

## Politics and Development Policy

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Unit	International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia		
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### Introduction

HFHA is a signatory to the *Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct* which acts as a guide for development organisations like Habitat for Humanity Australia to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing transparency and accountability. It is therefore important to ensure that HFHA projects remain both neutral of potential political influence or divides within communities and respect the rights of all people to freedom of thought, conscience and political beliefs.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that HFHA international program activities are guided by the principles of non-involvement and impartiality with respect to political activity in order to maintain its commitment to delivering development assistance to those most in need. This policy serves as a practical guide to HFHA staff and volunteers in professional relationships with partner organisations and the communities in which it works.

### Definition

Political activities are defined as supporting a political party, candidate or organisation affiliated to a political party.

### Policy Statement

HFHA is not, and will never be, affiliated with any Australian or foreign political party or organisation. HFHA formulates its own policies and priorities autonomously of the Australian government and foreign governments – noting that HFHA ensures its policies comply with the accreditation requirements of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in order that HFHA can participate in the Australian government’s international development program. It also endeavours to maintain political and organisational independence across all facets and functions of the organisation, including governance, management, programming, fundraising, communications, campaigning and financial management.

HFHA Program staff, volunteers and local counterparts will not encourage, respond to, nor engage in initiatives that:

- Fund programs that are designed to convert people from one political persuasion to another.
- Fund the building of political structures, including infrastructure, training or organisational activities - with exception to circumstances where those structures are specifically designed to provide and/or contribute to relief and/or development assistance.
- Discriminate on the delivery of relief and development programs based on an individual's or community's political beliefs or membership of a political group.
- Attempt to influence the delivery of aid to any area other than on a needs basis, including for political gain or bribery. [See also *HFHA Fraud Policy*].

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the HFHA Counter Terrorism and Anti Money Laundering Policy which also prohibits aid to specified criminal / political organisations.

### **Policy in Practice**

Through its policies, agreements, monitoring activities, communications and project development practices, HFHA will ensure that:

- Program staff, volunteers and local counterparts act within the provisions of the HFHA Politics and Development Policy, as well as understanding and supporting the principles of non-discrimination on the basis of politics or political belief.
- Whilst HFHA program staff and volunteers are able to engage in political activities in their own right as individual persons, all program staff and volunteers must maintain impartiality by not engaging in political activities whilst representing HFHA or when present on a HFHA office or project site (for example whilst wearing a HFH merchandise, banners or other materials) unless otherwise approved.
- Funds and resources are used for the purpose of aid and development and will not be used to promote a political party, or to promote a candidate or organisation affiliated with a political party.
- Project activities are identified and designed on the basis of need only, and do not support, include nor are influenced by any political party or candidate.
- The political preference of individuals and communities does not influence their participation in HFHA projects or as project beneficiaries.

### **References**

- HFHA Fraud Policy
- HFHA Counter Terrorism and Anti Money Laundering Policy