



# UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

APRIL 2020



# STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

Allens was a foundation signatory to the UN Global Compact in 2001 and we are proud of our ongoing commitment to the Compact's principles and our continuing focus on responsible corporate citizenship, sustainability, inclusion, and respect and support for human rights.

At a time of significant global health and economic challenges, best practice in corporate responsibility is critical and we will continue to work alongside businesses across the world to support and promote the Compact's 10 principles.

This report outlines some of the practical actions we took during 2019 to implement those 10 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 the Asia-Pacific region 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 we 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 commitment to compliance with Australia's *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth), our extensive pro bono work and the ongoing implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan, as well as through our philanthropic support for community organisations.

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## PRO BONO

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

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

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice

During 2019, Allens worked with the Aboriginal Legal Service in Western Australia to advocate for an Aboriginal boy from Bunbury in WA, who was only 13 years old when he was sentenced under the State's mandatory sentencing laws, having pleaded guilty to a number of burglary offences. The boy suffers from severe learning difficulties and has had a challenging childhood. His parents have a history of substance abuse and have spent time in prison. Despite being so young, he already had a history of similar burglary offences by the time of his sentencing hearing.

At the Bunbury Children's Court, the magistrate considered what appeared to be a conflict between two legislative provisions. On the one hand, WA's mandatory sentencing laws provide that a young offender who has been convicted of previous burglary offences must be sentenced to at least 12 months' detention. By contrast, the *Young Offenders Act 1994* (WA) allows the court to not have regard to previous convictions where they occurred more than two years ago or where 'special circumstances' exist. The magistrate determined that the mandatory sentencing provisions overrode the discretion allowed by the Young Offenders Act.

The WA Aboriginal Legal Service asked for Allens' assistance to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court. The Allens team submitted that the Young Offenders Act provisions were not overridden by mandatory sentencing laws and that requisite 'special circumstances' existed. The Supreme Court of Western Australia upheld the appeal and found that the mandatory sentencing did not override the discretion.

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Two years ago we launched our fifth Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**), strengthening our commitment to building reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. With the support of our RAP committees, we seek to identify the areas in which we 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. It is through this ongoing work that we can 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](#).



# 112

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



# 42

of our staff have now completed a secondment through our partnership with Jawun and Empowered Communities, contributing over **283** weeks to capacity-building work within a number of Aboriginal organisations and communities across Australia



# 6,534

hours of pro bono legal work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations during 2019

In 2019, we continued work to advance constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in particular, acting for our pro bono client Uphold & Recognise to progress earlier work relating to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We have also continued to provide pro bono legal advice on a range of matters to NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils. To date, the firm has assisted 12 Land Councils with matters including property rights, tenancy agreements, contract review, employment relations and governance questions.

Education and employment pathways remain a focus of our RAP commitment. In 2019, eight Indigenous law students completed our two-week Indigenous legal internship program. 122 students have now completed that program. Many of our staff provide mentor support to secondary and tertiary students through our RAP partner organisations Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (**AIEF**) and AIME Mentoring (**AIME**), as well as through the Reconciliation Action Mentoring Program established by our Brisbane RAP committee in conjunction with several Queensland universities. The firm is on track to meet its 2021 target of increasing its Indigenous employment to 1%.

Our partnership with Jawun and the Empowered Communities project continues, with seven of our people undertaking secondments of 6-12 weeks in 2019, to support capacity building in organisations in Aboriginal communities around Australia.

As a founding member of Supply Nation, we continue to seek opportunities to engage with the Indigenous business sector through our procurement decisions, mentoring and pro bono support. Several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses attended the social and Indigenous enterprise bootcamp held in Melbourne – a half-day workshop providing legal and practical advice targeted towards entrepreneurs in the early stages of establishing their business.

## > 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 supports and respects the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights and we are committed to providing a fair and safe workplace where our employees are treated with dignity and respect. As a purchaser of products and services, we also aim to reduce adverse impacts and identify opportunities within our supply chain to drive positive social and environmental change.

