



HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS

2021
**RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
REPORT**

Welcome

The Report contains highlights of our responsible business practices, which support our people, our clients and wider society, and is an indicator of the progress we are making each year against our goals. The Report also demonstrates our firm's commitment to the UN Global Compact (UNGC) Principles and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recognising that we are one year into the UN's "Decade of Action" dedicated to achieving those Goals.

Successful responsible businesses are those that are highly attuned to the needs of society. At Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF), we look to address society's biggest challenges, working with our partners, our people and our clients to shape a better future. We are proud that our diverse talent and positive culture enable us to do this, and that we are trusted by clients around the world to advise and navigate them through ever-changing global trends and challenges.

Here we touch on some of the key initiatives we have launched or progressed over the past year:

- In September 2020, we launched our 10 Actions for Change, a global set of commitments aimed at improving the representation and experience of Black, First Nations, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues. In the Report, you can read more about our goals - which include a target of having minority ethnic partners comprise 10% of our London partnership and Asian partners comprise 50% of our Hong Kong partnership by 2025 - and our progress towards these.
- There is also progress on gender diversity: the percentage of our women partners is now 28%, against a target of having 35% of partner and partner leadership roles filled by women by 1 May 2023.
- This year, we have also launched our "Agile 60" initiative - enabling our people to work in the office for an average of 60% of their working time - in direct response to the changes to

working practices accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Flexible working practices have a major effect on inclusion, whether by improving mental health and wellbeing or making career choices more accessible for a greater number of people.

- In February 2021, we created a new Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Leadership team, streamlining client access to the firm's expertise and specialist capabilities in this area across the globe. The practice has been ranked in the highest category by Chambers and Partners, a recognised source of legal sector intelligence, in their global ESG category. We have observed an increasing focus, including from clients, on ESG initiatives across all sectors. With pressure from investors, consumers, employees and governments, ESG issues have become mainstream business topics that redefine the roles of chief legal officers as much as the organisations around them.
- In December 2020, we announced a new climate change strategy, aiming to reduce our carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. As a leading international law firm, we are clear about our own responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future.

We are so proud of our colleagues, whose work on these and other initiatives helps to build a high-performing, sustainable business with a positive social impact. However, our work is very much ongoing. There is a lot more to do, both internally and externally, and we are frequently reminded of the inequities still prevalent in society. Our 10 Actions for Change initiative will and must remain top and centre of the agenda, and we will continue to embed the principles of the UNGC and SDGs in our day-to-day activities to support positive change in sustainable business practices - something which benefits us all.

We hope you enjoy reading this Report, and welcome your feedback on our progress.



**REBECCA MASLEN-STANNAGE
CHAIR & SENIOR PARTNER**

Rebecca was elected to the role of Chair and Senior Partner on 1 May 2021. She is one of Australia's most highly rated corporate lawyers and continues to maintain her mergers & acquisitions and broader corporate practice in conjunction with performing the role of Chair and Senior Partner. Rebecca is the firm's first female Senior Partner, and the first Senior Partner of the firm based in Australia.



**JUSTIN D'AGOSTINO, MH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AND PARTNER**

Justin is the firm's CEO, overseeing people, practices, clients and growth strategies. A thought leader and skilled practitioner in arbitration and dispute resolution, he has appeared before tribunals around the world and has sat regularly as arbitrator. The founder of the firm's first LGBT+ network in 2007, Justin is a strong advocate and active supporter of the firm's diversity and inclusion strategy and many responsible business initiatives.

