

**tearfund**

**Australia**



# **Associate Board Member Information Packet**

**Applications Due:  
2nd January 2026**

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## So...what is the Tearfund Board and what does it do?

The Tearfund Board is a group of committed Tearfund supporters who volunteer their time and efforts to govern Tearfund Australia. The Board as a whole is responsible for the good governance of Tearfund Australia which includes functions such as setting strategy, approving policy, managing risk, approving budgets, and ensuring accountability to stakeholders. The Board's role is separate from management activities in that the Board provides oversight and guidance while management implements the strategies and operations on a daily basis.

## What is an Associate Board Member?

Tearfund created the role of Associate Board Member (ABM) in the late 1990s. The Associate Board Member is an exciting two-year internship-like opportunity for young adults who are interested in governance.

The ABM position was created with a few goals: First, the ABM is a learning opportunity for younger Tearfund supporters who want to grow in their understanding of how a not-for-profit Board functions and the part governance plays for a Christian aid and development agency. Second, the ABMs help ensure that Board conversations are consistently enriched by the perspective and contribution of young adults who often bring a different generational perspective to Board meetings.

## What is expected of Associate Board Members?

- **Time:** on average an Associate Board Member needs to be able to contribute up to 4-6 days each quarter in order to prepare for and participate in Board-related meetings. This includes:
  - Reading the Board documents prior to each Board meeting. There are usually over 120 pages of reports, strategy and policy documents which will be sent to you electronically about 15 days before the meeting is scheduled.
  - Travel to (as required) and attendance at all Board meetings (see *How Often Does the Board Meet?*)
  - Attending at least one Board subcommittee each quarter for an evening virtual meeting (approx. 1.5 hours). These committees include:
    - Assurance Committee
    - Governance/Membership Committee
    - Program Committee

Associate Board Members are assigned to one of these subcommittees each year and involvement on subcommittees will rotate so that they receive broader exposure to Tearfund's work.

- **Active participation in meetings.** This includes:
  - Active preparation before meetings to ensure you are ready to engage with the agenda topics.
  - Voicing opinions, asking questions and sharing ideas on any governance matters pertinent to the meetings. You can contribute as much or as little to meetings as you feel comfortable with.
  - Participating in working groups or projects as requested.
- **Tearfund Codes of Conduct and Due diligence:** Associate Board Members are expected to commit to Tearfund's Codes of Conduct and due diligence processes relevant for Board-level engagement. Due diligence aspects include:
  - Board Code of Conduct—maintaining the confidentiality of Board documents and discussions;
  - Tearfund Code of Conduct—underpinned by Tearfund's mission and values and which all Tearfund staff, volunteers and fieldworkers adhere to;

- A current National Police and working with children (relevant to your state) checks;
- A current International Police check (if applicable); and
- Safeguarding, Whistleblowing and Counter-terrorism training—online training provided by Tearfund which covers safeguarding children and vulnerable peoples, whistleblower processes and aspects of counter-terrorism relevant to Tearfund’s policies.

## How many Associate Board Member positions are there?

As per Tearfund’s Constitution, the Board has up to two Associate Board Members active at any given time.

## How long is the term?

Associate Board Membership is a two-year commitment.

## What might Associate Members gain from the experience?

- An understanding of governance, particularly for a Christian international development NGO.
- An opportunity to see Tearfund’s work from a new perspective.
- A better understanding of strategic planning and financial reporting.
- An understanding of key issues and emerging trends in the international aid and development sector.
- An opportunity to meet and learn from experienced people on the Board who bring a wealth of knowledge, insight, learning and understanding with them, including being assigned a Board mentor.
- A deeper understanding of Tearfund's approach to development and discipleship.
- The opportunity to improve communication skills and analytical thinking through personal contributions and interactions in Board contexts.
- The opportunity to participate in relevant training.
- Prior to the first Board meeting that Associate Board Members attend, there will be a period of orientation during which you have opportunity to meet various Tearfund staff, learn more about the work of the Board, and have questions about Tearfund and the Associate position answered.

## How often does the Board meet?

The Board typically meets five times per year: as a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings. The present pattern of Board meetings is outlined below (noting that issues beyond Tearfund’s control, such as COVID, will impact these plans including travel for face-to-face meetings):

Associate Board Members are expected to attend and actively participate in each meeting, which (depending on national or state-level circumstances) annually comprise:

February/March	This meeting usually takes place as a virtual meeting across two half days (Friday/Saturday) but may take place as a full-day (Saturday)—as determined by the Board.
May/June	A three-day retreat—beginning Friday at lunch time and ending Sunday afternoon ( <i>Melbourne – travel permitting</i> )
August	This meeting usually takes place as a virtual meeting across two half days (Friday/Saturday) but may take place as a full-day (Saturday)—as determined by the Board.

