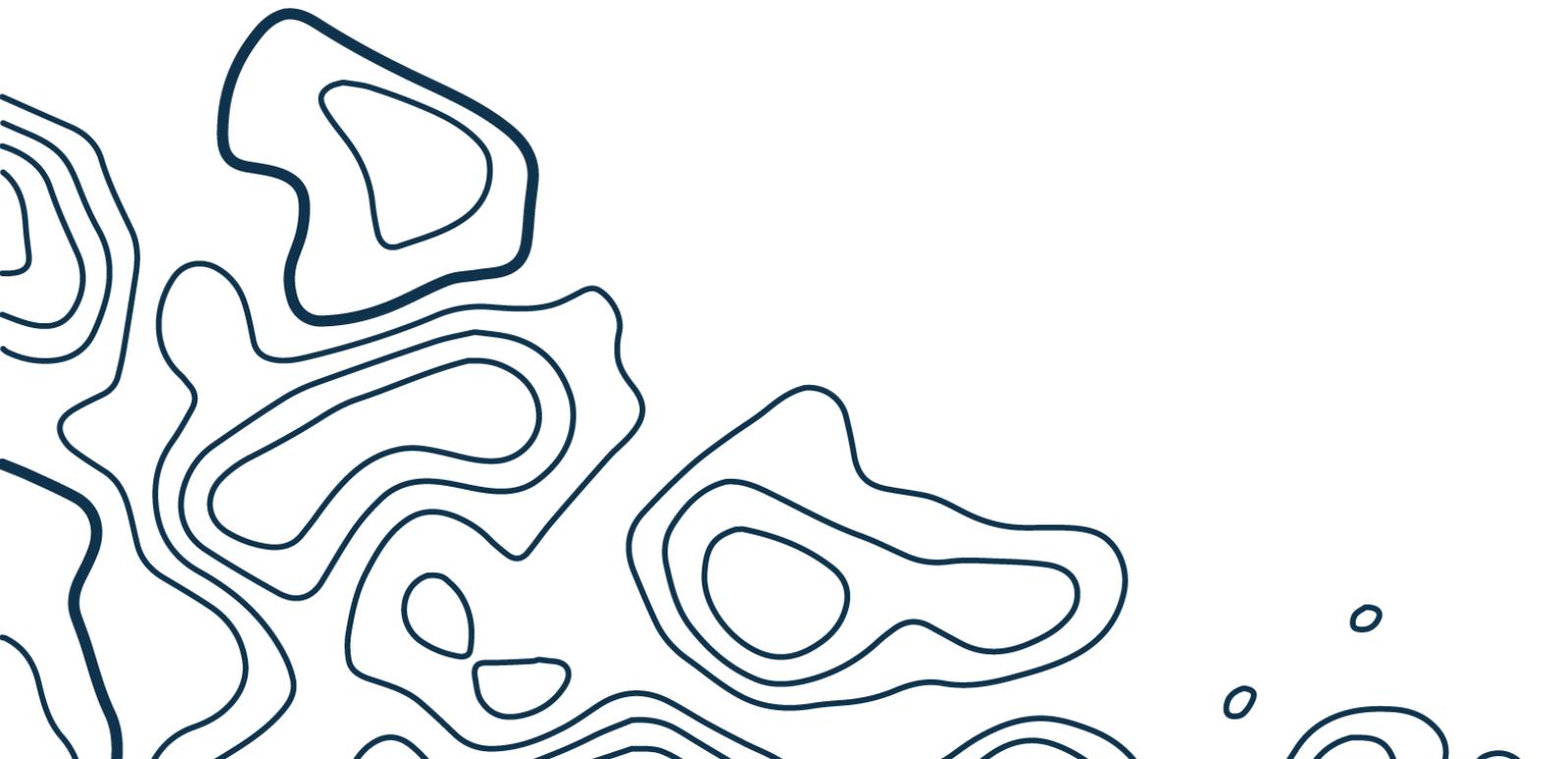




Palms Australia

# Philosophy, Policies and Code of Conduct



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## About Palms Australia

### Our Vision

People reaching beyond every barrier of culture, religion, nationality, gender, class & individualism, to cooperate in achieving a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world free of poverty.

### Our Mission

Facilitate, and be open to mutual formation and inspiration, with those who volunteer to:

1. Advance the awareness, enthusiasm and involvement of Australian and international communities in shared action to achieve just, sustainable, and peaceful development.
2. Participate in an exchange of knowledge and skills to meet the requests of communities seeking to reduce poverty by developing the capacities of their people and organisations.

### Our Values

Solidarity is the key energising value of Palms Australia. Solidarity is a principle arising out of our reflection that all living creatures are interdependent and that relationship invites responsibility and therefore solidarity.

