



**UNITED NATIONS  
GLOBAL COMPACT**  
COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

APRIL 2019



# STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

Allens has a long-standing focus on environmental sustainability, a dedication to supporting and respecting human rights and a commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.

As the firm's Managing Partner, I am proud to lead an organisation strongly committed to responsible corporate citizenship and to playing a leading role in our profession in upholding the principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

In the increasingly globalised context in which we and our clients operate, the UN Global Compact identifies best practice in corporate responsibility. Allens was the first organisation in Australia to sign the Compact and, since signing in 2001, we have continued to develop, implement and promote activities within our business that enable us to uphold the Compact's 10 principles.

This report outlines some of the practical actions we took during 2018 to implement the principles across the four areas of the Compact.



**Richard Spurio**  
Managing Partner, Allens

## > ABOUT ALLENS

### **We shape the future**

With a rich history spanning almost 200 years, we have helped shape the face of business, regulation and the legal profession in the Asia-Pacific region and continue to help shape what our world looks like with our clients, our people and our communities. We have built our reputation on the quality of our people, the strength of our client relationships and our innovative approach to complex work.

Allens is a leading international law firm with offices in Australia and Asia and we offer clients a global network of 40 offices in 28 locations through our global alliance with Linklaters.

We are privileged to hold some of the world's longest ongoing client relationships, and we bring our talent, expertise and insights to continue solving their toughest problems and creating new ways forward to help them thrive.

We are strongly committed to our obligations of corporate responsibility, and work with our clients, our people and our community partners to support a sustainable economy.

## > HUMAN RIGHTS

### PRINCIPLE 1

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

### PRINCIPLE 2

Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### COMMITMENT

Every human being is entitled to basic human rights – that is, freedom, equality, justice and the right to life. However, not everyone has access to the help or resources required to uphold these rights.

Allens has developed lasting relationships with non-government organisations and others within the community who are working to advance human rights. We recognise these groups are often in the best position to identify the issues, while we have the resources and expertise to assist.

Allens works hard to achieve its human rights-related goals, as set out by the firm's various community committees.

At Allens we demonstrate our commitment to supporting and respecting human rights through our extensive pro bono work and the ongoing implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan, as well as through our philanthropic support for community organisations.

## PRO BONO

Allens is proud of its longstanding commitment to its pro bono practice, and we work to make the most meaningful contribution possible within the communities in which we work and live. By working directly for disadvantaged individuals and the non-governmental organisations that work to protect human rights, we are able to strengthen the impact of our work.

A significant focus of our pro bono practice is human rights work.

### Representing asylum seekers

A large component of our human rights work over the last decade has involved assisting and representing asylum seekers at each stage of the asylum process. We run several clinics with specialist migration community legal centres, where our lawyers volunteer full or half days to assist asylum seekers prepare applications for protection visas. We provide advice and representation to asylum seekers whose applications have been refused and who seek review of negative decisions. Allens has also represented a number of asylum seekers detained offshore who have sought urgent medical evacuation to obtain specialist medical services not available to them on Nauru or Manus Island.

During 2018, we worked to secure the transfer to Australia of a young woman detained on Nauru, who had fled persecution in her home country with her brother and son. Our client had intended to join her husband, who had earlier fled to Australia and been granted a protection visa. Because the law had changed when our client came by boat to Australia, they were detained and sent to Nauru.

After years of separation from her husband and harmful conditions on Nauru, our client was assessed as having a high risk of suicide. Her son was also assessed as having serious mental health problems. Medical consultations concluded she required urgent medical treatment at a suitable tertiary medical facility.

Given the urgency of her medical situation, Allens and the Human Rights Law Centre instituted proceedings in the Federal Court, seeking an injunction that the government take all steps within its power to ensure the client, her brother and her son were transferred to Australia. The team sought an urgent hearing and prepared the application in less than three days, working with psychiatric experts to conduct consultations and prepare reports, as well as preparing supporting evidence.

The Court agreed with the team's submission that the imminent risk of harm justified an injunction requiring the prompt transfer of the family to Melbourne. Our client is now receiving medical treatment and has been reunited with her husband. Her son has also been reunited with his father, from whom he was separated at only one year old.

### Protecting human rights through pro bono work

In 2018 Allens also worked with the Human Resources Law Centre to assist a young Aboriginal woman incarcerated in a Western Australian prison who was about to have a baby.

