

# Open Information Commitment

## Purpose and Scope

1. Save the Children Australia (SCA) is an organisation which relies upon the trust of its stakeholders (the children we seek to serve, the communities with whom we partner, donors, sponsors, supporters, host governments, peer NGOs, and the public) to fulfil its mission. By holding ourselves accountable, we demonstrate that we are worthy of this trust.
  2. *Accountability* is one of Save the Children's values, requiring that the organisation takes responsibility for using resources efficiently, achieving measurable results, and being accountable to supporters, partners and, most of all, children. Transparency is a critical component of being accountable, and we commit to being open and factual in assessing our work and in our dealings with all of our stakeholders.
  3. Our approach to putting these principles and values into action is to share information about our activities and operations openly unless there are compelling reasons for withholding it. By adopting this approach, we enable our stakeholders to assess how we have made decisions; how we have managed our finances; and, how effective our programmes have been. At the same time, an open flow of factual information on what has worked well and what has not gone to plan enhances opportunities for us to reflect and learn from experience to improve our stewardship and increase effectiveness.
  4. SCA publishes a range of material in print and/or on-line, including an Annual Report, with information about our governance and decision-making processes, strategies, policies, programmes, and finances. If the information sought is not readily available in SCA publications or on our website, requests for information can be made by email to: [supporter.care@savethechildren.org.au](mailto:supporter.care@savethechildren.org.au). We aim to respond to requests in a timely manner. If the information requested is not available or a request is denied, we will explain why.
  5. SCA is committed to sharing information openly, however, there are legal, operational and practical considerations that need to be taken into account, balancing our commitment to accountability and transparency with our obligations to other stakeholders, including our staff, donors, our partners, and particularly the children and communities with whom we work.
  6. Our Open Information Commitment does not extend to all types of types of information held by SCA. SCA will **not** disclose the following information to the public:
    - **Private:** Information which by its nature is private to the individuals concerned. Private information may include personal information held by SCA (such as name, address, social security number (or equivalent), financial information or health status) about any persons, whether employees, volunteers, sponsors, sponsored children or families, any other individuals.
    - **Confidential:** Information may be confidential for legal, commercial or contractual reasons. It includes information received from or sent to third parties under an expectation of confidentiality and commercially sensitive information (such as matters under negotiation or in dispute or detailed fundraising plans and strategies).
    - **Relevant to safety and security:** Information that, if disclosed could endanger the safety and security of any individual or jeopardises Save the Children's ability to operate in a particular country or location.
    - **Legal Advice.**
    - **Internal communications, processes and administrative details:** To protect the integrity of our business processes it is essential to encourage the free flow of ideas and information internally. Unless intended for public circulation, we will not disclose: internal communications or documents (such as emails,
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working papers or drafts); documents relating to internal investigations, audits and review findings (such as office capability assessments) which are aimed at improving the performance of the organisation; information relating to internal Save the Children administration or operating systems which have no direct effect outside the organisation.

7. Finally, SCA may also decline to provide information in the following circumstances:

- **Stewardship:** As good stewards, we need to manage the resources required to respond to requests for information. We may decline to respond to requests where substantial information is already available and provision of additional information would take up significant staff time. Where we consider that the cost of disclosure, whether as a time cost or a monetary cost, would be disproportionate to the request, we may decline disclosure but will explain that this is the reason.
- **Bona fide requests.** SCA will only reply to bona fide requests, requiring that the individual or organisation provide verifiable contact details.
- **Vexatious requests:** Where in our opinion a person is making frivolous, excessive or abusive requests for information, we may consider that the request is vexatious, and decide not to respond.

**Approved by the CEO: September 2018**