

Operational Environmental Stewardship and Climate Mitigation Policy

Purpose

Outlines Mary MacKillop Today's principles and commitments to promote environmental stewardship in our programs and operations.

Additional Authority: Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Scope: All employees and representatives of Mary MacKillop Today.

Responsible Party: CEO and Mary MacKillop Today Board Directors.

Policy Statement and Purpose

Mary MacKillop Today recognises the convergence of scientific consensus and lived experiences of the people we serve in communities around the world that climate change impacts, loss of biological diversity, and collapses of ecological systems have collectively emerged as the greatest threats facing life on planet Earth and its human population. We also acknowledge the evidence that measurable economic, livelihood, and cultural losses, and increased mortality driven by climate change and localised environmental degradation¹ are 15 times greater for people in highly vulnerable countries². Furthermore, statistically, those impacts are the most burdensome for women and girls^{3,4}.

We acknowledge that the First Nations people of Australia stewarded its lands, and terrestrial and marine ecosystems sustainably for over 60,000 years, which contrasts starkly against the rapid deforestation, loss of habitat and species, and pollution since colonisation.

Thus, we heed the call of the late Pope Francis for "all humanity" to "cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents". Mary MacKillop Today commits under this policy to reimagine and act on how we will undertake our organisational practices and communications **to minimise Mary MacKillop Today's contribution to environmental and climate systems degradation, and promote attitudes and processes that restore sustainable human, natural and climate systems.**

¹ IPCC. (2021). Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. See WG II TS-9

² IPCC. (2021). See WG II TS 17

³ UNWomen. 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>. and UNFCCC. 2022. <https://unfccc.int/news/new-report-why-climate-change-impacts-women-differently-than-men>

⁴ UNOCHA citing UNEP. 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/climate-change-exacerbates-violence-against-women-and-girls>

Scope

This policy applies to all activities undertaken by Mary MacKillop Today in Australia. The policy directs particular responsibility to the following departments:

- **Operations and Finance** – to minimise Mary MacKillop Today's contribution to unsustainable consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy Principles

1. Becoming a **lead thinker and actor in environmental stewardship and climate change mitigation** (CCM) directly contributes to Mary MacKillop Today's Strategic Direction 4: *Sustaining a healthy and effective organisation*.
2. Raising internal and public awareness, education and advocacy in favour of environmental protection, restoration and resilience as it affects partnered communities – especially enabling local and indigenous perspectives – contributes to Mary MacKillop Today's Strategic Direction 3: *Amplifying Our Voice*.
3. In the spirit of our founders, Saint Mary MacKillop and the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Mary MacKillop Today must **communicate and advocate with boldness and sensitivity**.
4. As key stakeholders in its Australian operations, Mary MacKillop Today's personnel are to have meaningful participation and contribution in identifying, determining, and implementing Mary MacKillop Today's environmental and climate stewardship initiatives.
5. All communications about Mary MacKillop Today's program support for environmental, climate and disaster resilience will reflect our commitment. Communications will be respectful of the dignity of people in partnered communities and will endeavour as much as possible to incorporate their perspectives and voices.
6. While Mary MacKillop Today has maintained a history of ensuring a principle of '**do-no-harm**' to minimise or prevent negative environmental outcomes, the present era of environmental and climate crisis compels us to take a posture of harm-reversal and environmental and climate restoration.
7. Mary MacKillop Today has an **ethical responsibility to be internally and externally transparent** about its environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation performance against its targets.

Core Commitments

Mary MacKillop Today is committed to reducing and preventing negative impacts on Australia's natural resources and generation of greenhouse gas emissions.

In finance and administration, we will:

1. Identify and action a methodology for calculating Mary MacKillop Today's annual operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, to establish a baseline level of emissions.
2. Establish five- and ten-year specific, measurable targets against baseline values for reducing Mary MacKillop Today's contribution to GHG emissions and resource consumption, and assess and

transparently report progress against targets annually.

3. Develop and establish an ethical and environmentally responsible procurement policy to define criteria for selecting suppliers.
4. Research and incorporate into annual departmental work plans actions that contribute to achieving its GHG and consumption reduction targets.
5. Monitor and update as required, Mary MacKillop Today's finance manual to provide recognition and ensure efficient facilitation of potential expenditures related to improving operational environmental and climate performance.
6. Nurture continuous learning to identify the most cost-effective and positively impacting environmental and climate stewardship options for the organisation.

In fundraising, marketing and communications, we will:

1. Calculate and record the environmental and GHG cost of each fundraising campaign by weight using a carbon calculator. Monitor the outcomes and use as a benchmark to compare future campaigns with a view to offsetting our carbon emissions.
2. As part of our commitment to develop our advocacy strategies, we will investigate utilising our communication streams to highlight environmental and climate themes of protection and restoration.
3. Work with our First Nations partners, and other agencies that serve First Nations people to explore and develop an Indigenous led understanding of care for country that encompasses environmental and climate protection and restoration.

Fiscal Stewardship

Respecting that financial resources are entrusted to Mary MacKillop Today, identification and selection of environmental and climate stewardship initiatives will favour options that generate long-term cost reductions through efficiencies where available. Yet, Mary MacKillop Today embraces that some responsible actions will require a medium-term increase in costs to assure an ethical and sustainable outcome.

Glossary

Definitions	In this policy, when referred to these terms means:
Environment ⁵	a. ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; b. natural and physical resources; c. qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; d. heritage values of places; e. social, economic and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in (a), (b), (c) or (d).
Sustainability	"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". ⁶
Climate Change	"a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that

⁵ Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999

⁶ The United Nations Brundtland Commission 1987

Definitions	In this policy, when referred to these terms means:
	persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.” ⁷
Anthropogenic Climate Change	“change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and that is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”. ⁸
Climate Change Mitigation	“A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases (GHGs).” ⁹
Greenhouse Gases	“those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of terrestrial radiation emitted by the Earth’s surface, the atmosphere itself and by clouds. This property causes the greenhouse effect”. ¹⁰

Linked Policies

- 3.8 Risk Management Policy
- 5.7 Code of Conduct Policy

Linked Documents

- N/A

⁷ IPCC, 2018: Annex I: Glossary [Matthews, J.B.R. (ed.)]. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., et. al.(eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA. At <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/>

⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.(UNFCCC)
https://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/press_factsh_science.pdf

⁹ IPCC. 2018. Op.Cit.

¹⁰ IPCC. 2018. Op.Cit.