



ACCI STANDARDS POLICY

APPLICABILITY: ACCI Missions & Relief Staff, Volunteers, Field Workers, Associates, Relief Partners, Missions Partners & Board Members (See Scope)

VERSION: 2 August 2023

AUTHORISED BY: Board Approved

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE: October, 2026

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
PREAMBLE.....	3
PURPOSE	3
SCOPE.....	3
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	4
1. SHARED VALUES AND STANDARDS.....	5
1.1. ACCI PURPOSE STATEMENT	5
1.2. ACCI SHARED VALUES	5
1.3. AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES STATEMENT OF FAITH.....	6
1.4. KEY ACCI POSITIONAL STATEMENTS.....	7
2. ETHICAL BASIS	8
2.1. ETHICAL APPROACH TO OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES	8
2.2. ETHICAL APPROACH TO MISSIONS TRIPS.....	9
3. CODE OF CONDUCT	10

INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

ACCI Missions & Relief is the overseas ministry expression of the Australian Christian Churches movement and consists of two separate Organisations under the one banner.

- ACC International Missions Ltd (“ACCIM”) is the Missionary sending and support agency of the Australian Christian Churches movement. ACCIM sends and supports Field Workers for various types of ministry in their country of service and partners with local churches to support and promote the cause of missions.
- ACC International Relief Inc (“ACCIR”) is the Aid and Development arm of the Australian Christian Churches. ACCIR carries out humanitarian projects with approved partners for the relief of poverty, suffering, distress and misfortune of people wherever they are found in the developing world, regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic background, religion, political beliefs or marital status.

These two separate organisations are collectively referred to as ACCI Missions & Relief (“ACCI”). ACCI is part of the Australian Christian Churches movement, a religious body, and as such, conforms to the doctrines, beliefs or principles of their religion. This includes, but is not limited to, the Australian Christian Churches Statement of Faith.

These two organisations have separate boards, governance, activities, and staff. However, they also have a number of aspects in common; such as shared office building and office equipment, Field Workers and project partners, similar policies and practices and the same Missions Director. For consistency and simplicity, it has been decided to operate under a common set of policies and standards.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a common set of standards, commitments, and policy framework:

- For consistent application across both ACCIM and ACCIR and the various categories of ACCI Stakeholders; and
- To provide a consistent framework of compliance expectations to our Relief Partners, who have their own organisations, boards, staff, and stakeholders.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all **ACCI Stakeholders** defined below.

- All ACCI **Staff** including but not limited to employees, contractors, and consultants.
- All ACCI **Volunteers** including but not limited to office and event-based volunteers.
- All ACCI **Field Workers**.
- All ACCI **Associates**.
- All ACCI **Missions Partners**
- All ACCI **Relief Partners**
- All ACCI **Board Members**.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ACCI recognises the following external standards, codes of conduct and guidelines:

- ACC Statement of Faith
- ACC Child Protection Policy
- ACFID Code of Conduct;
- ACFID Fundraising Charter;
- ACNC Governance Standards;
- ACNC External Conduct Standards;
- DFAT OAGDS Guidelines
- Fundraising Institute of Australia's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- Missions Interlink Standards Statement
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

ACCI will use this policy as a framework to train all stakeholders on an annual basis through an online refresher course of all ACCI policies.

1. SHARED VALUES AND STANDARDS

1.1. ACCI PURPOSE STATEMENT

Our Vision

ACCI's vision is for a world where all people have an opportunity to experience the gospel.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to see whole life transformation in individuals, families and communities by empowering our people to love well.

Implementation (Achieving our Mission)

We seek to achieve our mission through empowering our people; our missionaries, project partners, national leaders, pastors and workers and our Churches. We empower through...