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Our firm

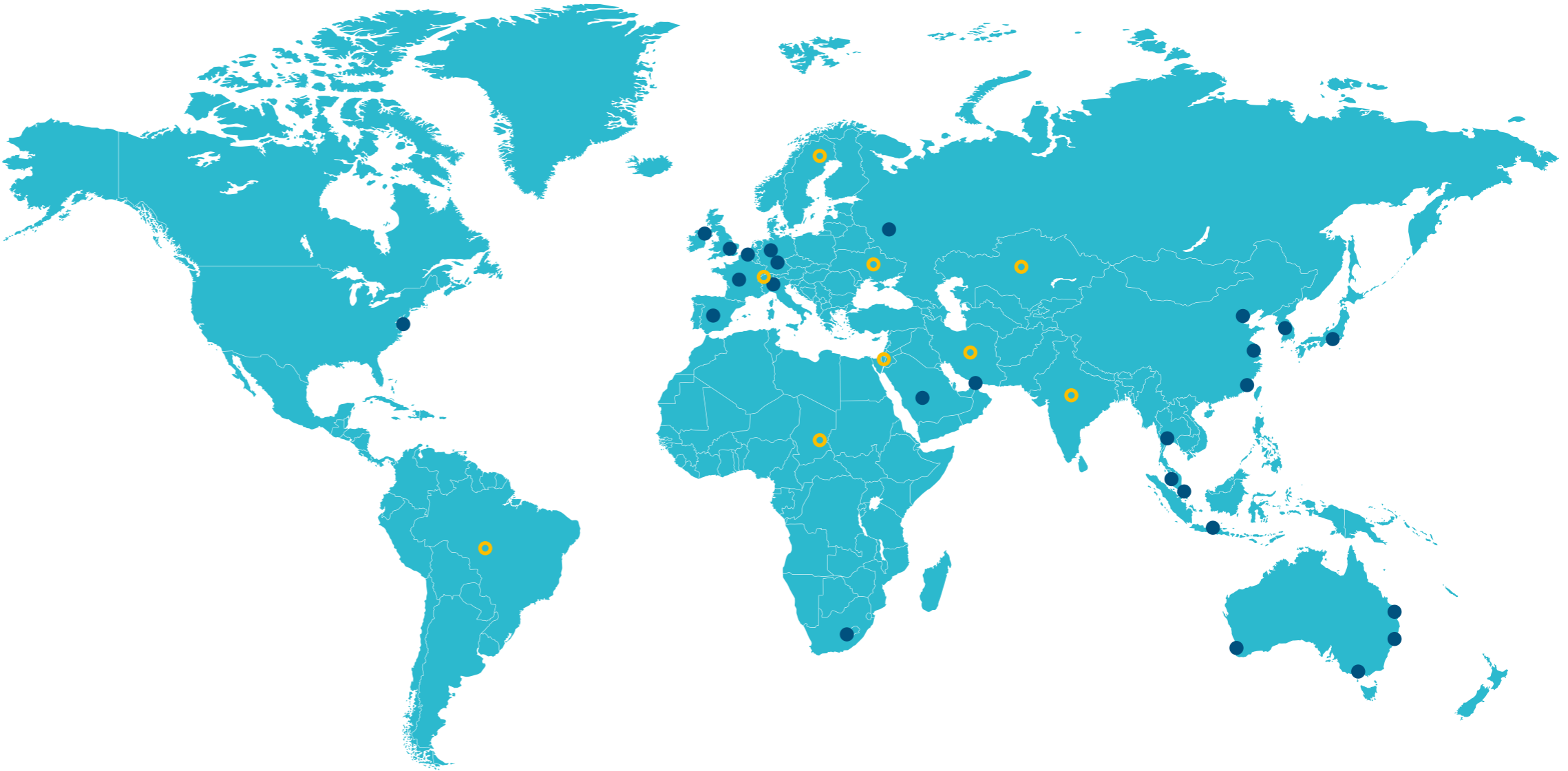
Herbert Smith Freehills is a world-leading international law firm. We are located in 26 offices across Asia Pacific, UK, EMEA and North America, operating at the heart of the new global business landscape, providing premium, full-service legal advice for some of the world's biggest organisations. We provide our clients with legal expertise and insight, and trusted advice based on both global and local perspectives.

While drawing on a rich heritage as a strategic corporate adviser, we also recognise that we have an opportunity to provide leadership that goes beyond our size or sphere of influence. As we play our part in helping tackle some of society's biggest challenges, our commitment to integrity and justice is even more important. These values underpin our work, and guide us as we help our clients navigate today's shifting environmental, social and governance landscape.