Solidarity involves liberation of victims, oppressors and innocent bystanders, allowing all life to live to the full and is not about a vague sort of compassion or shallow distress at others' misfortune. The more who achieve this potential in life, the greater will be the contribution



of all to a common or universal good.

In valuing solidarity we value love that is lived out in respect for the dignity of all life. We value humility lived out in personal integrity and responsibility. We value justice lived out in a willingness to challenge structures that prevent collective participation in creative solutions.

The interaction of these values calls us to further values. The interface of love and humility suggests transparency. The interface of humility and justice suggests ecological sensitivity. The interface of justice and love suggests participative community building. The interface of love, humility and justice gives grace to the value of peace. Movement to such deep peace will be a movement to solidarity.

## Development Policy and Philosophy

Palms Australia engages and links people wanting to build a just, sustainable and interdependent world with communities requesting assistance to alleviate and eradicate poverty and to overcome oppression, disadvantage and injustice.

### Development Philosophy

Development is an economic, social, cultural, spiritual and ecological process that encourages the empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, communities and organisations to reduce poverty, enjoy and nurture basic human rights and independence, and work towards a future where the interdependence of economic and ecological sustainability is achieved.

Palms Australia believes that all people contribute to their own development and we can contribute to the development of others only when invited to do so. Sustainable development derives from the co-ordinated and negotiated plans of the local community. Palms Australia views partnerships with local communities as part of an on-going and dynamic process of interaction, dialogue and negotiation within a work environment.

Palms supports a development by preparing qualified and experienced professionals to build the capacity of individuals and institutions within a community. With the main objective being to bring about the transfer of skills and knowledge to communities, those participating in Palms program work side by side with the local people to develop the local skills and knowledge necessary for the communities to become self-reliant. All communities served by Palms seek a future without dependence on money and handouts.

### Aims

The Palms Australia development philosophy is articulated through the aims of Palms Australia

To provide the skills of Australians to requesting communities where those skills make a sustainable improvement to the quality of life of the materially poor and disadvantaged.

To assist Australians to understand the economic, social & cultural aspirations of people with whom we engage.

To contribute to partnerships that work towards a just and sustainable world.

To encourage participant relationships in their communities through the development of self-awareness, interdependence, and intellectual, ethical & spiritual insight.

### Requesting Communities

Palms Australia receives requests from communities or organisations wishing to build their organisational capacity and/or achieve a sustainable and self-defined future. Palms Australia calls these communities and organisations “Requesting Communities”. Requesting communities, through correspondence and completion of a Memorandum of Understanding and Conditions of Service, invite Palms Australia to assist them in achieving their aims and

objectives. Palms Australia recruits individuals with specific skills, qualifications and experience, known as Palms Australia Program Participants, in response to these invitations. Palms Australia places participants within communities, which have the capacity and commitment to host them and work together towards the overall goal of poverty reduction.

Palms Australia Program Participants contribute to the on-going process of community development through skills & knowledge transfer, institutional strengthening, capacity building and working collaboratively. The role of Palms Australia in the development process is one based on partnership and interdependence rather than external control and the creation of dependence. Such partnerships foster accountability and solidarity.

In this way, both Palms Australia Program Participants and Requesting Communities contribute to a process of development that is characterised by respect, mutuality, trust and equality.

### **Palms Australia Program Participants**

Palms Australia accepts the role of formation and support for those who participate in its Global program. Palms Australia invites its participants through training & preparation to develop a clear understanding of the development process, as well as awareness about the economic, social, political, cultural and ecological aspirations of the communities in which they go to work. This will enable them to participate & engage more fully in the life of the community in which they are invited to work.

During placement and upon return, Palms Australia encourages its participants to share their new understanding with the broader Australian community and to engage local community support for their work. In this way, it is hoped that the cross-cultural experience of Palms Australia participants will lead to increased awareness and support for development within Australia and a greater movement towards a just and sustainable world for all.



Roger and Maliana teacher talking of the need for teachers.

## Gender and Development Policy

All development activities have a gender impact and do not necessarily benefit women and men equally. Palms Australia recognises that just, sustainable and interdependent development can only evolve through the equitable & active participation of both women and men in leadership and decision-making within their community.

Gender equality remains a core development goal of Palms Australia. Having equal rights to, access to and control of resources, opportunities and benefits is fundamental to poverty reduction, achieving gender equity and the promotion of sustainable development.

Palms Australia also acknowledges that this policy must be implemented in a flexible, responsive and culturally sensitive manner.

Incorporating a “Gender and Development”<sup>1</sup> approach into the Palms Australia Program means considering both women’s and men’s needs and responsibilities and working to ensure that both men and women participate equally in the development activity, program or community as beneficiaries and decision makers.

In order to meet women’s practical needs, it may be that Palms Australia Program Participants become involved in separate activities with and for women. These may be required to promote the status of women and/or to promote their human rights.

