



UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS

JULY 2021



STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

Allens became a foundation signatory to the UN Global Compact in 2001 and in the 20 years since, we have maintained our commitment to the Compact's principles. We are proud of our ongoing work to embed the principles of responsible corporate citizenship, sustainability and human rights in our organisation.

Throughout the last year, the world has faced significant global health and economic challenges. Best practice in corporate responsibility has been critical to navigating those challenges 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 2020 to implement those 10 principles across the four areas of the Compact.



Richard Spurio
Managing Partner, Allens

> ABOUT ALLENS

We shape the future

Next year, Allens will turn 200. For almost two centuries, we have helped shape the face of business, regulation and the legal profession in the Asia Pacific region. We have built our reputation on the quality of our people, the strength of our client relationships and our innovative approach to complex work.

We are 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 our clients' 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 needs, 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 human rights-focused pro bono practice. We work closely through long-term partnerships with NGOs with expertise in relevant areas of law, including asylum seeker rights, poverty law and Indigenous justice. We published our first Modern Slavery Statement in 2021 and we are working to increase our support of social enterprises that provide opportunities to those at risk of modern slavery. The firm's reconciliation commitments and philanthropic endeavours complement our commitments to advancing human rights.

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 NGOs that work to protect human rights.

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

Advocating for First Nations justice

A team of Allens lawyers worked with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and, later, the Human Rights Law Centre, to represent the family of Yorta Yorta woman Tanya Day, who died in police custody in 2017.

Ms Day was arrested after a train conductor found her sleeping in her seat on a regional train on 5 December 2017 and called the police who removed her from the train and arrested her for being drunk in a public place.

Ms Day was then detained in a bare cell comprising a concrete slab with some cushions and a blanket for a bed. Not long after being placed in the cell, she slipped and hit her head heavily on a concrete wall. Despite the requirement that she be physically checked and roused at least every 30 minutes, this did not happen and it took almost four hours before police noticed a bruise on her forehead. Ms Day was taken by ambulance to hospital where a scan revealed the catastrophic extent of her injuries – she had suffered an extensive brain haemorrhage. She was airlifted to another hospital in Melbourne for emergency surgery but tragically died seventeen days later. She was 55 years old.

Ms Day's four children are seeking justice. Allens represented them at the coronial inquest into their mother's death and the strength and determination the family demonstrated was the driving force behind the novel legal case that explored the systemic racism affecting the treatment of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

Navigating new legal territory – 'systemic racism' as a contributing factor

The circumstances of Ms Day's death mandated that a coronial inquest be held under section 52(2) of the *Coroners Act 2008*.

For the Day family, it was imperative the inquest consider whether racism played a role in their mother's arrest and detention. Consequently, a cornerstone of the legal strategy was ensuring the Coroner could consider 'systemic racism' as a contributing factor – the first time in Australia this argument would be tested.

The family also sought to have the 'offence of public drunkenness' repealed from Victoria's *Summary Offence Act 1966*, which is an outdated offence that disproportionately affects Aboriginal people. There have been repeated calls for its repeal, including in the Victorian Parliament's 2005 Implementation Review of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. In support of the legal effort, the Day family did incredible work as advocates by, for example, launching a petition for the repeal of the offence. The campaign was hugely successful and achieved more than 7,000 online signatures and nearly 4,000 written signatures.

Allens was engaged to assist in making the novel case that certain decisions made by the police and train staff were informed by their unconscious biases about Aboriginal people. Allens' team provided extensive legal research, advice and strategy and, on 25 June 2019, Acting State Coroner Caitlin English handed down a landmark ruling – that the scope of the inquest would be extended to include consideration of 'systemic racism'. Another 'first' took place on 22 August when the Victorian Government announced its decision to abolish the offence of public drunkenness, and replace it with public health reform.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

We continue to work towards the goals we set for ourselves in our current Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**), with a focus on key areas in which we can make the most meaningful contribution towards building reconciliation with First Nations communities. 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 First Nations peoples and build the inclusivity and diversity of our organisations and communities.