Our work is adaptive, innovative and embraces today's pace of technological change, recognising and harnessing its potential to encourage meaningful progress across our business and beyond.

Today, our clients increasingly look to their trusted legal advisers to help them manage a broad range of emerging legal issues, many included in this report. They are increasingly accountable for risk management, beyond just legal risk, and in managing a tidal wave of regulation, much of which relates directly to data and technology. The appetite for technological change is relentless, and our clients' expectations and needs are changing, which is evolving legal service delivery at a faster pace. In addition, we continue to develop our workforce, recognising the changing approach to how lawyers wish to work and can most efficiently work.

In this report, we reflect on our responsible business journey over the last 12 months, our response to key trends and advancement towards our own and broader global targets. Covering important recent developments, case studies, key indicators of performance and future plans, the report also serves as our 2021 Communication on Progress, in line with our commitment to implementing the principles of the UN GC and contributing to the UN SDGs.



OFFICES ●			GROUPS ●
BANGKOK	JOHANNESBURG	RIYADH*	AFRICA
BEIJING	KUALA LUMPUR	SEOUL	INDIA
BELFAST	LONDON	SHANGHAI	IRAN
BRISBANE	MADRID	SINGAPORE	ISRAEL
BRUSSELS	MELBOURNE	SYDNEY	KAZAKHSTAN
DUBAI	MILAN	TOKYO	LATIN AMERICA
DÜSSELDORF	MOSCOW		NORDIC
FRANKFURT	NEW YORK		SWITZERLAND
HONG KONG	PARIS		UKRAINE
JAKARTA*	PERTH		* Associated office

Our approach

We have a reputation for combining in-depth knowledge and insights with a global perspective, and recognise we have a chance to provide leadership. More than ever, we are mindful that our success as a business depends on the wellbeing of our people and our communities, and playing our part in tackling some of society’s biggest challenges, particularly in today’s shifting environmental and social landscape. On this page, we outline our overall approach to our governance of these issues. We also recognise the dual nature of our role, that of being responsible in the way we operate, as well as in the advice we provide our clients. Therefore we take this opportunity to also introduce and highlight our new ESG practice.



People and culture

In the past year, we have created four regional People Forums to help create the best experience for people in the firm. Established by the People & Culture Advisory Board (PCAB) – which is chaired by our CEO, Justin D’Agostino and works with the Global Executive and Council to develop the firm’s People & Culture strategy. The forums contribute views to the regional executives on how best to implement global and regional priorities. The forum members come from all levels in the firm, and bring with them wide-ranging perspectives that reflect the diversity of our business, and aim to help make us an even better place to work.

Diversity and inclusion

Our vision is to be the leading global law firm for diversity and inclusion (D&I). We work on integrating D&I into our culture – from the most strategic decisions to the everyday moments, and in the advice we provide our clients. D&I is everyone’s responsibility, but accountability within the senior leadership of the firm ensures that creating a consistent and inclusive global experience for our people remains a strategic priority. A large proportion of our partners have specific objectives related to diversity and inclusion, which forms part of a balanced scorecard considered during discussions on performance and remuneration. In addition, our Regional Executives are accountable for the implementation and success of our approach.

Climate Change

By committing to net-zero carbon by 2030, we are dramatically ramping up our efforts to become a leader in the legal sector’s efforts to combat climate change. We have also committed to a number of initiatives including The Earthshot Prize, The Green Pledge, The Greener Litigation Pledge, and The UN Race to Zero, the global campaign to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery. This year, we added climate change to the firm’s enterprise risk register, recognising changes in the Earth’s climate pose a number of inter-related risks to – or opportunities for – our business.

During the year, we conducted an internal audit of our climate change governance structure, to ensure two key principles; transparency and accountability. As we take big steps towards becoming a leader in tackling climate change, we must ensure the changes and activities we take part in are effective.

Social impact

The Firm is enormously proud of its culture of connecting with and creating opportunities for the communities where our people live and work. Our aim is to increase access and inclusion across our society, the justice system, our communities and our firm. We focus on access to justice and access to opportunity for all. Through our pro bono legal practice, NGO partnerships and community programmes, we prioritise issues where there is the greatest un-met need and where we can have the highest impact.