Furthermore Palms Australia will seek to:

- Work with our partners to enhance the development of gender equity
- Continue to improve opportunities and outcomes for members in the communities we work by : –
  - enhancing women’s access to education, health, employment, other resources and political status
  - encouraging the involvement of women in decision making and the enhancement of women’s access to leadership positions.
  - recognising the unique contributions of both men and women in the development of communities.
- Supporting men and women in open discussion about their roles and responsibilities within the community.
- Broaden general awareness and understanding of gender and development among Palms Australia Program Participants, Palms Australia members and the Australian community.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that the language and image portrayed in our materials promotes cultural diversity and gender equity by avoiding the use of gender sensitive language in verbal and written communication

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<sup>1</sup> Reference from [Guide to gender and development](#), AusAID; [Gender equality in Australia’s aid program – why and how](#), AusAID

- Information sessions will discuss gender and development issues and scheduling of sessions will be timetabled to encourage attendance by all members of the community.
- Assessment of partners and placements to include gender issues
- Arrangement of placements to consider the necessary balance between family and work responsibilities.
- Improvement of Gender & Development and Country Studies sessions on the Orientation Course to provide adequate training and information about gender equity & associated issues.
- Encouraging participants to support efforts of community and employer to promote gender equity within a culturally appropriate and sensitive approach
- Evaluations of the placement by the participant and employer to continue to include reference to gender issues.



Local Timorese women with sewing skills are empowered and respected

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy

## *Introduction*

This policy addresses the principles and practice of equity, diversity and inclusiveness. It is consistent with the [Mission](#), [Vision](#) and [Values](#) of Palms Australia that emphasise cooperative relationships based on inter-dependence and solidarity. It recognises the value a diverse and multi-talented Board, staff and participant cohort can bring to the delivery of Palms programs, leading to increased development effectiveness in Australia and in Majority World communities.

The policy supplements Palms Australia's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity principles and practice that are legislative requirements applying to positions for directors and employees. In all its organisational and international positions Palms Australia encourages applications from women and men, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and people with a disability.

It is a policy that supports human rights justice recognising that it is unjust to marginalise and exclude people from access to opportunity. It is an intention of the policy to contribute to the elimination of discrimination against people based on gender, ethnic group, country of birth, political or religious affiliation, age, health status and people with disabilities. We seek culturally appropriate consideration from partner organisations around the world for implementation of similar principles and practice in communities where Palms program participants go to work.

## *Gender*

In upholding gender equity strategies, Palms Australia seeks to achieve fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men, recognising that different approaches will ensure more representative and equitable outcomes.

### Palms Board

For the Palms Australia Board, at least one-third of the Directors are to be women and at least one third are to be men. As the Board is elected by the members of Palms Australia at an Annual General Meeting for a three-year term, gender balance will be sought in the nomination of Board candidates and members will be sent this policy with pre-selection and electoral information.

### Management

Palms Australia seeks to have a gender balance in its organisation particularly in management positions. Where imbalances exist in the organisation, Palms Australia will use gender equity as a guiding principle for nomination, selection and /or secondment of staff to senior management positions. This principle of gender balance will be taken as an added weighting where nomination, selection and/or secondment to senior management positions are based on the relative ability, skills, experience and suitability for the position.

### Work/Life Balance

Palms Australia is also committed to providing staff and volunteers with a work/life balance that recognises the family, caring responsibilities and other personal commitments. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to discuss with management how they can best achieve that balance within their Conditions of Employment. This may include: access to part-time work, flexible working arrangements, study leave and other career development opportunities and extended maternity/paternity leave provisions. Palms Australia will give priority to being responsive to the importance of staff and volunteers achieving work/life balance.

Palms Australia's commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women in our global programs is outlined further in our [Gender and Development Policy](#).

## *Disability*

### Overall approach

Palms Australia is committed to making our products, services, workplace and culture welcoming and supportive of people with a disability. Palms understands that disability is relevant to every aspect of our operations – donors, employees, program participants, volunteers, communities, suppliers and key stakeholders. This builds on the Palms Australia policy related to Gender Equity, which recognises the value of diversity in its staff, volunteers and office holders.

### Employees

Palms Australia is committed to increased participation for people with disabilities as employees, office holders (including board members) and volunteers. Our recruitment methods give people with disability the opportunity to show their ability to do the job and we undertake reasonable adjustments to the workplace, including suitable technology to accommodate the needs of staff and volunteers with a disability.

### Documents and communications

Palms Australia is monitoring and updating its website to meet access standards. Palms follows guidelines for making our publications accessible. Palms documents are generally provided in formats (including Microsoft Word) that can be read by screen readers and other access technology. Other alternate format documents are also generally available on request.