The client wanted to keep her baby with her in prison, consistent with the WA policy on women in prisons and medical advice that it was in both the baby's and the mother's best interests. However, the Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services and the Superintendent of the prison resolved to remove the baby due to a lack of nursery accommodation in the prison. An independent report indicated it would be possible, but inconvenient, for the State to allow the client to keep her baby, but the Department of Corrective Services would not undertake to do so.

The Allens and HRLC team worked with the Aboriginal Legal Service WA to negotiate with the Department to dispute the reasons for refusal, seek an undertaking that the mother would not be separated from her baby, and highlight her medical situation. They also prepared an urgent application for judicial review of the decision. At the last minute, the Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services agreed to make another room available in the prison for the client and her baby, ensuring they remained together and preventing the need to issue proceedings.

This is one of many cases Allens worked on in 2018. As a law firm, we are privileged to be able to utilise our skills and experience to support the work of our pro bono partner organisations and achieve life-changing outcomes for clients.

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In 2018 we launched our fifth Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**), strengthening our commitment to building reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We seek to identify the areas in which we, as a leader in the legal profession, can make the most meaningful contribution towards building reconciliation within our communities and our country. This includes our ongoing work on constitutional recognition, pro bono matters and secondments, our Indigenous Legal Internship program and our collaboration with the broader business community to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and build the inclusivity and diversity of our organisations and communities.

Our 2018-2021 RAP can be accessed [here](#).

### Uluru Statement from the Heart

Allens was proud to be one of eighteen leading Australian law firms that jointly issued a public response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, in support of the voices of First Nations people being established in the Australian Constitution (the **Voice**).

Released in May 2017, the Uluru Statement from the Heart is a national Indigenous consensus position on Indigenous constitutional reform, which was drafted at the end of a three-day constitutional convention of 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates. The Statement was the culmination of 13 Regional Dialogues held around Australia during a year-long consultation.

Allens also continues to provide practical legal support and advocacy in the public discussion and parliamentary consideration of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including the provision of pro bono support to the non-profit organisation Uphold & Recognise. This included drafting a Speaking for Country Bill 2018, an Advisory Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Bill 2018 (both providing essential detail in relation to the Voice), and a Makarrata Tribunal Bill 2018, which formed part of the Uphold & Recognise submissions to the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (**Joint Select Committee**). The firm also provided its own written submission to the Joint Select Committee in support of the Uluru Statement and practical Constitutional recognition.



# 113

Indigenous law students have now completed our two-week Indigenous Legal Internship program, with many going on to forge careers in the law – at Allens, other firms and elsewhere in the profession.



# \$93,500

spend in FY18 on Indigenous suppliers. We continue to develop our supplier diversity through our sustainable procurement policy.

# 33

of our staff have now completed a secondment through our partnership with Jawun and Empowered Communities, contributing over **215** weeks to capacity-building work within a number of Aboriginal organisations and communities across Australia.

## > LABOUR

### PRINCIPLE 3

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

### PRINCIPLE 4

The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.

### PRINCIPLE 5

The effective abolition of child labour.

### PRINCIPLE 6

The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### COMMITMENT

Allens maintains employment arrangements and agreements that do not prohibit or discourage freedom of association or collective bargaining. The firm opposes all forms of forced and compulsory labour and seeks to abolish child labour. Allens is also active in working to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the workplace.

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## ACTIVITIES

### Equal Employment Opportunity

Allens is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and to eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace. Providing a safe and supportive workplace that values difference is critical to the engagement of our employees and the sustainability and growth of our business.

Our Equal Employment Opportunity, Bullying and Harassment Policy is supported by:

- a Grievance Policy that details the steps an employee can take if they feel they have been bullied, discriminated against or harassed;
- access to an independent, free and confidential counselling service for all employees and their immediate family members;
- compulsory online EEO training upon commencement with the firm and every two years thereafter; and
- an external 'Speak Up' whistleblowing service through which employees can raise concerns.

Allens reports annually to, and is compliant with, the *Australian Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. This legislation is overseen by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (**WGEA**) and aims to improve and promote equality for both women and men in the workplace.

### Inclusion and diversity

Allens has a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity: we celebrate the contribution brought to our firm by different backgrounds and life experiences.

By being inclusive, we're able to harness the unique contributions of our people to help us connect with our clients, solve complex problems, innovate, and attract and retain great people. Allens' inclusion and diversity strategy focuses on structural, behavioural and 'hearts and minds' opportunities across the key demographic pillars of:

- gender
- cultural and linguistic diversity
- LGBTI+
- Indigenous
- carers
- disability, and
- social mobility.

The strategy frames inclusion and diversity as a core business issue, and aims to leverage inclusive strength, actively manage the talent pipeline, drive conscious talent management and create a flexible working environment as business-as-usual.

