

	Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedure	
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Climate change affects people, families and communities. The impacts are uneven and disproportionately affect vulnerable people already living with conflict and/or economic insecurity. The poorest nations and most vulnerable people are impacted the first and worst. Our Rainbow House recognises that environmental sustainability and climate action is essential to protecting the planet, supporting healthy communities, and achieving our mission to provide quality education in Zambia.

We acknowledge the urgent global need to reduce environmental harm and commit to integrating sustainable practices across all areas of our work, in both Australia and Zambia. We are guided by the principles of stewardship, responsibility, and care for current and future generations.

This policy reflects our commitment to:

- Complying with environmental laws and regulations in both Australia and Zambia
- Minimising our environmental footprint
- Promoting environmental awareness and action within our team and communities
- Promoting climate action and improved environmental outcomes through our development initiatives, including education, infrastructure, and community engagement activities

2.0 REFERENCE

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)

Environmental Protection Act 1994 (QLD)

Environmental Management Act No. 12 of 2011 - Zambia

Our Rainbow House Code of Conduct

Our Rainbow House Ethical Procurement Policy and Procedure

Our Rainbow House Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure

Our Rainbow House Partner Agreement Template

Our Rainbow House Partnership Policy

Our Rainbow House Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Policy and Procedure

Our Rainbow House Project Monitoring and Evaluation Tool

Our Rainbow House Project Planning Tool

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity: The variety of life forms within an ecosystem.

Board means the governing body of Our Rainbow House.

Climate action refers to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance climate resilience, and promote sustainable practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change and protect environmental and human well-being.

Community of Practice: A group sharing knowledge and practices on a common concern.

Environmental Sustainability: Responsible interaction with the environment to avoid depletion or degradation of natural resources.

Our Rainbow House community shall mean all representatives of Our Rainbow House, students, guardians and family members, caregivers, sponsors, donors and visitors, i.e., anyone directly or indirectly involved in Our Rainbow House activities.

Representative shall mean any board member, staff member, volunteer, student placement, apprentice, contractor, sub-contractor or any other person who is caused to undertake tasks or duties on behalf of Our Rainbow House.

Sustainable Development: Economic and social development that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

4.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all Our Rainbow House representatives and partners involved in our operations, both in Australia and Zambia.
- how Our Rainbow House responds to the ongoing climate crisis and works towards sustainable goals both within our internal operations and our program delivery.

5.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy is to:

- integrate environmental sustainability into our decision-making, operations, and development programs;
- promote responsible use of resources, particularly energy, water, and materials;
- educate and engage our representatives and communities in sustainable practices;
- encourage and prefer suppliers and partners who demonstrate environmental responsibility;
- minimise waste and pollution wherever possible.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Board: Oversee implementation, compliance, and periodic review of this policy and ensure procedures are in place to support this policy.

Australian and Zambian Staff: Coordinating implementation of sustainability practices, reporting progress and issues to the Board, and ensuring compliance with environmental laws in Australia and Zambia.

All Representatives of Our Rainbow House: Uphold the values and practices in this policy and contribute to continuous improvement.

7.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Our Rainbow House commits to the following actions:

Operational Practices

- Providing a safe, healthy, and environmentally responsible workplace for all representatives.
- Reducing, reusing, and recycling materials wherever feasible.
- Minimising use of non-renewable resources and energy.
- Preferencing sustainable products and suppliers in procurement decisions.
- Avoiding or minimising negative environmental impacts in all activities.
- Complying with all relevant environmental laws and standards in both countries.

Program Delivery

- Considering environmental impact and sustainability during the design, implementation, and evaluation of all our development initiatives.

- Promoting climate action and improved environmental outcomes through all our development activities, including education, infrastructure, and community engagement.
- Integrating environmental sustainability into school and community education where possible.
- Supporting local initiatives that promote environmental awareness, biodiversity, and clean energy.
- Considering environmental impacts when designing or modifying school infrastructure or community programs.
- Considering whether travel is necessary, and whether communication technologies and local capacity can be used instead.

Governance and Accountability

- Encouraging reporting of environmental concerns or suggestions by all members of the Our Rainbow House Community.
- Reporting environmental practices and outcomes in our Annual Report and other communications.

Collaboration and Partnership

- Participating in networks or communities of practice that promote environmental sustainability.

8.0 PROCEDURE

Office and Operational Practices

In both the Australian office and the Zambian school, Our Rainbow House commits to reducing its and environmental impact by:

Area	Procedure
Waste	Separate and recycle waste where facilities exist; reduce single-use items; avoid unnecessary printing
Energy	Switch off lights/equipment when not in use; preference energy-efficient devices; opt for renewable energy where possible
Water	Use water-saving devices and practices wherever feasible
Travel	Use communication technologies and local capacity to reduce travel; opt for low-carbon travel options where possible
Procurement	Preference local, recycled, or sustainably produced goods; avoid products with high carbon footprints
Infrastructure	Consider sustainability in construction/maintenance projects (e.g., solar power, local materials, energy-efficient buildings)
Carbon Footprint	Regularly assess and aim to reduce carbon footprint across all operations, including energy use, travel, and procurement
Minimising Impact	Prioritise climate-friendly practices, including waste reduction and adopting renewable energy in both Australia and Zambia
Biodiversity	Where applicable, manage any landholdings in a way that preserves or enhances local biodiversity

Climate Action in our Development Initiatives

In our development work, Our Rainbow House commits to:

- Integrating climate action into all program and project design. This includes:
 - Assessing environmental impact during the planning and implementation of programs.
 - Considering climate change adaptation and resilience strategies in program activities.
 - Promoting climate-smart agriculture and energy solutions where relevant in Zambia.
 - Supporting local communities in adopting climate-friendly technologies and practices, such as renewable energy, sustainable water management, and eco-friendly agricultural methods.
- Minimising environmental impact in program delivery by:
 - Using energy-efficient technologies and sustainable materials.
 - Promoting resource conservation (e.g., water-saving techniques, waste reduction) in the communities we serve.
 - Minimising the carbon footprint of program activities (e.g., using solar power in educational facilities, supporting local sourcing).
- Working with partners who prioritise environmental sustainability and climate action in their operations.

Training and Awareness

- All representatives will be familiarised with this policy and our sustainability endeavours as part of their inductions.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Our Annual Report will include updates on environmental efforts and achievements.
- Representatives will be encouraged to:
 - Report any environmental hazards or risks to the designated officer
 - Suggest improvements in sustainability practices
 - Participate in training or awareness activities

Complaints and Non-Compliance

- Any concerns about environmental practices can be raised confidentially by contacting admin@ourrainbowhouse.org.au, or via the contact facility on our website www.ourrainbowhouse.org.au.
- The Board will investigate significant breaches or risks and implement corrective action.

9.0 REVIEW

Date of next review: 16/06/2027