Palms engages in a variety of electronic communications, such as the website, social media (Twitter, Facebook), and e-newsletters and appeals. Programs and applications used are chosen with accessibility as one of the key criteria for use.

### Accessibility of technology

Palms Australia will continue to build on existing accessibility features of the website, electronic communications and social media to ensure that staff, volunteers, donors and stakeholders have the best experience in carrying out their work responsibilities or when accessing information and engaging with Palms Australia. Palms Australia uses mainstream access technology and software as part of its office set-up and provides any necessary reasonable adjustments to meet the specific needs of people with a disability.

### Disability and overseas communities

Palms Australia recognises that many of the communities that it operates in have challenges with basic infrastructure needs, including the needs of those with disabilities. Palms work with local communities to develop appropriate local solutions to particular needs.

Palms Australia participants (especially those with health and allied services backgrounds) actively promote an inclusive view of disability and seek to assist communities move from traditional views of disability (where it is often hidden or shunned) to a more human rights based, inclusive approach.

The briefing and orientation for participants includes information on approaching issues around disability, tailored to the specific cultural approach of the community in which they will be working.

### [Disability and overseas placements](#)

Palms international opportunities are open to people with disabilities. The assessment of participants for overseas placement includes reviewing any reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of the person with a disability.

Palms recognises that overseas participants may also be vulnerable to temporary or episodic disability (particularly stress-related conditions) as a result of living in more challenging environments, with cultural changes and distance from family and friends. Palms has developed robust support and orientation programs, including extensive orientation briefings, in-country support and debriefing at the end of the assignment, to support and manage participants.

### *Cultural Diversity*

Recognition of the value of cultural diversity is at the core of the work of Palms Australia. It is the central tenant of [Palms Vision, Mission and Approach](#) to International Development Volunteering.

### [Overall approach](#)

Palms Australia is committed to making our products, services, workplace and culture welcoming and supportive of people from all cultural backgrounds – employees, volunteers, donors, communities, suppliers and key stakeholders. This is a further recognition of the value of diversity in its staff, program participants, volunteers and office holders.

### [Employees](#)

Palms Australia encourages participation for people with diverse cultural backgrounds as employees, office holders (including board members) and volunteers. Our recruitment seeks ways to encourage people with diverse cultural backgrounds providing opportunity to show their ability to do the job. Employees are encouraged to share cultural understandings especially on the occasion of special cultural events and celebrations.

### [Documents and communications](#)

Palms is continuously expanding documentation that can reasonably be expressed in the language of partner organisations including forms and information booklets.

### [Cultural Diversity and placements in overseas communities](#)

Palms international opportunities are open to people from all cultural backgrounds.

Where English is not broadly a language of communication in communities to which participants are sent Palms Australia engages In-Country Program Coordinators able to speak the local language and prepares and encourages our program participants to learn the local language. The briefing and orientation for participants includes information on language learning. Language resources are provided for participants to take to their placement.

### *Acknowledgement*

Palms Australia acknowledges Alex Varley (CEO, Attitude Foundation Ltd) as an advisor on mainstreaming Disability Inclusive Development into programs. DFAT's 'Development For All 2015-2020 Strategy for Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development in Australia's aid program' was also referred to in the process of developing this policy.

# Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

## 1. Preamble: Palms Australia's commitment

Palms Australia is strongly committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes and protects the rights and dignity of children and vulnerable adults and prevents all forms of abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults.

All staff, volunteers, directors, interns and contractors engaged by Palms Australia are expected to uphold the dignity of all with whom we work and abide by Palms Australia's Policy and Code of Conduct.

Palms Australia strongly condemns all forms of abuse and exploitation, including physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse of children and vulnerable adults. Abuse and sexual exploitation constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment. The protection of children and vulnerable adults is always paramount and all relevant legal steps will be taken corresponding to the legal and social conditions of the local situation.

## 2. Rationale

This Policy has been developed to clearly articulate:

- Palms Australia's strong commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults;
- Palms Australia's strong condemnation of all forms of child and vulnerable adult abuse or exploitation; and,
- Practical steps to be taken to ensure children and vulnerable adults are kept safe.

Additionally, this Policy will provide guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of abuse. It provides guidance to staff and others on how to work respectfully and effectively with children and vulnerable adults. This will provide all stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and others with a safe working environment.

Palms Australia is obliged to adhere to local and international criminal laws, which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. These include local laws where Palms Australia's programs exist, and international laws and Conventions in relation to all forms of abuse and exploitation, including: sex tourism, sex trafficking, exploitation of labour and pornography.

## 3. Guiding Principles

- Palms Australia does not tolerate any form of abuse or exploitation.
- All children and vulnerable adults have rights, outlined in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), including the right to be safe at all times.
- Palms Australia believes in the empowerment and participation of children and vulnerable adults and aims to create environments in which children and vulnerable

adults feel confident to contribute to discussions and decision-making. In such an environment, children and vulnerable adults will be more able to raise their concerns for their own safety and wellbeing.

