

Ethical Decision-Making Framework

Policy name	Ethical Decision-Making Framework
Policy date	23 July 2024
Authorisation	CEO
Policy owner	Executive, Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care
Policy type	Enterprise and Governance
Policy Setting	All staff

1 Ethical Ecosystem

- 1.1 This **Ethical Decision-Making Framework** forms part of Mission Australia's Ethical Ecosystem, which works to ensure we're true to who we say we are and make ethically sound decisions.



2 Core Principles

- 2.1 At Mission Australia (MA), all decisions – whether they are major strategic choices or investment decisions through to how a client should be treated – will:
- Reflect the intent of our Founding Purpose: Inspired by Jesus Christ, Mission Australia exists to meet humans need and to spread the knowledge of the love of God.
 - Align with the [Unpacking Our Founding Purpose charter](#) ↓
 - Uphold our [Values and associated behaviours](#) ↓ and our Operating Principles.
 - Be consistent with our Codes, Statements, Frameworks, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.

3 Ethical Decision-Making

- 3.1 Most decisions in MA have been encountered before and an ethically sound decision can usually be reached using the documents above.
- 3.2 The Ethical Decision-Making Guide explains how to handle more complex ethical decisions.

4 Unethical Behaviour

- 4.1 It is everyone's responsibility to act ethically and to speak up about anything that could be (or could be seen to be) unethical.
- 4.2 In that case, refer to our [Speak Up and Speak Out Statement](#) for guidance on relevant policies, raise issues with your manager or, if that is not appropriate, with a member of the Mission Australia Leadership Team (MALT) or a Chaplain.
- 4.3 If they are not able to resolve the matter, they can raise it with the Ethics Committee. External stakeholders should raise issues with a senior MA manager or Executive.

5 Accountabilities

- 5.1 Most organisation-wide and challenging ethical decisions will be made by the Executive Committee (ExCom), or by the CEO. Some will be determined by the Board.
- 5.2 ExCom will consider advice from the Ethics Committee before reaching a decision, unless there is a compelling reason not to.

6 Referrals to the Ethics Committee

- 6.1 Referrals can be made by ExCom, MALT members or Chaplains, following the process outlined in the Ethical Decision-Making Guide.

7 Ethics Committee Charter

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Ethics Committee (the "Committee") is to consider and make recommendations to ExCom on the handling of organisation-wide or challenging ethical dilemmas. The Committee does not make decisions on such dilemmas.

Responsibilities:

- Consider ethical dilemmas that are either organisation-wide or are challenging and recommend responses to ExCom.
- Review MA's priority ethics-related Codes, Statements, Frameworks and Policies before they are published.
- When requested by ExCom, debate or provide ethical input into areas of innovation or research projects that will require new policies but where legislation or precedents are unclear.
- Oversee application of MA's Ethical Decision-Making Framework and Guide.
- Communicate the outcome of any ethical decisions made by ExCom.
- Maintain an annual program of work, aligned to business need and strategy.

- Review MA's Ethical Decision-Making Framework and Ethical Decision-Making Guide annually and recommend any changes to ExCom.

Exclusions:

- Ethical dilemmas that can be resolved using existing MA documents (such as Policies) or the Ethical Decision-Making Guide.
- Research proposals using an external Human Research Ethics Committee.

Composition

The Committee will include eight (8) people with the following characteristics:

- The CEO will be a member
- The Executive, Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care will be the Committee Chair
- Remaining members will be selected to represent diverse perspectives to ensure a balance across the whole Committee of people:
 - with tertiary qualifications in theology, philosophy or involving research and analysis
 - with different identities - such as genders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people identifying as LGBTQIA+
 - with relevant lived experience
 - with different faiths and no faith
 - from different parts of MA and from different hierarchical levels
 - with experience of serving on Ethics Committees.
- The Committee may ask other staff, clients and external consultants to contribute to a specific discussion and may also seek legal advice.

There will be a quorum of five (5) at each meeting, including the CEO and Committee Chair.

Membership requirements:

- Have at least 12 months' service with Mission Australia
- Actively support Mission Australia's Founding Purpose as explained in the [Unpacking Our Founding Purpose charter](#) 
- Be sensitive to Mission Australia's history, explicit Christian identity and the views of key stakeholders
- Be willing to review information and present opinions ahead of and at Committee meetings
- Be prepared to challenge and be challenged, including in relation to Christian and other worldviews
- Be willing to meet at least four (4) times per year for at least two (2) years
- Have been trained or are prepared to be trained in ethical decision-making, including MA's approach.

Expressions of interest

Membership will be determined by the CEO and Committee Chair based on expressions of interest received to join the Committee and endorsed by ExCom.

If member numbers fall below five (5) it will trigger calls for new expressions of interest.

Meeting frequency

The Committee will meet quarterly, or more frequently if required.
On request, the Committee can present updates to MALT or CEO Forum.

Reporting

Ethical recommendations made by the Committee will be stored centrally and decisions will be accessible to all members of the Committee, ExCom, MALT and Chaplains.
The Committee Chair will provide an annual update to the Board.

Charter review

The Charter will be reviewed annually.

More information

The Ethical Decision-Making Guide.