The Pro Bono and Responsible Business Council oversees the Firm’s approach to Pro bono and Responsible Business work on behalf of the Global Council and the Global Executive, updating stakeholders on activities regularly.

Our ESG leadership

There is heightened awareness of the impact that businesses can have on key ESG factors - from labour rights and supply chain challenges, to climate change and the environment. In addition, companies are looking to evolve their business practices to better achieve and support positive outcomes for society, while faced with an ever-expanding regulatory framework.

We are a pioneer in supporting this area, with more than 30 years’ experience advising clients on ESG matters, and have been recognised as a leading firm, and one of only two firms ranked in the highest category globally for ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) by Chambers, the recognised industry rankings. With these decades of collective experience, and deep expertise in advising on the risks and opportunities involved, we can help organisations navigate this complex landscape.

In this context, we have created a new ESG leadership team that streamlines client access

to the firm’s expertise and specialist capabilities from across all practice areas, sectors, and offices – mobilising multi-disciplinary teams to match client demand in this field. We work with some of the world’s largest corporations on issues of human rights, environmental protection and corporate responsibility. Throughout this report you will find case studies of our work with clients.



The new structure breaks down traditional law firm structures to better mobilise our skills across disciplines, particularly for global clients. The new leadership team is also responsible for developing the firm’s next generation of experts through training and education.



SILKE GOLDBERG, CHAIR OF THE FIRM’S GLOBAL ESG LEADERSHIP TEAM

Case study: A positive ESG option for retail investors

Several practice teams have been at the forefront of helping The Big Issue Group launch The Big Exchange, a ground-breaking online investment platform for retail investors to invest in funds that mitigate ESG risks - a first for the market. The pioneering platform has been backed by leading fund managers.

Investors can pick their preferred area of ESG and risk appetite, choose from ready-made bundles or individual funds, and then track how much they are reducing negative ESG risks or making positive ESG impacts through their investments



Our people

We aim to put peoples' experience at the heart of our business, knowing it translates into client experience. Our PCAB sets the tone, ensuring our leadership directs and is accountable for the wider culture as a whole, including all aspects of diversity and inclusion, learning and development, health and wellbeing, and employee engagement. We want to attract and retain top talent from all backgrounds and enable them to perform to their full potential. We also believe in providing regular opportunities for people to share their experiences, feedback and ideas.



SDGs



Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

We support SDG 3 by supporting the wellbeing and health of our employees and their families by ensuring a safe and healthy workplace. We have made investments in the wellbeing of our people and have made it a priority in our business operations. Learn more on pages 21 and 22.

- Our Thrive initiatives and commitment to mental health
- Our enhanced commitment to parental leave and caregiver support
- Our new commitment to flexible working
- Our commitment to support our colleagues with disabilities



Reduce inequality within and among countries

We work to support SDG target 10.2, Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status through our Leading for Inclusion strategy. Read more on pages 15, 19, 35 and 39.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

We are working specifically to support SDG target 5.5, Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. Learn more on pages 12 and 17.

- Our goals for gender balance at partner level as well as across all business areas
- Our work towards closing the gender pay gap
- Our support for access to child and dependent care for both women and men.
- Our zero tolerance for sexual harassment

“

Fostering an inclusive culture where our people can be themselves, contribute their perspectives and perform roles which are meaningful and aligned to our shared values is a business priority.

”

JUSTIN D'AGOSTINO, CEO



Employee survey

In the results from our employee survey, covering the past year, people told us they feel part of a team, they are given the right amount of autonomy to do their jobs effectively, and their work continues to feel worthwhile. These indicators are heartening in the context of the pandemic, with the shift to remote working and our efforts to maintain strong connections support. We also know we need to do more to enhance employees' career development opportunities, and improve awareness of the various career pathways open to them.