- Palms Australia’s Child Protection Policy is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, [AusAID’s Child Protection Policy](#) and the [ACFID Code of Conduct](#). Nothing in this policy should be taken as repudiation of the concepts and principles outlined in these documents or of any civil law related to the rights and protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- All staff, program participants, volunteers, directors, interns and contractors engaged by Palms Australia are expected to read this policy and the related Palms Australia Code of Conduct. Adherence to these documents is mandatory for all staff, global volunteers and others who may be seen as representatives of the organisation.

#### 4. Definitions

**Palms Representative**, for the purposes of this policy, refers to all Palms Australia staff, program participants, office volunteers, interns, directors, state representatives, in-country representatives, contractors or others operating under the auspices of Palms Australia, in Australia or abroad, or who may be seen to be representing the activities and/or values of Palms Australia.

##### **Child or young person**

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Palms Australia defines child or young person as any person below the age of 18 years regardless of local laws or other definitions. Notwithstanding this definition, Palms Representatives may have additional obligations under local laws where a higher adulthood threshold is applied.

##### **Vulnerable Adult**

The Australian Department of social Services defines a vulnerable adult as an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

**Bullying** is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with an intent to injure either physically or emotionally. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. The bullying may be physical or psychological (verbal and non-verbal).

- Physically, bullying includes pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other action causing hurt or injury.
- Verbal bullying includes insults, taunts, threats and ridicules.
- Psychological bullying includes physical intimidation and ostracism.

**Abuse** can be physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or sexual abuse.

Boys, girls, men and women can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted on and by men and women, as well as by young people themselves.

- **Physical abuse** occurs when a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child or vulnerable adult. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing.
- **Emotional abuse** occurs when a child or vulnerable adult is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name-calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent or caregiver to the extent that it affects the physical and emotional growth.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child or vulnerable adult with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation, supervision or care to the extent that the child or vulnerable adult's health and development are placed at risk.
- **Sexual abuse** occurs when an adult, more powerful child or adolescent uses his or her power to involve a child or vulnerable adult in sexual activity. That coercive power can be physical, verbal or emotional. Sexual abuse is prohibited regardless by the age of majority or age of consent locally. Neither mistaken belief in the age of the child nor consent amounts to an excuse or defence to such situations.

**Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection** is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children and vulnerable adults being abused or maltreated.

**Child Sex Tourism** is defined (by ECPAT International) as:

*'...the commercial sexual exploitation of children and vulnerable adults by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children, defined as anyone aged under 18 years of age.'* (ECPAT International, 2006)

**Particularly vulnerable children and vulnerable adults** refers to children and vulnerable adults who may be at heightened risk of abuse within or external to the family situation, including at institutions, at work, on the streets, in war zones or in emergencies. In an emergency or crisis situation, children and vulnerable adults are extremely vulnerable when they become part of a displaced or traumatised population.

Children and vulnerable adults may also experience heightened vulnerability to abuse as a result of other factors, such as a disability or loss or absence of caregivers.

Particularly vulnerable children and vulnerable adults may experience greater difficulty in reporting abusive situations.

## 5. Context

Palms Australia recruits, prepares, sends and supports global volunteers in skill exchange programs aimed at reducing poverty. These programs occur in a number of countries, including Australia, and operate in collaboration with local partner organisations.

All Palms Australia global volunteers are over the age of 18, though some may be accompanied by their own children and vulnerable adults to Palms Australia's preparation and re-entry courses in Australia and to their placements, either in Australia or abroad. Volunteers are placed for an average period of two years in local communities and work directly for a local partner organisation. Placements are scoped by Palms Australia staff, in

line with Palms Australia's Quality Assessment Framework and Field Trip Policy and Procedures.

Palms Australia Global Volunteers will often live in a local community where children and vulnerable adults are present or may work in roles which require them to work directly with children and vulnerable adults, for example as teachers, youth workers or in hospitals.

Palms Representatives may also be involved in education or fundraising programs in Australia which may involve children and vulnerable adults, particularly at schools or churches.

## **6. Scope of the policy**

This policy applies to all Palms Representatives as defined above. While recognising the different laws related to children and vulnerable adults in different national contexts, all must abide by the Palms Australia Code of Conduct in all contexts.

### **7.1 Code of Conduct**

All Palms Representatives must sign the Palms Australia Code of Conduct prior to being engaged in activities connected to Palms Australia which involve, or may involve, children and vulnerable adults.

The Palms Australia Code of Conduct provides a simple articulation of the responsibilities and obligations of Palms Representatives in their interactions with children and vulnerable adults. The Code of Conduct is designed to establish clear professional boundaries, and to protect everyone involved from misunderstandings or violations of professional standards.