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

Throughout 2020 and into 2021, we worked closely with the First People's Assembly of Victoria, providing pro bono legal advice on a range of matters including Terms of Reference and a dispute resolution process. Our support in advancing constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is ongoing. We also continued our work with a number of Aboriginal Land Councils, as well as a range of education, arts and community legal organisations.

12,165

hours of pro bono work on human rights matters



41

Allens staff have now completed a secondment through our partnership with Jawun and Empowered Communities, contributing almost **1400** work days to capacity-building projects within a number of Aboriginal organisations and communities across Australia



136

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

4,747

hours of pro bono work for First Nations people and organisations working for reconciliation (other than specifically human rights matters, which are recorded above)



1,037

hours of pro bono work for clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness (again, other than specifically human rights-related matters)

The firm continues to work towards its target of increasing its Indigenous employment to 1%, through a range of education and employment pathways activities. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, over the past year 16 First Nations law students undertook the firm's two-week Indigenous Legal Internship program. 137 students have now completed that program, with a number going on to develop legal careers at Allens. Many of our staff provide mentor support to secondary and tertiary students through our RAP partner organisations Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (**AIEF**) and AIME, as well as through the Reconciliation Action Mentoring Program established by our Brisbane RAP committee in conjunction with several Queensland universities.

Our partnership with Jawun and the Empowered Communities project continues, with 41 of our people now having undertaken secondments of 6-12 weeks, 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

> 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.

ACTIVITIES

Equal Employment Opportunity

Allens is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and does not tolerate 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;
- an external 'Speak Up' whistleblowing service whereby employees can raise concerns; and
- working to identify additional strategies to prevent harassment, discrimination and misconduct, redesigning our education and training programs and improving people support channels.

Allens is compliant with the *Australian Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth). This legislation is overseen by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (**WGEA**) and aims to improve and promote equality for 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 more great people.

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

Chaired by the 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+**), Cultural Awareness Network (**CAN**) and Reconciliation (**RAP**) – that promote inclusive behaviour and outcomes across the firm and into the community. As a team, we have many different stories, but we stand side-by-side in delivering exceptional outcomes for our clients and communities. Introduced in 2020, our *This is Allens* campaign shares the human stories of our firm, celebrating our diversity and helping foster inclusion.

Gender representation and equality

Allens is building a culture of genuine inclusion to support the success of women in the firm. With 34% female partners and 58% female legal professionals (at 1 July 2021), we are on track to achieve our goal of at least 35% female partners by 2022.

Allens has been recognised by the WGEA as an *Employer of Choice for Gender Equality* for the past 17 years, reflecting our commitment to building a culture where everyone can reach their full potential.

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.

In 2020, Allens introduced a parents package that removes the distinction between primary and secondary carers and gives all employees the time and flexibility they need to create strong family connections. Since introducing this package, we are seeing more men take part in longer-term parental leave, creating clear role models and normalising caring behaviour and responsibilities for men and women.

Similarly, flexible work is for everyone at Allens, regardless of gender, age or life stage. Our approach recognises there is no 'one size fits all' for flexible work, instead promoting choice, balance, trust, accountability and change.

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, and a member of numerous industry forums

LGBTQ+ inclusion

Allens is dedicated to improving LGBTQ+ inclusion. In 2011 we established ALLin, our network for partners and employees who identify as LGBTQ+, as well as their allies. 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.

All Allens' policies are inclusive of LGBTQ+ employees and their families. Allens' parental leave policy is specifically inclusive of same-sex partners and families, adoption, surrogacy, foster care and long-term kinship care. Allens has a trans- and gender-diverse policy to support any employee wishing to affirm their gender.

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-profits in their advocacy on transgender rights and expunging historical homosexual criminal convictions.

