture of inclusion where personnel feel, and are, valued and respected, have the opportunity to fulfil their individual potential, have access to opportunities and resources and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their workplace.
- 10.1.9 Reporting annually to the Province Council, the MWIA Board and the Loreto Ministries Board on disability inclusion practices in staffing and governance structures.

10.2 Projects

The Province and its ministries will operationalise its commitment to disability inclusion by:

- 10.2.1 Including our commitment to disability inclusion within development project materials provided to project applicants, project beneficiaries and project partners.
- 10.2.2 Ensuring that disability inclusion is a consideration at all levels of development projects, including project application, assessment, approval, execution and reporting.
- 10.2.3 Supporting project partners to identify and reach project beneficiaries with disabilities and encourage activities that address their inclusion.
- 10.2.4 Identifying project beneficiaries and participants with disabilities throughout the project cycle and take steps to address their inclusion.
- 10.2.5 Creating a culture of inclusivity and consultation where project beneficiaries and project partners feel, and are, valued and respected, have the opportunity to participate, access opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve a project's aims, decision making and outcomes.
- 10.2.6 Regularly reporting to internal and external stakeholders, donors and the public on progress on disability inclusion.
- 10.2.7 Reporting annually on disability inclusion in development projects.

10.3 Reporting Procedures

- 10.3.1 Internal reporting of any disability inclusion concerns by personnel is both required and expected.
- 10.3.2 Concerns about disability inclusion should be reported to a direct manager.

10.4 Reporting to Province Council, Loreto Ministries Board and Mary Ward International Australia Board

10.4.1 The Manager, HR & Policy will:

- a) report annually to the Province Council, MWIA Board and Loreto Ministries Board on disability inclusion practices as detailed in section 10.1 of this policy.
- b) make recommendations to the Province Council and the Boards for any changes or improvements to this policy.

10.4.2 The MWIA Executive Officer will:

- a) report annually to the MWIA Board on disability inclusion in MWIA projects as detailed in section 10.2 of this policy.
- b) make recommendations to the Board for any changes or improvements to this policy.