- **Capacity Building** – ACCI provides training, coaching and support in the development and implementation of their ministry initiatives, sustainable development and rights based development projects.
- **Funding** – ACCI assists with fundraising, funds management, grant applications and acquittals.
- **Accountability** – ACCI maintains clear sending, partnership and compliance systems and processes that add value.
- **Engagement** - ACCI promotes the cause of Missions and advocates within our networks and provides opportunities for churches, donors and volunteers to engage with our mission.
- **Specialist Responses** – ACCI Kinnected Initiative provides technical support for programs which seek to preserve and strengthen families and assist children who are currently living in residential care to achieve their right to be raised in a loving family.

1.2. ACCI SHARED VALUES

As a Christian ministry, we are committed to fostering and maintaining a positive workplace culture that creates a safe, caring and productive environment. To enable this, we focus on 3 core values.

1. **Humility** - we practice respect for each other. We are respectful of others, their contribution and their equality. We value different perspectives, engage in respectful conversations by listening and asking questions and we aim to create a respectful environment by providing a safe place to learn / fail / excel / express / submit / request help and exercise personal responsibility.
2. **Collaboration** - we seek to empower team members through being interdependent and supportive. We are a team of competent individuals who achieve more by working together, not independently. We will be collaborative, provide coaching and opportunities for growth and will encourage innovation.
3. **Responsibility** - we encourage responsibility through self-learning, reflection, self-awareness and personal development. By encouraging intrinsic motivation, growth and accountability, we recognise that we are responsible to others for the activities we do and our conduct as individuals, partners and as an organisation. We each take responsibility for our own personal conduct, activities and interactions with others. We believe that self-accountability is holding ourselves accountable, so that others don't have to. We commit to seeking input and feedback

from all stakeholders and disseminating information to all stakeholders on how to provide feedback or make complaints.

1.3. AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

ACC United Constitution – Article 4: Doctrinal Basis

[Also refer to the Theological Supplements which expand upon the Doctrinal Basis]

4.1 The Eternal Godhead

We believe in God, who is eternal and self-existent, revealed as one being in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Creator of all things.

4.2 The Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, ministering in teaching, healing, and miracles. He was crucified and died on our behalf. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where He is now seated and exalted at the right hand of the Father as the risen Lord and Intercessor.

4.3 The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, fully divine, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He convicts, regenerates and sanctifies, and guides believers into all truth.

4.4 The Holy Bible

We believe that the Bible is the inerrant, inspired and infallible Word of God and our highest authority for faith and practice.

4.5 Creation

We believe that God created the universe and that all people are created in the image of God, to love and worship God.

4.6 The Devil

We believe in the existence and person of the devil who actively opposes the purposes of God.

4.7 The Fall of Humanity

We believe that all people have rejected God through their sinful acts and are separated from God.

4.8 The Atonement

We believe that salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone who—by His suffering, shed blood, death on the cross, and resurrection—has made full atonement for the sins of all people. We receive salvation by grace through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

4.9 The Church

We believe that the Church, the body of Christ, is the community of people who confess faith in Jesus Christ. While universal, the Church is local in expression and witness. It exists for worship, fellowship, evangelism, discipleship, and mission. Gifts of ministry are given by Christ to strengthen and mature the Church.

4.10 Water Baptism

We believe in water baptism by single immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a public declaration of a person's faith in, and identification with, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4.11 The Lord's Supper

We believe in the Lord's Supper which is in symbolic remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ until He returns.

4.12 Sanctification

We believe in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit who convicts people of their sin and inspires repentance and faith. The Holy Spirit transforms believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

4.13 The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is a transformative experience, distinct from and subsequent to salvation. It is available to all believers and accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. It results in empowerment for effective witness to the world.

4.14 Gifts

We believe that the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to believers for ministry to one another, the Church and the world.

4.15 Divine Healing

We believe that God heals today through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. By praying in faith for healing and miracles we witness to and continue the ministry of Jesus Christ.