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 does not tolerate discrimination, harassment or 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 is compliant with the *Australian Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth). This legislation is overseen by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (**WGEA**), to which Allens reports. WGEA aims to improve and promote equality for both women and men in the workplace.

### Inclusion and diversity

Allens has long been committed to inclusion and diversity. Harnessing the many talents of our people helps us connect with our clients, solve complex problems, innovate and attract even more great people.

Allens' inclusion and diversity strategy focuses on implementing the right structures, driving inclusive behaviours and building 'hearts and minds' commitment across a range of pillars, including gender, parents and carers, LGBTQ+, Indigenous, cultural and linguistic diversity, disability and flexible work. We work to build on inclusion as a strength, mainstream flexible work and actively support and manage our talented people throughout their careers.

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 at Allens, ALLin (LGBTQ+) 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 35% female partners by 2022. At 1 July 2020, 33% of partners were female.

In 2020, Allens was recognised by the WGEA as an *Employer of Choice for Gender Equality* for the 15th consecutive year. Our 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 at 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. 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, and a signatory to the Council's Diversity and Equality Charter. Allens is also a signatory to the NSW Law Society's Charter for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession.



We are working to mainstream flexible work for all employees across the firm, regardless of gender, age or life stage. 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 career and life goals.

### LGBTQ+ inclusion

Allens is dedicated to improving LGBTQ+ inclusion. ALLin – our network for partners and employees who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (**LGBTQ+**), 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 LGBTQ+ community.

Allens regularly holds LGBTQ+ information sessions and events, both internally and with clients and community groups. We are currently recognised as a bronze employer in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (**AWEI**).

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

### Indigenous employment opportunities

As part of our Reconciliation Action Plan, Allens creates employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians to expand their skills and experience.

Allens' Indigenous Legal Internship program commenced in 2006. Through that program, more than 120 Indigenous law students have taken up the opportunity to experience life at a commercial law firm. Each year, our Corporate Services Cadetship also provides an opportunity for a promising Indigenous university student to undertake work with us while completing their studies.

As noted above, through our RAP education partners AIEF and AIME, we provide mentoring and career pathways support to secondary and tertiary students. Allens' employees take part in mentoring programs for students, as well as running workshops on topics such as CV and interview preparation.

### 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 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, working collaboratively with other firms to help eliminate the stigma of mental health, educate leaders and individuals, and promote psychologically safe and healthy workplaces.

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, skin checks, healthy catering, parental leave transition coaching, carer referral services, fitness challenges, confidential counselling support and targeted campaigns and programs.

### Modern slavery

In 2019 we conducted a review of our responsible sourcing procedures in line with Australia's new *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth). The review included mapping and assessing risks of modern slavery practices in our supply chain, conducting targeted supplier due diligence and developing a Supplier Code of Conduct (**SCC**). The SCC was designed to inform suppliers about the firm's commitments as a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact, our approach to responsible sourcing and our expectations with respect to human rights and labour standards. Staff in key procurement roles were also provided with information about modern slavery and the firm's responsible sourcing processes.

## > 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.

### COMMITMENT

Allens has a longstanding focus on environmental sustainability and we take action to assess and manage the firm's material environmental impacts and communicate the firm's environmental performance.

The firm maintains an Environmental Management System (**EMS**) in our Australian offices that is certified in accordance with the AEMS Standard developed by the Australian Legal Sector Alliance. Through our EMS, we identify the firm's material impacts, set reduction targets, implement mitigation measures and monitor and report on our progress. We also publicly report on our progress through the Australian Legal Sector Alliance annual Sustainability Insights report, and through the Australian Government's Climate Active Carbon Neutral Program.

## ACTIVITIES

### Climate action

Allens takes action to monitor and reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases. The firm's Australian offices have been certified as carbon neutral in accordance with the Federal Government's Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard since December 2014. We also offset emissions associated with the operation of our offices in Vietnam and Papua New Guinea.