Chaired by our Managing Partner, Allens' Inclusion & Diversity Council supports the Executive Committee and Board in creating a diverse firm and inclusive culture. We also have a number of employee network groups – Women@Allens, ALLin (LGBTI+) and Reconciliation (RAP) – that promote inclusive behaviour and outcomes across the firm and into the community.

### Gender representation and equality

Allens is building a culture of genuine inclusion to support the success of women in the firm. Our goal is to achieve at least 35 per cent female partners by 2022. As of 1 March 2019, 30 per cent of partners were female and at 1 July 2019, we are on track to be more than 33 per cent.

Allens appointed its first female chairman in 2016. We are recognised by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) as an *Employer of Choice for Gender Equality* and have held this citation every year since 2005.

Allens' career model, policies and initiatives have been developed with an emphasis on the engagement, professional development and promotion of women in the firm. We have a strong and high-profile networking and mentoring group, Women@Allens, which is chaired by senior partners in each office.

Allens was one of the first organisations in Australia to become a signatory to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles, and we are a signatory to the Law Council of Australia's National Equitable Briefing Policy, which aims to eliminate briefing practices that consciously or unconsciously limit opportunities for female barristers. We are also a signatory to the Law Council of Australia's Diversity and Equality Charter.



We are also working to mainstream flexibility for all employees across the firm, regardless of gender, age or life stage. We know our people have an increasing need for flexibility and may choose to take part in different kinds of flexible work at different times in their lives. We are working to create a culture where our people feel they are trusted to work in a way that allows them to balance the needs of the firm alongside the pursuit of their own career and life goals.

## LGBTI inclusion

Allens is dedicated to LGBTI inclusion. ALLin – our network for partners and employees who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI), as well as their allies – was established in 2011. ALLin provides opportunities for members to build relationships with each other, our clients and the wider community through events, network meetings and pro bono legal assistance on matters of interest to the LGBTI+ community. Around one-fifth of the firm is part of the ALLin network.

Allens regularly holds LGBTI+ information sessions and events, both internally and with clients and community groups. We were previously recognised as a gold/silver employer in the Australian Workplace Equality Index and are now awaiting the result of our 2019 submission.

Our people continue to dedicate their time to a range of LGBTI+ causes through pro bono work. In recent years this has included assisting LGBTI+ asylum seekers with their claims, and supporting local and international not-for-profits in their advocacy of transgender rights and expunging historical homosexual criminal convictions.

## Indigenous employment opportunities

As part of our Reconciliation Action Plan, Allens works to create Indigenous employment opportunities within our firm. Allens' Indigenous Legal Internship program commenced in 2006 and, since then, 114 Indigenous law students have experienced life at a commercial law firm. Three alumni of the program have obtained graduate roles at the firm. We continue to refine the program for better impact, in line with our commitment to diversity and an inclusive culture across the firm.

Our Corporate Services Cadetship also provides an opportunity for a promising Indigenous university student to undertake work with us while completing their studies.

## Wellbeing, including mental health

Allens takes the health and wellbeing of our people seriously. We know wellbeing is a combination of physical, mental, emotional and social health factors, and our approach to wellbeing reflects this.

We recognise that mental health is a significant area of focus for the legal profession. We play an active role in the industry group Resilience@Law, which is a collaboration between some of Australia's largest law firms and professional training college, The College of Law. Resilience@Law works collaboratively to effect change across the legal profession by eliminating the stigma of mental health, promoting psychologically safe and healthy workplaces and educating leaders and individuals.

Allens' partners and employees take part in mental health and resilience training and we support wellbeing through a range of initiatives such as flexible work and leave policies, gym memberships, flu vaccines, healthy catering, parental leave transition coaching, carer referral services, fitness challenges, confidential counselling support and targeted campaigns and programs.

## > ENVIRONMENT

### PRINCIPLE 7

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.

### PRINCIPLE 8

Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.

### PRINCIPLE 9

Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Allens has a long-standing focus on environmental sustainability, and we have committed to reducing our material environmental impacts and striving for continuous improvement in our firm-wide Sustainability Policy. We maintain an Environmental Management System (**EMS**) in our Australian offices and, in 2018, we achieved recertification of our EMS in accordance with the AEMS Standard developed by the Australian Legal Sector Alliance. Through our EMS, we assess our material impacts, set reduction targets, implement mitigation measures and monitor and report on our progress. We also report on our progress publicly through the Australian Legal Sector Alliance annual Sustainability Insights report, and through the Australian Government's Carbon Neutral Program.