4.16 The Second Coming of Christ

We believe in, and look forward to, the imminent and personal return of Jesus Christ to gather His people to Himself, and to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

4.17 The Punishment of the Wicked

We believe in the resurrection of the body. All who believe in Jesus Christ will have everlasting life in the presence of God; those who reject Him to eternal separation from God. It is the call of all believers to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ until He returns.

1.4. KEY ACCI POSITIONAL STATEMENTS

- Biblical Basis for Missions and Development
- Holistic Understanding of Poverty
- Justice for the Poor
- Creation Care

2. ETHICAL BASIS

2.1. ETHICAL BASIS FOR OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES

1. Problems are Complex

- a) We need to recognise that inequality is the basis of human poverty, which is far more complex than merely a resource deficit, with a simple cause and effect solution.
- b) Human poverty is much more than living below an arbitrary economic line. It is experienced as multidimensional deprivation that spans across physical, economic, psychological and social domains. Poverty deprives people of their basic needs and rights such as food security, clean water, adequate shelter, education, basic health care and security. More significantly the voices of the poor tell us that poverty deprives people of their dignity, self-worth and voice. It deprives people of their positive freedoms, meaningful choices and control over their own lives. It is defined as a state of being powerless.
- c) Inequality is basically a false and unbiblical hierarchy of human worth most commonly based on social classifications such as race, caste, gender, socio economic status, education and ability/ disability. When this inequality informs our societies and world's systems and structures, they become sites of partiality and injustice that favour the powerful over the powerless, and the result is poverty.
- d) We also recognise that there are intersecting drivers of inequality and marginalisation which include but are not restricted to race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class and socio-economic status.

2. Change or Transformation Goal

- a) The underlying purpose in missions is change or transformation. We feel compelled to act because we recognise a problem that requires a solution, a situation that needs to be changed for the better or simply room for improvement. Without a change driver, it would be merely maintenance.
- b) Any change within a community is a complex matter and any activity carried out for the purpose of community transformation is carried out within a complex context. There is no such thing as an isolated activity.
- c) Biblical principles form the basis of our understanding of ethics which can be summarised as outworking the two great commandments, to 'Love the Lord your God', and 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

3. Ethical Approach

- a) When we acknowledge that a situation is complex, we are more inclined to slow down and expect that we may not have all the answers. Unpacking the complex problems involves consulting widely, asking lots of questions, active listening, making and challenging our assumptions.
- b) It also involves alternating between zooming out to map the big picture and zooming in to explore details, including:
 - a. Drill down to the root cause of issues affecting the community
 - b. Identify the various stakeholders and the complex web of relationships they create
 - c. Locate community assets and strengths (not just needs and weaknesses)
 - d. Explore the cross cultural issues and the different worldviews and beliefs involved
- c) We pursue a human rights approach in programming, understanding that human rights are for everyone, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status

2.2. ETHICAL APPROACH TO MISSIONS TRIPS

1. Types of Ethical Missions Trips

Ethical Missions Trips will fall into 2 categories:

- a) Action oriented trips facilitate teams or volunteers to achieve a tangible goal which is related to a Program during the course of the trip, including:
 - a. Skills based volunteering and exchange, when someone uses their specific expertise and qualifications to assist a local organisation or community in a niche area.
 - b. Asset based trips, in which we first recognise that every community has assets and the capacity to envisage and initiate positive change for themselves. This could be by way of contributing to the resource pool communities require to fulfil their self-identified goals or coming alongside communities to work together and lighten the load. Either way, it's a 'do it together approach'.
- b) Learning oriented trips, designed to impart knowledge to teams about local and global issues, include:
 - a. Exposure trips are about exposing people to other countries, cultures and contexts.
 - b. Advocacy trips are designed to equip teams and volunteers with knowledge and awareness for the purposes of advocacy efforts that are most likely to take place once they return home.

2. Safeguarding Vulnerable Individuals

Ethical missions trips will prioritise the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals, specifically:

- a) Safeguarding children and upholding their rights must also be central to any short-term missions trip that engages with children; and
- b) Safeguarding vulnerable individuals and other program beneficiaries with whom we hold an unequal power dynamic.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

We are all responsible for upholding and encouraging an ethical and professional standard of behaviour, so All ACCI Representatives agree to comply with the ACCI Code of Conduct.