Establishing People Forums

Over the past 12 months, the PCAB has established four regional People Forums to help inform how we create the best experience for people in the firm. The forums contribute views to the regional executives on how best to implement global and regional priorities. The forum members come from all levels in the firm (other than partners), and bring with them innovative, wide-ranging perspectives that reflect the diversity of our business.

Our vision for diversity and inclusion

Our vision is to be the leading global law firm for diversity and inclusion (D&I). Fostering a culture of respect, where diverse perspectives are valued, is crucial for our business and helps our people thrive. D&I is an imperative for our people, for many of our clients and for our business as a whole.

D&I contributes to the firm's overall strategy in many ways. D&I performance helps create a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining top talent, as people perform better where they can be themselves. In addition, many clients associate D&I with trust and confidence in us as a firm, and expect that we will present them with inclusive and diverse teams of people who are better equipped to bring innovative solutions to our clients' increasingly complex problems. Finally, benchmarking our D&I practices within our sector and beyond strengthens our position as a leading professional services firm.

Our D&I strategy - in summary

Our global strategy, Leading for Inclusion, focuses on inclusion as the overriding objective for our work. At the same time it reaffirms the importance of our focus on specific strands of diversity - gender, ethnicity and cultural background, LGBT+ and disability inclusion.

The Leading for Inclusion strategy is based on the following four pillars.

- **Talent** - We attract and retain talent from a diverse range of people and enable them to perform to their full potential, and work to counteract unconscious bias throughout the firm. Our analyses of gender pay equity aim to ensure we have gender equity when comparing like-for-like roles.
- **Clients** - Many of our clients expect diversity in their legal teams, knowing diverse perspectives will help solve complex issues. We engage with our clients through our D&I programmes and aim to be best placed to meet the needs of a diverse global client base, especially when addressing challenges organisations face on topics such as mental health and wellbeing, gender diversity, LGBT+ and disability.
- **Innovation** - Research is clear that companies with above average diversity regularly perform better financially. We strive to create a psychologically safe culture where people can contribute their perspectives in pursuit of our drive to find innovative solutions to complex issues.
- **Values** - We enable all our people to connect, collaborate, excel and lead within the context of our inclusive culture.

Our D&I strategic priorities – 2021

In our Leading for Inclusion strategy, we set out some clear priorities for 2021 - we'll report on our progress next year.

- **Gender** - Continuing to work for greater gender equity, reporting on our targets, ensuring a healthy recruitment pipeline and engaging allies to advance gender equity.
- **Ethnicity** - Implementing our 10 Actions for Change for greater ethnic diversity, including through targets and focusing on retention and progression of minority ethnic individuals.
- **Mental health** - Implementing our global mental health strategy, Thrive, with a particular focus on our Mental Health Champions Programme.
- **LGBT+** - Enhancing our global approach to LGBT+ inclusion, including establishing our Advocate/Embassy model throughout the firm.
- **Disability** - Implementing our commitment to continue to prioritise global disability inclusion, focusing on accessibility, adjustments, neurodiversity and mental health.
- **Parents** - Launching Circle In - a new digital parent's portal - and enhancing support for parents before, during and after parental leave.
- **Social mobility** - Building an inclusive environment regardless of socio-economic background, including through our Social Mobility Network and awareness campaigns.
- **Building D&I into our L&D programmes** - Ensuring D&I principles are part of all learning and development programmes.
- **Clients** - Leading the market in innovative client D&I engagement through forums, events, and secondments.
- **Inclusive leadership** - Further ingraining an understanding of how we can all lead inclusively.
- **Communication** - Continuing to make the most of our D&I hub as the place for all D&I information, while improving firm-wide awareness and understanding.
- **Data** - Focusing on data to better inform our priorities and understand areas of potential bias within our processes.
- **Day to day** - Working across Business Services and practice groups to cement existing initiatives, including supporting new partners by allocating senior sponsors.

Our global diversity networks

Our diversity networks are key to bringing our Leading for Inclusion strategy to life within the business. They support and inform improvements in policies and practices, promote inclusive practices and engage many people across the firm. Collaborations between diversity networks and with our clients' networks allow us to take an intersectional approach to diversity.