## ACTIVITIES

### Climate action

Allens' Australian offices have been certified as carbon neutral in accordance with the Australian Government's Carbon Offset Standard since December 2014. Cutting the firm's emissions remains our priority and last financial year we reduced greenhouse gas emissions in our Australian offices by 7.3 per cent. We purchase our carbon offsets through the Qantas Future Planet Program, which enables us to access high quality carbon offsets from domestic and international projects that deliver not just emissions reductions activity, but also environmental, social and economic benefits for local communities.

Last year we added another Indigenous Carbon Farming project to our portfolio, the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project in the Northern Territory. This project has seen Indigenous fire managers and their partners in Arnhem Land successfully reinstate customary burning practices, producing significant social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits for Indigenous landowners. In recent years, measures to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions have included upgrading our video and audio conferencing technology and facilities.

### Energy and resource efficiency

Last financial year we reduced energy consumption in our Australian offices by 24 per cent. This was largely the result of switching to LED lighting in our Sydney office and rolling out new energy efficient laptops and dual screens. The new laptops also enabled us to adopt more paper-lite practices, and contributed to a 10 per cent reduction in paper purchases in our Australian offices. We also introduced a new document management system and electronic filing processes at the end of 2018, and we expect this initiative will lead to ongoing cuts in paper use this year.

### Waste management and recycling

We encourage our staff to reduce the use, reuse and recycle, and we provide employees with a suite of recycling options, ranging from organic to battery recycling. In 2018, we introduced new recycling streams and facilities in our Brisbane office, and we worked with our building manager to introduce takeaway coffee cup recycling in our Sydney office.

### Environment and Pro Bono

Allens provides assistance to environmental organisations, including Bush Heritage and WWF Australia, through our pro bono program. In 2018, we worked with WWF Australia to purchase and retire the last full-time commercial fishing gill net on the northern Great Barrier Reef, bringing to an end commercial net fishing in the Princess Charlotte Bay region north of Cairns.

### Partnerships

Allens encourages environmental stewardship and responsible consumption through our Sustainable Procurement Policy, our participation in industry groups, and our staff education and awareness raising events. Staff engagement and education is an important part of our environmental sustainability program. In 2018, our staff had the opportunity to participate in Earth Hour, World Environment Day, Ride2Work Day, National Recycling Week and National Plant a Tree Day events and activities. In 2018, we continued our membership of the Australian Legal Sector Alliance - an association of law firms working collaboratively to promote sustainability in the legal sector - and we actively participated in the Australian Government's Carbon Neutral Network, a network of carbon neutral certified organisations in Australia.

# > ANTI-CORRUPTION

## PRINCIPLE 10

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## COMMITMENT

As a leading law firm, Allens is committed to ensuring that our employees abide by the law. This includes laws that prohibit corruption in all its forms.

## ACTIVITIES

Allens has a range of policies that aim to prevent corruption in all its forms, including fraud and anticorruption policies. Aspects of the firm's anti-corruption activities are outlined below.

### Office of General Counsel

Allens' Office of General Counsel continues to help our people deal with ethical issues encountered during the course of their work. The Office of General Counsel is closely involved in a wide range of training at the firm, covering issues of ethical conduct, professional responsibility and anti-corruption.

### Anti-Corruption Policy

The Anti-Corruption Policy aims to ensure Allens personnel, as well as third parties that act on behalf of Allens, do not engage in corruption, and aims to minimise the risk of Allens breaching anti-corruption laws. All Allens partners, employees and contractors are responsible for the prevention of corruption when acting on behalf of Allens, and must ensure their own actions do not result in corruption. Additionally, all personnel have an obligation to report suspected corruption.

### Our work with clients

Given the rise in anti-corruption monitoring and enforcement at both a domestic and international level, coupled with increased opportunities for investment in foreign and emerging markets, there is a need for clients to ensure robust compliance programs and due diligence tools are in place to respond to these risks, and Allens has developed a well-recognised expertise in providing this. Our tools include:

- Tailored jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction geographic and activity risk analysis. We have conducted antibribery risk assessments for clients across the Asia-Pacific.
- Development and implementation of recommendations and internal policies following a risk assessment, including tailored anti-bribery and corruption training programs. For example, we have advised on, prepared and implemented global anti-bribery policies, compliance and training programs for a range of companies in the energy and resources, agriculture, technology and other sectors. These training programs are designed so the clients can undertake the training on an annual basis.

More broadly, we continue to run ethics sessions across our Australian offices as part of the Corporate Counsel Seminar Series – our continuing professional development program for clients.

# Allens › ‹ Linklaters