September	Mid-week (evening) virtual meeting for 1.5 hours
November	<p>This meeting is held the weekend of the AGM as either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday Night Annual General Meeting (Melbourne or another capital city – travel permitting) and full Saturday Board Meeting (Melbourne or another capital city – travel permitting) OR</li> <li>• Lunch time start on Friday (Board meeting), followed by the AGM (Friday evening) and the remainder of the Board meeting held Saturday (morning into early afternoon), unless otherwise determined by the Board.</li> </ul>

In addition, each subcommittee typically meets virtually, at least 4 times per year, on a weekday evening, for around 1.5 hours.

The Board may also decide to hold one or two trainings throughout the year—generally as a virtual, evening meeting (around 2 hours) if they cannot otherwise be incorporated into a Board meeting.

Tearfund covers the travel costs to attend Board meetings for people traveling from interstate.

## What happens during a Board meeting?

- Board meetings are a combination of single and multiple day meetings as outlined above.
- There are short breaks throughout for morning/afternoon tea.
- An agenda is distributed electronically with the Board papers two weeks before the meeting. Board and Associate Board Members are expected to have read and digested all papers prior to the meeting.
- Papers that correspond to the agenda items will inform discussion and pose recommendations for the Board to consider.
- Attire for Board meetings is neat casual, unless otherwise specified.
- Agenda items typically include:
  - Spiritual reflection, devotions, prayer
  - Reports against strategy from the different departments at Tearfund
  - Financial reporting
  - Strategic discussions—engaging with issues relevant to Tearfund
  - Compliance-related governance work
  - Policy development
  - Board subcommittees reports
  - Board Development—training on specific governance-related topics.

## Why don't Associate Members vote at Board meetings?

According to Tearfund's Constitution, to be a voting member of the Board you must be elected by the Membership or appointed by the Board as a Director. The Associate Board Member role was created to provide young adults exposure and experience with not-for-profit governance but without the legal and fiduciary liability that is held by an Elected or Appointed Director. That said, the Associate Board Members are actively part of decision making discussions and encouraged to share their views and perspectives to help shape Board decisions.

## Who is eligible to be considered as an Associate Board member?

An Associate Board Member is someone who is:

- At the time of appointment between the ages of 20 to 24 (inclusive) (as per Tearfund's Constitution).
- Committed to Tearfund's mission, vision and values.
- In full agreement with, and supportive of Tearfund's Charter, Constitution, and theological Basis of Belief. Copies of these documents are available upon request.

## What sort of person is Tearfund looking for?

Someone who is:

- Committed to meet with God regularly through Bible study and prayer
- Already interested in, or involved with, Tearfund or similar organisations
- Interested in community development, advocacy, community education or other fields relevant to Tearfund's work
- Able to dedicate significant time and energy to actively engage with the reading materials and meetings
- Able to think strategically and analytically about issues
- Able to communicate their ideas clearly
- Not related to or close personal friends with Tearfund staff (or have any other significant conflicts of interest)
- Connected to their formal and informal Christian networks
- Infectious in their passions and convictions; and
- Keen to engage others in the mission of Tearfund.

Tearfund Australia seeks to be a diverse and inclusive environment, in which people of different backgrounds, genders and ages work together. We are committed to be an equal opportunity organisation and aspire to create an inclusive Board. Please contact Tearfund if you have any questions about additional support that can be offered.

## How do you apply? / What do you do next?

**Tearfund is currently taking nominations for young adults from across Australia.** There are currently two positions vacant and the terms will run from May 2026 – May/August 2028.

If you are interested in applying, you will also need a Tearfund Board member, staff member or active Tearfund volunteer (Tearfund Member, Ambassador, Tearfund Group member, etc.) who knows you and is willing to support your application.

Over the years, Tearfund has greatly valued the contribution of Associate Board Members. An Associate Board position involves a significant investment of resources. Before applying, potential Associate Board Members are encouraged to prayerfully consider their decision to apply.

If you would like to apply, please forward the following documents to Deb Ware at [membership@tearfund.org.au](mailto:membership@tearfund.org.au):

- 1) A short CV, including contact details for two referees (one being a Tearfund Board member, staff member or active Tearfund volunteer as outlined above)
- 2) Short (*one paragraph each*) answers to the following:

- i) Share how you see yourself aligning with the question “What sort of person Tearfund is looking for?” (include any specific examples of involvement with Tearfund)
  - ii) Tell us how you came to be concerned about poverty and injustice.
  - iii) What are the ways you engage with poverty and injustice issues?
  - iv) How does your faith influence your involvement with issues of poverty and injustice?
  - v) What is your understanding of good governance and your personal interest in this as it relates to the Tearfund ABM role?
- 3) A short written endorsement by the Tearfund person who is supporting your application, briefly outlining the reason for their support.

**Fully completed applications are due no later than Friday 02 January 2026.**

A due diligence process needs to be undertaken on all applicants, including contacting referees and undertaking National/International Police checks and relevant Working With Children check.

The final decision about ABM applications will be made during the February Board meeting with the successful candidate to undertake their induction process during March/April in order to commence at the May Board meeting.

If you have any questions about the role or process, please contact Deb Ware at [membership@tearfund.org.au](mailto:membership@tearfund.org.au).