The following guidelines also form part of the Code of Conduct that must be signed by all Palms Representatives.

Palms Representatives must:

- treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect
- not use language or behaviour towards children and vulnerable adults that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- not engage children and vulnerable adults under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including payment for sexual services
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult person is present when working near children and vulnerable adults
- not invite unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- not sleep close to unsupervised children and vulnerable adults unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor's permission must be obtained, and ensure that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children or vulnerable adults under their direct care)

- never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children and vulnerable adults, or access exploitative material through any medium [see social media sharing guidelines]
- not use physical punishment on children and vulnerable adults
- not hire children and vulnerable adults for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- immediately report concerns or allegations of exploitation and abuse, and policy noncompliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law
- be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as exploitation and abuse

These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

## **7.2 Use of children and vulnerable adults' images**

**When photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult or using children and vulnerable adults' images for any purpose**, the Palms Australia representatives must:

- take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult
- obtain informed consent from the child or vulnerable adult and parent or guardian of the child or vulnerable adult before photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided.
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children and vulnerable adults in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children and vulnerable adults should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child or vulnerable adult when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form

## **8. Abuse reporting procedures**

It is mandatory for Palms Representatives to report concerns or allegations of abuse connected with Palms Australia or a Palms Representative.

All instances or concerns should be reported immediately to the Executive Director, or if occurring overseas to the relevant Country Program Coordinator. The individual receiving the report will acknowledge its receipt immediately.

Concerns which must be reported immediately include:

- any disclosure or allegation by a child or vulnerable adult that he or she has been harmed, or fears being harmed, by a Palms Representative
- concerns expressed by a partner organisation, government representative, other international NGO, or other person about the behaviour of a Palms Representative
- any observation or reasonable concern of inappropriate behaviour by a Palms Representative which breaches the Palms Australia Code of Conduct
- Inappropriate use of Palms Australia's photography or computer equipment for the purposes of pornography
- Suspicious behaviour of a Palms Representative in regard to sexual exploitation, trafficking or abuse of children and vulnerable adults

Palms Australia advises prudence in reporting incidents to local authorities. Many countries do not have sufficient protection services, and may not be able to effectively protect the child or vulnerable adult in question. Palms Australia recommends considering the "best interests of the child or vulnerable adult" as a measure of appropriate action. In any case, Palms Australia recommends discussing such incidents initially with the relevant Country Program Coordinator or Palms Australia's Executive Director.

Palms Australia will treat all reported concerns seriously. All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult regardless of the outcome of any investigation. Palms Australia will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting abuse in good faith will be protected, however Palms Representatives making intentionally false or malicious claims will face disciplinary action.

### **Confidentiality**

Palms Australia will ensure that the concern is handled with utmost care and confidentiality, including protecting the identities of the reporting individual, the person against whom allegations or suspicions have been raised, and the victim or potential victim of abuse. Details will only be released on a "need to know" basis or when required by relevant local or Australian law, or a notification to police or relevant authorities is made. The Executive Director may, at his/her discretion, seek advice from another staff member or Director before deciding how to proceed.

## **9. Risk management**

All Palms Australia programs should be designed utilising the principles outlined in Palms Australia's Risk Management Matrix.

Specific steps related to mitigating risk in matters of protection for children and vulnerable adults include:

- The acquisition of criminal records checks for all Palms Australia global volunteers
- At least two verbal or written references will be required for each global volunteer

- The employment of a specialist childcare worker at all Palms Australia courses attended by one or more children and vulnerable adults where parental supervision is not possible at all times
- The purchasing of travel insurance for all global volunteers and their dependents
- The inclusion of children and vulnerable adults of volunteers, where possible and appropriate, in Palms' pre-departure preparation and re-entry programs

## 10. Educating staff and others

Palms Australia is committed to educating all Palms Representatives on the principles of appropriate behaviour and their obligations related to the reporting of abuse. This Policy and the accompanying Code of Conduct make up part of the Palms Australia *Induction Kit* that will be provided to all new staff and board members within their first month.

Palms Australia will endeavour to keep staff abreast of the latest standards and will organise professional development for staff when necessary.

## 11. Reviewing the Framework

Palms Australia commits to reviewing the Policy and Code of Conduct every three years. The Executive Director will be responsible for this process and will engage staff and other stakeholders as necessary.



Timorese Children

## Environmental Policy<sup>2</sup>

Palms Australia recognises the link between poverty, vulnerability and environmental degradation. Any work that a Palms Australia Program Participant engages in will promote environmental sustainability, which in turn is a long lasting element in reducing poverty.