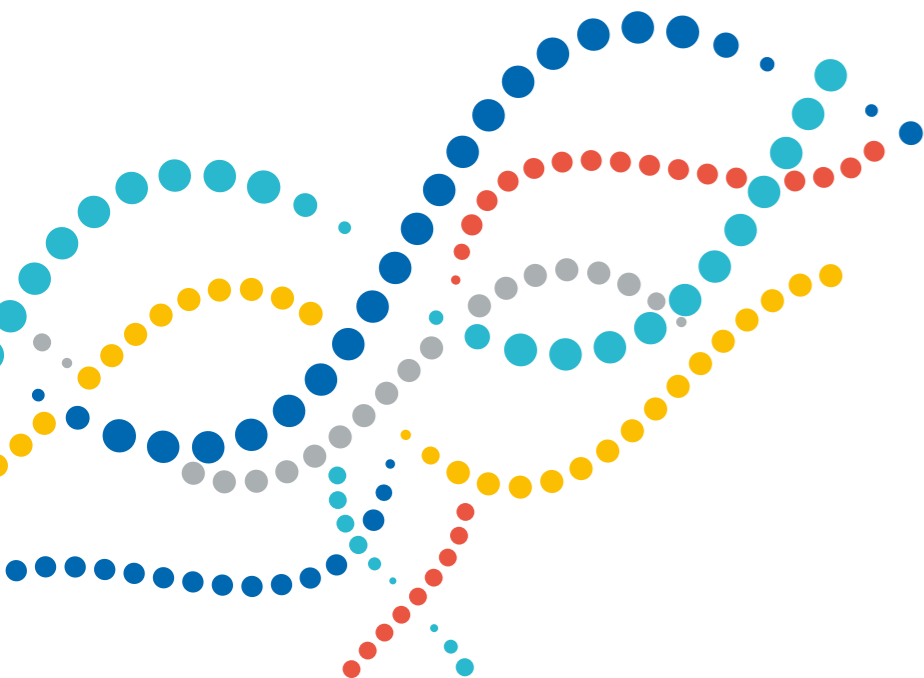
- Multiculturalism
- LGBT+ (IRIS)
- Gender Equity Matters (GEM)
- Family
- Ability
- Social Mobility (UK)
- Military (UK) and Veterans (Australia)



The Diversity and Inclusion committee is doing an amazing job within the firm. All of the initiatives have been fruitful and I feel like the workshops being held are effective to change the culture within the firm.



RESPONSE FROM INSIGHTS SURVEY



10 Actions for Change

In September 2020, we launched our 10 Actions for Change, a global set of commitments aimed at improving the representation and experience of Black, First Nations, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues, and ensuring we operate as a truly anti-racist organisation.

The 10 Actions for Change include addressing barriers to recruitment, improving retention and increasing representation in more senior roles, as well as a focus on mentoring and work experience opportunities and how we, as a business, use our position to make positive change in the broader communities we operate in.

The graphic outlines our areas of commitment. All the activities support our overall mission to become an anti-racist organisation and build a supportive, respectful environment where everyone can thrive. Below we include an overview of some of our achievements over the past year. Our work is very much ongoing and there is much more to do.



While we have some way to go, these actions are backed by initiatives and rigorous data collection. It is a priority for the firm to create a safe, supportive and respectful environment where everyone feels seen and valued.



DANIELLE KELLY, DIRECTOR OF CULTURE & INCLUSION



Please visit [our website](#) to read more about our 10 Actions for Change.

