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 **WaterAid**

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UNGC  
Report

[wateraid.org/au](http://wateraid.org/au)

Children enjoying clean, safe water from new water infrastructure in Timor-Leste. Photo: WaterAid/Tom Greenwood

## About WaterAid

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### About WaterAid

WaterAid Australia is a member of WaterAid, an international non-governmental organisation. WaterAid is made up of member countries in India, Australia, Canada, Sweden, the UK and the USA, and has a presence in Japan. The member countries help to coordinate and fund operations across country programs with the mission to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised people by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

WaterAid Australia coordinates and fund programs in Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste and supports programs in Africa and India.

WaterAid's vision is of a world where everyone, everywhere has safe water, sanitation and hygiene. The organisation's work to achieve this vision is guided by four pillars. These include,

- **Equality:** tackling and challenging the inequalities that prevent the poorest and most marginalised people from realising their right to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.
- **Sustainable services:** supporting governments and service providers to strengthen the systems and capabilities required to deliver sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- **Hygiene:** positively influencing hygiene behaviour to maximise the benefits of access to safe water and sanitation.
- **Integration:** working with others to develop plans and activities that accelerate change by integrating water, sanitation and hygiene into sustainable development.



Children washing their hands at a portable water tank in Madagascar. Photo: WaterAid

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to express WaterAid Australia's continued support for the United Nations Global Compact and renew our organisation's ongoing commitment to the initiative and its principles.

The commitment to the Global Compact is an important example of WaterAid's dedication to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 6 on universal access to clean water and sanitation. WaterAid is acutely aware of the production and consumption factors highlighted by Goal 12 that are affecting our work and view the Global Compact as an effective conduit to affect change in this area. Furthermore, by engaging with industry as part of a global movement our organisation sees opportunities to more effectively address emerging global water challenges, such as water scarcity and pollution, that are having an increasingly negative impact on both businesses and communities.

The strength of mutual benefit outlined in this Communication on Engagement (COE) will drive WaterAid Australia's participation in the activities of the UN Global Compact where appropriate and feasible. We pledge to offer our knowledge and leadership to help shape special initiatives and work-streams, develop tools and research, further partnerships projects and help to hold business accountable with respect to their commitments to the Global Compact and its ten principles.

The attached document details WaterAid's practical actions in influencing change in a broader movement to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

Kind Regards,



**Paul Nichols**  
Chief Executive





In December 2013, WaterAid Australia signed onto the UN Global Compact (UNGC), and joined the Global Compact Network Australia. Launched in 2000, the UNGC is an international initiative which seeks to improve organisational practices in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

As a signatory to the UN Global Compact, WaterAid Australia is able to show leadership in the not-for-profit sector and ensure our policies align with the ten universally accepted principles.

Water is one of the greatest sustainability challenges facing business and is a key issue for Australia as the world's driest inhabited continent. Water underpins the global economy—it is essential for agriculture, manufacturing, metal, thermal energy, food, beverages, textiles, pulp, paper and many other industries. Water issues, including access, scarcity and pollution are fundamental risks to business that affect the bottom-line and carry environmental and social implications. This is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which recognises water and sanitation as critical components of sustainable development (Goal 6).

WaterAid sees its corporate relationships as important opportunities to emphasise water's importance in sustainable development. Under the WaterAid federation, WaterAid Australia is committed to the CEO Water Mandate and advises companies on how they can both protect their water supply needs and ensure poor, rural communities have access to clean water.

Corporate partnerships are critical to our success, not only in terms of raising valuable funds, but also in ensuring WaterAid has a strong voice in campaigning governments locally and in the countries in which we work to help us solve the water and sanitation crisis in developing countries.

As a member and participant in UNGC forums, WaterAid Australia is able to promote the necessity of universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene as a fundamental human right in overcoming poverty. Over the last three years, WaterAid has campaigned tirelessly to ensure a dedicated Global Goal for water and sanitation in the SDGs.

Through a partnership with WaterAid, companies can strengthen their corporate social responsibility and sustainability programs, commit action toward the SDGs and bring life-saving clean water and sanitation to the world's poorest communities.

With 7,000 corporate signatories in 135 countries, the UNGC is the world's largest voluntary corporate sustainability initiative and one that WaterAid Australia is proud to be a member.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe our actions to support the Global Compact and its principles over the period January 2014 - January 2016. We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.



Queensland WaterAid Ball. From Left:

Mark Thomas WaterAid, Rachael de Zylva, Get the Message, Paul Nichols WaterAid, Kurt Dahl, Permeate Partners.

Photo: Queensland Urban Utilities



Children washing their hands at a portable water tank in Madagascar.

Photo: WaterAid



World Toilet Day event in Melbourne CBD.

Photo: WaterAid/Olivia Greenwell





## Engage with Global Compact Local Networks

### Actions

WaterAid works closely with the Global Compact Network Australia to promote all activities, webinars and events and participates whenever we can.

WaterAid promotes our membership on our website and via social media channels as appropriate.

WaterAid advances the work of the UNGC in communications with national governments and community partners.

### Outcomes

Although headquartered in Melbourne with a delivery focus in the Asia-Pacific, WaterAid staff regularly travel domestically to engage with government, community and corporate partners.

This includes a WaterAid presence at business and non-business events throughout Australia with fellow members of the UNGC and concurrent supporters of WaterAid Australia.

WaterAid's membership of the Global Compact is published on our website.

This has led to a number of discussions with our water industry partners seeking to improve their approach to corporate responsibility in areas of environment and the promotion of equity labour rights, including funding of a number of WaterAid projects in Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.