We seek to continually improve the measurement of the firm's emissions and, last year, we participated in the pilot of a new approach to accounting for emissions under the Government's Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard. Participating in the pilot involved adopting improved calculation methodologies based on guidance from international best-practice standards, including the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and ISO14064, and a new emissions-factor dataset developed in Australia.

As well as taking action to reduce our emissions, the firm invests in high-quality carbon offset projects that reduce or remove emissions from the atmosphere. For the financial year ending 30 June 2019, our carbon offset portfolio included three Indigenous carbon farming projects; the West Arnhem Land fire Abatement project, the North Arnhem Land fire abatement project and the Northern Savanna project. These projects are operated by Traditional Landowners and Indigenous fire management groups in Australia, and involve conducting strategic and planned burning on country in the early dry season to reduce the intensity of late, dry season wildfires. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the projects provide employment and an income stream to local Aboriginal communities, strengthen connections with the land, contribute to the preservation and transfer of knowledge and protect biodiversity. We also invested in conservation and reforestation offset projects in Papua New Guinea and Australia and renewable energy offset projects in Vietnam and India.

### Energy and resource efficiency

Over the past 10 years, Allens has achieved significant reductions in energy and paper use as a result of implementing energy and resource efficiency projects, such as energy efficient lighting, technology upgrades and electronic file management processes. We continue to actively encourage the use of environmentally friendly technologies, including the use of remote-conferencing tools like video conferencing and Skype for Business (to reduce the need to travel), 'follow-me' printing (to minimise unnecessary paper use) and the use of energy efficient laptops (to allow for flexible working, reduce energy consumption and encourage paper-lite work practices).

Although it has become more challenging to identify new opportunities, we continue to seek ways to promote energy and resource efficiency. Last year, we were able to achieve small cuts in our electricity and paper use even though our number of full time equivalent employees increased during the same period.

### Waste management and recycling

Allens has continued to implement measures to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. The firm provides staff with a suite of recycling options, ranging from organic to battery recycling. In 2019, measures to reduce waste included the removal of unnecessary single-use plastic items from staff kitchens, subsidising the purchase by staff of reusable cutlery for takeaway meals and establishing a supply of reusable takeaway coffee cups in our Sydney and Melbourne offices. We also continue to source office paper with 100% recycled content.

## Partnerships

Staff engagement and education is an important part of our environmental sustainability program. In 2019, volunteers from our Melbourne and Sydney offices participated in a citizen science project run by the Blue Carbon Lab at Deakin University and Earthwatch. The project included climate change education and assisting with field research to better understand the capacity of coastal ecosystems to sequester and store carbon. Awareness-raising events were also held for staff in conjunction with Earth Hour, World Environment Day, Ride2Work Day, National Recycling Week and National Plant a Tree Day.

We seek to encourage good environmental practices in the firm's supply chain. Last year, Allens became a business member of Social Traders, with the aim of growing the firm's procurement spend with social enterprises that drive environmental and social change. Social Traders is an organisation that certifies social enterprises and connects businesses to social procurement opportunities. In 2019 we engaged Fruit2Work, a social enterprise which delivers fruit to workplaces in Melbourne and provides employment opportunities to people who have been impacted by the justice system. We have also developed the new SCC to inform suppliers of our standards and expectations with respect to environmental stewardship and to encourage them to identify opportunities to reduce the lifecycle impacts of their products and services.

Allens has continued its membership of the Australian Legal Sector Alliance – an association of law firms working collaboratively to promote sustainability in the legal sector – and we have actively participated as a founding member of the Government's Climate Active Network, a collective network of Climate Active carbon neutral organisations in Australia.

Through our pro bono program, Allens also provides pro bono legal assistance to environmental organisations, including Bush Heritage Australia, WWF Australia and the Rainforest Conservation Society.



## > 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

Allens has developed well-recognised expertise in providing robust compliance programs and due diligence tools in response to increased opportunities for investment in foreign and emerging markets and the rise of anti-corruption monitoring and enforcement. Our tools include:

- Tailored risk analysis by jurisdiction and business activity. We have conducted anti-bribery 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**