Cultural diversity and inclusion

Allens Cultural Awareness Network (**CAN**) promotes cultural diversity and inclusion that reflects our people and clients, and Australia's diverse society.

CAN supports our many team members who identify as culturally and/or linguistically diverse, as well as celebrating cultural differences, developing cultural competency, and broadening and strengthening Allens' engagement with clients and impacts in the community.

First Nations Peoples employment

As part of our RAP, Allens creates employment opportunities for First Nations Peoples to expand their skills and experience.

Allens' Indigenous Legal Internship program commenced in 2006. Through that program, more than 130 Indigenous law students have taken up the opportunity to experience life at a commercial law firm. Our

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

Through our RAP education partners AIEF and AIME, and our Reconciliation Action Mentoring Program, 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

Allens is making the health and energy of our people a front-of-mind, shared priority. We know wellbeing is a combination of physical, mental, emotional and social health factors, and our approach reflects this.

Allens also recognises mental health is a significant area of focus for the legal profession. Our 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 classes and challenges, confidential counselling support through our Employee Assistance Program and targeted campaigns and programs. Our team-based principles promote conscious inclusion in line with our wellbeing strategy, being:

- purpose and clarity;
- conversation and connection;
- care and support; and
- trust and transparency.

Allens was recognised for *Excellence in Employee Health & Wellbeing* at the 2021 Australasian Law Awards. We also 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.

Modern slavery

In March 2021, Allens published its first Modern Slavery Statement, in line with Australia's *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth). The Statement sets out actions we have taken to assess and address risks of modern slavery in the firm's operations and supply chain.

We have a Supplier Code of Conduct (**SCC**) 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.

During the reporting period, we have organised staff seminars to raise general awareness of modern slavery issues and we have delivered tailored training programs for staff in key procurement roles covering modern slavery risks 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.

We maintain an environmental management system in our Australian offices to ensure we systematically 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 Sustainability Insights report, and through the Australian Government's Climate Active Carbon Neutral Program.

ACTIVITIES

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

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 Australian 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.

This year we measured our FY20 greenhouse gas emissions and for our Australian offices, confirmed we reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 20.5% compared with FY19. This reduction was attributable to a range of factors, including changes in working practices and office use, and investment in technology, systems and training to support digital working practices and virtual meetings. Greenhouse gas emissions data for FY21 will be reported in our next Communication on Progress.

Our goal is to transition to purchasing our office electricity through arrangements that support renewable energy in offices where we have control. In late 2020, we switched to purchasing 100% GreenPower-accredited energy for our Sydney and Melbourne offices.

Energy and resource efficiency

We continue to actively encourage the use of environmentally friendly technologies and tools. In 2020 we implemented MS Teams as the firm's digital collaboration platform and communication system to support remote working, virtual meetings and digital working practices, and to replace desktop telephone hardware.

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. We also continue to source office paper with 100% recycled content.

Protecting biodiversity

To celebrate World Environment Day this year, we sponsored the planting of 50 trees as part of a WWF-Australia restoration project in the Daintree Rainforest area of North Queensland. We also offered our staff the opportunity to sponsor tree planting through our matched funding program and we hosted an awareness-raising staff workshop on biodiversity and native pollinating species.

Engagement and partnerships

Staff engagement and education is an important part of our environmental sustainability program. Awareness-raising events were held for staff in conjunction with Earth Hour, World Environment Day and National Recycling Week. We also organised activities and events to support sustainable practices while staff were working from home, including recipes and online cooking classes for plant-rich meals and a workshop on energy efficiency at home.

We seek to encourage good environmental practices in the firm's supply chain. Allens is 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.

The firm's SCC also informs suppliers of our standards and expectations with respect to environmental stewardship and encourages 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.

Through our pro bono program, Allens provides pro bono legal assistance to environmental organisations, including Bush Heritage Australia, WWF Australia, Landcare Australia and the Equator Principles Association

> 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 anti-corruption 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