Palms understands its relationship to the environment as ecocentric. This relationship is specific yet holistic. The ecocentric approach considers the relationship that particular ecosystems have with each other (ecosystems would include both humans and non humans as well as the living and non living). An ecocentric approach includes economic, environmental, social and cultural systems.

### Environmental philosophy

The environment is central to the Palms Australia faith tradition. It is rooted in the understanding that the natural world is the primary revelation of God. When this natural world is degraded both humans and non humans suffer the consequences. Righting this imbalance is achieved through addressing things such as poverty, education, oppression and injustices.

Taking an ecocentric approach, Palms Australia works with communities so that they can recognise the imbalances in both their local ecological systems and the wider global ecological systems and the relationship that exists between both. In recognising the imbalances, which are both physical and spiritual, the communities work towards righting the imbalances as individuals and as a collective. Palms Australia Program Participants contribute to assisting individuals and communities through interaction, dialogue, self-revelation and encouragement.

### How this is achieved:

Palms Australia and the Palms Australia Program Participants:

- Supports the development of individual and community decision-making processes within an ecocentric approach. The decision making process would ensure that biological diversity and the integrity of the environment is fundamental to any outcome of the program or placement.
- Upholds the principle that the environment is not only enjoyed and of benefit to the present generation, but preserves and enhances the environment for future generations (Intergenerational equity).
- Adopts a precautionary approach where there is uncertainty in an action that may cause harm to the environment.
- Endorse the Earth Charter and encourage members & participants to adopt the spirit of the document.
- Draws on the wisdom, experiences and expertise of those who are involved in environmental research, policy writing and active in roles that promote, safeguard and ensure the sustainability and integrity of the environment. An example would be “The Convention on Biological Diversity” (Rio de Janeiro 1992).

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<sup>2</sup> Reference from [The Environment and climate change](#):- AusAID; [Environmental Management Guide for Australia's Aid Program](#)- AusAID; [www.earthcharter.org.au](http://www.earthcharter.org.au) - The Earth Charter

## Privacy Policy

This document details Palms Australia's policy with respect to the collection, holding and disclosure of personal information supplied to Palms Australia. This policy is informed by the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) (APP) which outline how Australian not-for-profit organisations must handle, use and manage personal information. When personal information such as name, address, or health details are collected, we are bound to follow these principles.

**Important: Palms Australia provides personal information to overseas entities for the purposes of recruitment and arranging travel. These overseas entities are not bound by the Privacy Act (1988) and APP and Palms Australia is not responsible for personal information held by these overseas entities.**

### 1. Application of this policy

This Policy applies to personal information of international program applicants, international program participants, travellers, members, office staff and volunteers, donors, and subscribers.

'International program applicants' refers to individuals who have submitted information for the purposes of applying for a long-term international placement. 'International program participants' refers to individuals who have been accepted into Palms Australia's global development program, prior to departure, during their term overseas, and upon their return to Australia. 'Travellers' refers to individuals who are registered on a Palms Australia Encounter tour.

'Personal information' is information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

### 2. Collection of information

Palms Australia collects personal information for the effective provision of our international programs, tours and domestic activities. Palms Australia collects personal information through:

- Online enquiry, application, and registration forms
- Information provided at events or in-person interactions
- Through publicly available publications (e.g. contact information provided on websites and published registers)
- Provision by a third party individual for the purposes of registering next of kin or program dependents.

Palms Australia will attempt to make clear the purpose of the inclusion of any sensitive information collected in application and registration forms. Individuals may choose not to disclose such information.

Palms Australia does not purchase or seek registers of personal information from third party entities for the purpose of marketing or communication.

### 3. Holding of information

Personal information provided to Palms Australia is kept in a secure database. This information is accessible by Palms Australia staff and office volunteers.

Sensitive information is stored independently of this database and is accessible only to designated staff members. Any access of this sensitive information for purposes other than those for which it was provided is prohibited.

Individuals have the right to access personal information held and the right to request that the information held on file is correct, complete & up-to-date. Individuals may, at any time, request their personal information be updated by contacting a Palms Australia representative.

#### **4. Disclosure of information**

Palms Australia will not disclose personal information to a third party or to a platform which may reasonably be considered public without the express consent of the individual, with the exception of sensitive information disclosed for the purposes of providing emergency medical care (See '6. Sensitive Information' below). Consent will be sought from international program applicants, program participants, and travellers to disclose their name and relevant information to overseas third parties for the purposes of securing an international placement or for necessary travel arrangements.

Information and opinions provided to Palms Australia for the purposes of distribution through Palms Australia's website and online platforms must have the consent of all parties represented in accompanying images. By providing an article for publication, the individual agrees for the information therein to be publically available until such a time as Palms Australia removes it from the platform(s). Requests to remove personal information from Palms Australia's public materials (online or in print) can be made to a Palms Australia representative.

