

# ESG Statement

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For more than 200 years, The Benevolent Society has supported people at the margins of Australian society. Today we support children, young people, and their families; older people; people with disability; and carers. Fundamental to our work is the understanding that all Australians contribute to the richness of our communities. We recognise the worth, potential and inherent dignity of every person; and the power of diversity when operating in a complex environment. Our vision is for a just society where all Australians can live their best life.

We recognise the importance of charities acting legally, ethically and responsibly. Our approach to understanding and advancing Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) is shaped by our vision and strategy. Our part in achieving a better and more sustainable world for all is embedded in our culture of continuous improvement and learning, and anchored to our organisational values of integrity, respect, collaboration, effectiveness, and optimism.

We acknowledge the necessity of a balanced approach to acting on and advancing each element of the E, S and G domains, factoring in the underlying urgency and ensuring that the steps we decide take are considered, measured and follow best practice.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

We recognise the impact our business operations have on the environment and are committed to reducing our negative impact on the environment and contributing to mitigating the effects of global warming. In our 2021 – 2023 organisational strategy, we set a target of being carbon neutral by 2025 and using our procurement and financial investments to influence others to reduce their impact on the environment. As we embarked on this strategy, we realised the complexities and challenges of this task. In our 2022 – 2024 organisational strategy, we revised our strategic goal to reduce our impact on the environment and implement strategies to reducing our carbon footprint. We are at the early stages of examining our environmental footprint and identifying organisational strategies and actions to reduce our negative impact on the environment. In the meantime, we are relooking at some of our internal policies and considering supplier requirements.

## **Social Responsibility**

Those who experience the negative impacts and consequences from adverse social issues are usually individuals, groups and communities already experiencing disadvantage from their existing vulnerabilities. As a human services provider whose core work is to support people experiencing their existing vulnerabilities, we have been well placed to advance the 'social' domain of ESG. Currently, we are actively managing social risks in our interaction with people; this includes our staff, volunteers, clients and other people that may interact with us. At the core of our social responsibility, we are:

- instilling a human rights culture where the rights of our staff, volunteers, clients and people who interact with us are upheld;

- prioritising the health and safety of people who interact with us including staff, volunteers, clients.
- committing to reconciliation and supporting reconciliation through building relationships, respect and opportunities as well as understanding our impact on First Nations peoples and communities;
- promoting diversity and inclusion and actively adopting practices that contribute to the prohibition, prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination;
- adopting a rights-based approach to safeguard privacy (including, without limitation, strengthening our cybersecurity measures);
- taking steps to identify and address modern slavery in our service delivery;
- taking steps to ensure that our supply chain is transparent, fair, sustainable and as far as possible, free from modern slavery.

### **Good Governance**

Strong governance creates a strong foundation upon which environmental, social and other issues can be addressed. Good governance is central to ensuring accountability and acting ethically, and needs to be embedded in organisational culture and behaviour, and operationalised through a suite of mechanisms. We are committed to conducting our services and business with the highest standards of personal and corporate integrity. As a charity, we comply with the ACNC Governance Standards. Beyond this, we have adopted the current ASX Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations. In doing so, we voluntarily comply with the applicable principles and recommendations to the fullest extent practicable for a charity of our size, complexity and nature of services, and adapting them where appropriate. We review our Corporate Governance Statement every year and publish the Statement on our website.

We will continue to examine our impact and influence on ESG issues; remain flexible and make adjustments to our approach, and work collaboratively with sector peers to advance positive change.