3.1. Commitment to an Aligned Vision, Mission, Values and Culture

- Align with ACCI vision and mission.
- Align with the ACCI shared values.
- Agree with the ACC Statement of Beliefs.
- Agree with Biblical Basis for Missions & Development and key positional statements.

3.2. Commitment to Good Ministry and Development Practice

- Commit to an ethical approach to overseas missions' activities and missions trips.
- Understand that good ministry strategy and project design is an essential starting point.
- Recognise that there are some activities or methodologies that ACCI will never endorse, while some activities require specialist skills, knowledge, or experience.
- Adhere to the requirements of the [ACCIR Development Policy](#), which states the four key principles of fair distribution, informed by local people: participatory and empowering, sustained or lasting benefits and inclusion.
- Adhere to the requirements of the [ACCI Gender Equality Policy](#) and [ACCI Disability Inclusion Policy](#) which includes a commitment to fostering inclusiveness of all individuals with special regard for those experiencing systemic exclusion based on gender, disability or ethnicity.
- Adhere to the requirements of the [ACCI Environmental Sustainability Policy](#), encouraging the faithful stewardship of God's creation.
- Have the capacity to deliver the activities and conduct appropriate monitoring and evaluation or willing to incorporate capacity building activities into the ministry strategy or project design.

3.3. Commitment to Safeguarding the Vulnerable

- Adhere to the mandatory [ACCI Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct](#), which states our commitment to being a child safe organisation and requires child protection processes and training appropriate to the organisation's level of risk.
- Adhere to the [ACCI Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) (PSEAH), which states our commitment to upholding these basic human rights.
- Adhere to the [ACCI Policy Regarding Visitors and Volunteers in Residential Care Projects](#), which address the issue of ethical engagement within projects that have a residential care component.
- Agree to regularly assess risk in relation to Child Safeguarding and PSEAH through our inherent risk assessments.
- For ACC Credential Holders, comply with the ACC movement's child protection training, reporting and other compliance requirements.
- Agree that any programs working with orphaned or vulnerable children will facilitate initiatives that strengthen families and communities and enable children to achieve their right to be raised in a family.
- Understand that we do not endorse the establishment of new children's residential care facilities or orphanages.
- Understand that ACCI only partner with existing children's residential care facilities and orphanages that commit to the Kinected goals and practices and are part of the Kinected program.
- Commit to not facilitating or promoting orphanage tourism and follow ACCIR's Protecting Children in Short-Term Missions Manual.

- Commit to the inclusion and representation of those who are vulnerable and those who are affected by the intersecting drivers of marginalisation and exclusion.

3.4. Commitment To Accountability and Transparency

- Operate with a high level of personal and professional integrity in all your stakeholder relationships.
- Ensure ministry activities and organisations are places where integrity is honoured, accountability is practised, unacceptable behaviour is not concealed and where appropriate corrective action is taken.
- Acknowledge of the CMA Principles of Ministry Governance as a basis for continued organisational improvement.
- Adhere with ACCI's policies regarding management and governance practices:
 - [ACCI Communications Policy](#); Including that any budgets, claims or reports made to any stakeholder in respect of the ministry or development activities, finances or fundraising/administration costs are realistic, accurate and achievable.
 - [ACCI Complaints Handling Policy](#) and [ACCI Whistleblower Policy](#); Including receptivity to complaints with an attitude that recognises the necessity for continual learning and development, striving for excellence and valuing and learning from the perspectives of others;
 - ACCI Governance Policy;
 - [ACCI Conflict of Interest Policy](#); and
 - [Privacy Policy](#).