Individuals will be notified of any request by a third party organisation or individual to access their personal information.

#### **5. Deletion of information**

Any individual may request, at any time, for their information to be entirely and permanently deleted from Palms Australia's records. An exception exists for records of electronic payments made to Palms Australia, the records of which must be available to Palms Australia for tax purposes.

To request that information is changed or deleted, an individual must contact a Palms Australia representative. Any requests for changes to, or deletion of, information must be made within three working days of receiving the request.

For individuals whose personal information is held for the purposes of their being registered as next of kin for international program participant or traveller, the international program participant or the traveller will be notified of this request for deletion and will be required to provide Palms Australia with details for a new next of kin.

The opportunity to unsubscribe from Palms Australia e-newsletter correspondence is made available in each instance of correspondence. Note that unsubscribing from this mailing list does not automatically remove an individual's record from Palms Australia's database.

## **6. Sensitive information**

Sensitive information is a type of personal information and includes information about an individual's:

- health (including predictive genetic information)
- racial or ethnic origin
- political opinions
- membership of a political association, professional or trade association or trade union
- religious beliefs or affiliations
- philosophical beliefs
- sexual orientation or practices
- criminal record
- biometric information that is to be used for certain purposes
- biometric templates.

Palms Australia will not disclose sensitive information of an individual without prior, express consent from the individual. An exception may be made for sensitive information of an international program participants or traveller in cases of medical emergencies.

## **7. Information held overseas**

Personal information of international program applicants, participants and travellers may be provided to overseas entities for the purposes of recruitment or organising travel arrangements. By applying for an international program placement or an Encounter tour, individuals give consent for Palms Australia to share non-sensitive information with an overseas entity. Sensitive information will only be shared with the express consent of the individual.

Palms Australia is not responsible for personal information held by overseas entities.

## **8. Reporting of data breaches**

Palms Australia is obligated to report any data breaches or suspected data breaches. Notification of a breach or suspected breach will be made to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and affected individuals will be notified of the breach and any necessary steps to be taken to protect their personal information.

## **9. Revision**

This policy may be revised in response to relevant amendments to the Privacy Act (1988) or legislation pertaining to digital data storage. However, the passage of new legislation does not negate this document. This document will remain in effect until such a time as it is reviewed and amended by Palms Australia.

## Principles Governing the Support of Palms Australia Participants

**Principle 1**— That Palms Australia staff will listen with respect to participants, recognizing their unique contribution to mission & development, while being responsive and consultative in all phases of the program.

**Principle 2**— That Palms Australia in collaboration with Palms Australia partners will ensure that participants are informed of job requirements; performance expectations; reporting channels; living arrangements and will receive suitable levels of support/guidance and feedback whilst in placement.

**Principle 3**— That Palms Australia will maintain a high standard in the provision of preparatory training & resources for participants before, during and after field placement to maximize the well-being, capacity and rights of participants.

**Principle 4**— That Palms Australia will aim to ensure ongoing participant security and minimize and manage risk, especially in areas of high vulnerability and post-conflict or natural disaster situations. Participants will be briefed prior to departure & throughout placement on any pertinent security & health risk specific to the country, insurance arrangements and medical evacuations.

**Principle 5**— to endorse and inform participants of current development issues and best practice initiatives as outlined by Palms Australia, ACFID and AusAID.

**Principle 6**— to maintain high levels of staff competency in the provision of support to participants before, during and after field placement.



98<sup>th</sup> Palms Australia Orientation Course January 2017

## Palms Australia Program Participant Code of Conduct

Under the code, Palms Australia Program Participants agree to:

- Work towards the achievement of the Palms Australia Vision and Mission
- Uphold the standards articulated in the ACFID Code of Conduct
- Abide by the laws, regulations & employment rules of the country of placement and employer.
- Maintain a professional standard of behaviour, in line with the Palms Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct (to be signed separately).
- Avoid involvement in party or sectarian politics, and public comment on political or religious matters.
- Refrain from any wrongdoing or conduct that may bring Palms Australia, its program or the Commonwealth of Australia into disrepute.
- Perform the duties set out in the Position Description in the best interests of the requesting community.
- Provide accurate & reliable reports to Palms Australia or donors when requested.
- Act in a manner which gives due respect to the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people with whom they work consistent with the principles of basic Human Rights (ACFID Code of Conduct).
- Cooperate with Palms to create and develop links with Australian Institutions for their own professional support in the field and the ongoing development support of the overseas partner with whom they work.
- Take adequate precautions to ensure personal security including:
  - abiding by the security advice given by Palms Australia;
  - immediately advising Palms Australia of any health, safety or security threat;
  - maintaining a sufficient balance of credit on their mobile phone.
- Avoid all comment to the media during any period of crisis, health or security threat, including during or after an evacuation.