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Environmental Policy

Background

Burnet recognizes its obligation to demonstrate environmental leadership, maintain the highest standards and serve as an example to staff and the community at large. Burnet is committed to undertaking its work nationally and internationally in a manner that is sensitive to and minimizes negative impacts on the environment and climate change and considers the impacts of climate change on the communities and partners with which we work. Burnet seeks to incorporate this analysis and climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations into project design and implementation.

Purpose

This policy describes Burnet's overarching commitment to minimising its environmental footprint in all its national and international operations.

Scope

Employees, students, visitors, volunteers, collaborators and contractors at the Burnet Institute

Definitions

Environment

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 defines "environment" as including:

1. ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities
2. natural and physical resources
3. qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas
4. heritage values of places
5. social, economic and cultural aspects of the above

MISC_POL_1_10/2023

Environmental Impacts

Any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organisation's environmental aspects.

Impacts of climate change

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Warmer temperatures over time are changing weather patterns and disrupting the usual balance of nature. The impacts of these warmer temperatures include more frequent and more extreme weather events, which negatively affect human lives, ecosystems, and economies.

Senior Management

Burnet's Executive, Program Directors, Heads of Disciplines and International Operations or Executives who represent the employer and who have high level responsibility for the conduct of Burnet's functions.

People Responsibility

Those who have day-to-day responsibility for employees' workplace activities and/or are the person in control and management of the workplace, including those with responsibility to allocate tasks to staff, students and oversee laboratory or workshop tasks, field trips, contractors and volunteers.

Personnel

Any person employed under a contract of employment or training, whether the contract is expressed or implied, oral or written, and all students undertaking studies under Burnet supervision.

The definition includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) persons employed by Burnet (full-time, part-time or casual)
- (b) persons employed on research grants
- (c) postgraduate students and post-doctoral fellows (e.g., when employed part-time to perform work such as teaching or as a research assistant)
- (d) visiting researchers undertaking collaborative work
- (e) persons volunteering with Burnet

Contractors

Includes principal consultants, contractors and their sub-contractors, who may be engaged by Burnet for a variety of purposes including construction, building and facilities maintenance and repair, communication installations, deliveries and project work.

Policy statement/overview

Burnet commits to supporting the principles of environmental sustainability as a part of its mission to achieve better health for vulnerable communities in Australia and internationally. Burnet will establish policies, programs, and practices for conducting operations in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner. Within the scope of our work, operations and activities, we commit to take actions to prevent harm to our local, regional, and global natural systems, while supporting the repair and recovery of those systems.

MISC_POL_1_10/2023

Burnet's policy is to:

- Ensure activities, policies and procedures are compliant with all applicable environmental laws and regulations.
- Train, educate and inform our personnel about environmental issues that may affect their work, and encourage personal responsibility.
- Develop and maintain appropriate emergency and spill response programs where particular health, safety or environmental hazards exist.
- Engage with our partners at the Alfred Campus, *g.*, seeking to align where appropriate with the terms of reference of the Alfred Health Environmental Sustainability Committee.
- Commit to continual improvement by:
- Considering whether our work may cause a negative impact on the environment requirements within the DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguarding Policy 2018 (<https://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/aid-risk-management/Pages/environmental-and-social-safeguards.aspx>)
- Monitoring actions to avoid and/or mitigate impacts, and to consult with stakeholders to understand the extent of potential risks and mitigation strategies.
- Partnership decisions to take into consideration the reputation of potential partner organisations, in regard to involvement in activities that cause environmental degradation or disruption of life sustaining ecosystems.
- Conducting periodic self-evaluation of all environmental practices and policies and making appropriate changes to policies and related activities, to continually improve the system.
- Communicating our progress in implementing this environmental policy in our annual report.
- Incorporating further climate change considerations from activity conception to closure in our international work which accord with the principles of requirements within the DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguarding Policy 2018

Responsibility for implementation

- Burnet Board and all levels of management
- Employees, students, contractors, volunteers, collaborators

Related legislation

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
([umbraco/\(https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00081\)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00081))

Environment Protection Act 1970 ([umbraco/\(http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/acts-administered-byepa#EPAAct\)](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/acts-administered-byepa#EPAAct))

Pollution of Waters by Oils and Noxious Substances Act 1986
([umbraco/\(http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/aboutus/legislation/acts-administered-by-epa#pollution\)](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/aboutus/legislation/acts-administered-by-epa#pollution))

National Environment Protection Council (Victoria) Act 1995 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/acts-administered-by-epa#nepc>)

Climate change and Environment Protection Amendment Act 2012
(http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/num_act/ccaepaa201278o2012514)

MISC_POL_1_10/2023

Environment Protection (Distribution of Landfill Levy) Regulations 2010 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/regulations#landfill>)

Environment Protection (Fees) Regulations 2012 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/regulations#fees>)

Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Resource) Regulations 2009 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/regulations#iwr>)

Environment Protection (Residential Noise) Regulations 2008 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/your-environment/noise/environment-protection-residential-noise-regulations-2008>)

Environment Protection (Scheduled Premises) Regulations 2017 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/regulations#Scheduled>)

Environment Protection (Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2013 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/air-legislation>)

Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Regulations 2012 (<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/water-legislation>)

Related Policies/ Procedures/Guidance

Environmental policy guidance note for international activities (</policies/international-operations/environmental-policy-guidance-note-for-international-activities/>)

OHS Manual (</support-services/ohs/#a35308b3-e6e4-4fcb-b401-ac58ac8d58b6>)

Spill Procedures (</support-services/ohs/#caf272f2-6b69-4e50-bbf0-1f65bd0c0906>)

Emergency Management documents (</support-services/ohs/#baac570b-8fb7-488b-b030-4bda779ba032>)

Procurement Policy (</policies/risk-management-and-governance/procurement-policy/>)

Alfred Health – Environmental Sustainability Committee - Terms of Reference

DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguarding Policy 2018 (<https://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/aid-risk-management/Pages/environmental-and-social-safeguards.aspx>)