This promotion has also lead to coverage on industry websites including the Goodbiz Network praising WaterAid's commitment to Principle 10 of the Global Compact.

In a recent submission to an Australian Government Inquiry into the delivery and effectiveness of Australia's aid program in Papua New Guinea WaterAid recommended Australia work with the Government of PNG and private sector partners to ensure that private sector engagement is increasingly pro-poor. In fact WaterAid proposed that businesses operating in PNG to sign-up to the UN CEO Water Mandate and the UN Global Compact amongst other initiatives.

## Participate in Global Compact global & local events

### Actions

The WaterAid team regularly attend Global Compact Network Australia events, webinars and AGM.

WaterAid was instrumental in bringing together stakeholders for a Global Compact Network Australia webinar on World Water Week.

### Outcomes

These opportunities connect our team to the UNGC's 10 Principles and assist in aligning the corporate and not-for-profit sector in a common voice to champion the rights of those under-served by governments globally.

The sharing of ideas amongst the network assists WaterAid in planning our strategies to increase our focus on ethical frameworks as we learn some of the challenges faced by big business, and the significant progress made.

The network brings together thought leaders driven to doing good which in turn encourages others to act more ethically and responsibly.

This webinar was successful in highlighting the emerging water issues in the South East Asian region. This also gained additional media attention through an article on the Australian Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility website. The takeaways from this session being:

Companies can contribute to improving the conditions that create water-related business risk, while also contributing to achieving the SDGs.

- Scaling up water stewardship will require closing the gap between leaders and learners, and the development of tools and resources for companies just beginning to address water management in a holistic way.
- Companies have a significant role to play in helping to address water security issues via collaborations with local and national governments, but there are significant challenges to policy engagement and collective action.
- The development of good metrics and data will be critical in demonstrating the impact of corporate water stewardship efforts and their contribution to the 2030 SDGs



## Join and/or propose partnership projects on corporate sustainability

Actions	Outcomes
Develop shared-value partnerships and promote CSR within the water companies.	<p>WaterAid has benefited with AUD \$2.2 million income from the support provided by Australian water utilities. This equates to funding WaterAid Australia's projects across South East Asia (Cambodia and Timor-Leste) in 2014/15 financial year.</p> <p>This includes grassroots fundraising initiatives such as WaterAid's Water Challenge which challenges supporters to drink just water for 14 or c30 days. Water industry partners are supporting this campaign as it aligns with their Choose Tap initiative advocating the environmental, economic and health benefits of drinking tap water over bottled options.</p>
WaterAid engages with the water industry through professional networks and particularly sector initiatives focused on assisting developing countries achieve universal water and sanitation as a mechanism for overcoming poverty.	WaterAid has recently joined the Australian Water Partnership, an Australian Government initiative that brings together the Australian development and water sectors under a long-term strategic engagement framework. As the leading water and sanitation development partner, WaterAid Australia will continue to strengthen existing and expand new partnerships both in Australia and abroad.

## Engage companies in Global Compact-related issues

Actions	Outcomes
In all corporate and program presentations, WaterAid's membership of the UNGC is highlighted.	WaterAid's advocacy in this area continues to elevate the Global Compact Network Australia within the Australian water industry. In fact the biggest proponents of our work, and the utility from which WaterAid Australia originated, Yarra Valley Water, is a member and ongoing supporter of the UNGC.
WaterAid has developed an ethical framework to guide potential partnerships.	<p>The framework development process has determined parameters for engaging in corporate partnerships so as to ensure activities are always in agreement with the ten principles that underpin the UNGC.</p> <p><b>At the most basic level, WaterAid:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When seeking funds will not enter into a relationship with a potential supporter or third party organisation whose work or activities negatively impacts on the mission of WaterAid i.e. is contravening the rights of poor communities to gain access to safe water and improved sanitation.</li> <li>Will not enter into any relationship with a third party organisation that poses a risk to WaterAid's reputation which could lead to loss of support and credibility.</li> </ul>



## Join and/or support special initiatives and work streams

Actions	Outcomes
WaterAid Australia's Corporate Relations Manager, Mark Thomas sits on the Global Compact Network Australia's Environment Leadership Group Steering Committee.	<p>WaterAid's presence on this Steering Committee has helped promote a deeper awareness within the Australian business community and elevate water supply as a critical aspect of business risk analysis and planning.</p> <p>The GCNA's Environment Leadership Group (ELG) was established to provide a forum for sharing, learning and collaboration in relation to corporate environmental responsibility, and to explore challenges and solutions to local and global environmental issues facing us. The ELG draws on the skills and knowledge of expert advisors, Government and business stakeholders to deliver forums and workshops that provide practical learning opportunities, and keep participants up-to-date on key domestic and international developments in the environmental sustainability space.</p>
WaterAid Australia's new Director of Policy and Campaigns is developing a strategy to engage the water industry in assisting WaterAid prosecute the SDGs and particularly Goal 6 on Water and Sanitation.	<p>This strategy is currently in the development stage but WaterAid is excited by the further engagement opportunities this presents.</p>

## Other actions to support the Global Compact and to engage with the initiative

The WaterAid federation is active on the Water Action Hub and has ten listed projects for funding through this mechanism. The Water Action Hub – an initiative of the CEO Water Mandate in partnership with the International Business Leaders Forum; Deloitte; GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development; and the Pacific Institute – is an online platform designed to assist stakeholders to efficiently identify potential collaborators and engage with them in water-related collective action.

WaterAid Australia's presence on the Water Action Hub is highlighted by the work of the Timor-Leste country program which aims to help deliver safe water, sanitation and hygiene for villages in Timor-Leste's through the construction of water systems and education on open defecation and hygiene with an overarching focus on the role of women.