3.5. Commitment to Implementing and Maintaining Appropriate Financial Systems

- Ensure appropriate financial and accounting systems are in place to manage project funds responsibly.
- Ensure budgets accurately reflect the costs associated with the proposed activities and have realistically achievable fundraising estimates.
- Take care not to mix personal, ministry and development project funding
- Commit to documentation and clarity around the ownership and control of overseas assets, such as motor vehicles, land and buildings.
- Adhere to ACCI's policies regarding the responsible use of resources and the prevention of fraud and corruption, including:
 - ACCI Finance Policy;
 - [ACCI Financial Wrongdoing and Risk Management Policy](#); and
 - [ACCI Counter-Terrorism Policy](#).

3.6. Commitment to High Standards of Conduct, Behaviour And Legal Compliance

- Adhere to the ACCI People Policy, and to not engage in unacceptable conduct or behaviour. Behaviour that should always be considered unacceptable includes:
 - Sexual exploitation or abuse of either children or other adults;
 - Aggressive or abusive behaviour such as threatening gestures or violence;
 - Verbal abuse (for example, yelling, screaming, abusive or offensive language);
 - Being under the influence of illicit drugs or impaired by alcohol
 - Bullying, harassment, intimidation or stalking;
 - Unwelcome physical contact including that of a sexual, intimate or threatening nature
 - Teasing, name calling, ridicule or malicious or mischievous gossip;
 - Abusive or harassing notes, emails, telephone calls, social media or text messages;
 - Stealing or misuse of Organisation resources or intellectual property;
 - Viewing inappropriate images or pornography in hard copy or electronically;
 - Fraud, bribery, corruption or money laundering; and

- Breaching confidentiality.
- Ensure that organisations you establish will be legally registered not-for-profit, non-government, foundation, social enterprise or business, that is appropriately licensed by the government to conduct activities.
- Adhere to laws and internationally recognised guidelines governing your ministry and project activities.
- Ensure any organisations, staff or associates are not listed on the National Security Australia website's 'Listing of Terrorist Organisations' nor the 'consolidated list' issued by DFAT. The organisation must use its best endeavours to ensure that their funding is not directly or indirectly going to people associated with terrorism.
- Provide a safe and healthy work environment for all stakeholders.
- Be aware of circumstances or hazards that present risks and take appropriate preventative or corrective action.
- Ensure an appropriate minimum insurance policy covering your overseas activities, personal health and travel.
- Plan ahead of time how you will respond to an emergency.
- Understand that there are documented processes for dealing with complaints, disputes, unacceptable behaviour and breaches of standards and Code of Conduct.

3.7. Commitment to Developing and Maintaining Personal Capacity

- Commit to be a lifelong learner.
- Demonstrate the skills and capacity to:
 - Engage in ministry activities;
 - Deliver project activities;
 - Conduct appropriate monitoring and evaluation; and
 - Achieve ministry and project goals.
- Recognise that some activities require specialist skills, knowledge or experience beyond the capacity of the organisation, and willingness to engage such expertise as required.
- Commit to learning the language and culture of the country and community where you are serving.
- Commit to maintaining good mental health and wellbeing.

3.8. Commitment To Partnership and Collaboration

- Adhere to the [ACCIR Partnership Engagement Policy](#), for our ACCIR development project partners.
- Fulfil contractual obligation in agreements.
- Commit to seeking input and feedback from all stakeholders and disseminating information to all stakeholder on how to provide feedback or make complaints.
- Ensure receptivity to feedback, assistance, and where appropriate, collaborating and sharing knowledge and resources with other organisations.
- Communicate regularly with the ACCI team, sharing highlights and being transparent about challenges that may arise.
- Comply with ACCI reporting requirements in a timely manner.
- Receive field visits from ACCI team.
- Understand that there are limitations to what services ACCI provide and ACCI's expectations of individuals based on the type of relationship entered into.
- Report breaches or suspected breaches of Code of Conduct using the relevant provisions of the Complaints Handling, Child Safeguarding, PSEAH or Whistleblower Policies.