Progress for our 10 Actions for Change

1. **Address barriers to recruitment** - Our Global Graduate Recruitment team works with our Multiculturalism Network and external organisations to improve our ability to attract and recruit a greater proportion of minority ethnic candidates. The London office has many initiatives on the go, including: a mentoring programme for black students interested in law - now in its third year; a focus strongly on increasing ethnic diversity in graduate recruitment; making the requirements of the Race Fairness Commitment part of our terms for recruitment agencies: a specific target to retain minority ethnic newly qualified lawyers proportionate to headcount; joining Target Oxbridge, which supports black sixth-form students with applications to Oxbridge. In Paris, we're recruiting from universities with a more diverse student base.
2. **Improve retention and representation in more senior roles** - In London, our targets include having minority ethnic partners make up 10% of the London partnership by 2025, up from 5.6%, improving black representation across the London office, and ensuring that the proportion of minority ethnic trainees retained as NQs will be at least the same as the proportion of minority ethnic trainees in each intake. There are also nearly 100 participants on our ethnicity reverse-mentoring programme in London and Belfast, pairing a senior leader with a more junior colleague from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background. To drive progress towards more diversity at senior levels in Hong Kong, we aim to have 50% of our partners and 50% of business services leaders to be of Asian ethnic origin by 2025. The purpose of this target is to ensure that the senior leadership levels within our Hong Kong office more accurately represent the ethnic diversity of our clients and employees - and that by achieving greater ethnic diversity, we will become more culturally inclusive. Asian partners and senior Business Services leaders in our Hong Kong office comprise approximately 33% and 62% of the total group respectively.
3. **Deliver anti-racism workshops** - Globally, thousands have attended our own interactive anti-racism workshops, presented in local languages, which focus on challenging micro-aggressions, understanding allyship and anti-racism. Leading social-change commentator and psychologist John Amaechi OBE, led a session for all partners and Business Services leaders, on the role of leadership in creating anti-racist and inclusive cultures. Members of our Multiculturalism Network, working as part of the law firm collective, Noticed, have developed a toolkit to support and encourage conversations about race in the workplace. Our Australian teams have also developed resources on anti-racism in the workplace, with input from the First Nations Collective, and have led sessions considering specific elements of racism, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

4. **Better inform and track our approach** - We now collect ethnicity data in our HR system from every office in the firm where legally feasible. We're founding signatories of the Rare Race Fairness Commitment in the UK, and also worked on the Diversity Council of Australia's research project, Counting Culture, a practical tool Australian organisations can use to measure and report on workforce cultural diversity.
5. **Invest in research and listening** - Colleagues in Belfast, Dubai and New York have been taking part in joint discussions about race and racial inequality, while the Asia Multicultural Network hosted a session on ethnic diversity. In Germany we've created a 10 Actions working group, and in London we have recently appointed Race Leaders to ensure the issue stays front of mind. Australia's Multicultural network has a well-established series of 'Culture over a Cuppa' sessions about race and ethnicity.

6. **Engage meaningfully with our clients on anti-racism** - We continue to encourage our Client Relationship Partners to promote our 10 Actions with clients, and we've also held client webinars. A number of clients have expressed interest in enlisting our support in improving data, understanding unconscious bias, and anti-racism workshops. During May and June 2021, we also hosted forums with GCs in our Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane offices focussed on ethnicity and wellbeing.
7. **Increase mentoring and work experience opportunities** - In London, we ensure suppliers for our apprenticeship schemes will put forward a proportion of minority ethnic candidates, and in our summer 2020 programmes, 59% of placements were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. We also have a well-established programme focused on engaging First Nations students in Australia, and our Paris office launched a new mentoring programme for African undergraduates.

8. **Support ethnic diversity within our supply chain** - This work is led globally by our Procurement team, who've helped define what we mean by ethnic-minority-owned businesses in many territories, where we continue to identify supply-chain opportunities to increase spend with such suppliers. We've joined Minority Supplier Development UK, gaining access to more than 300,000 minority ethnic-owned businesses, and also calculated how much we spend with these suppliers, so we have a baseline for comparison. We are on track to achieve our commitment on spending with diverse suppliers in Australia.
9. **Over the past year we have delivered thousands of hours of pro bono advice** in new relationships with UK organisations in this space across a range of issues including charity law, IP disputes, research on civil liberties and advice on policy submissions. Our commitment has also extended to our global offices, including a comprehensive suite of work in Australia based on our Reconciliation Action Plan, and projects across our Asia offices to protect the rights of migrant workers and, in Hong Kong, to assist refugees to apply for work permits.

10. **Hold regional executives accountable** - Ultimately responsible for our 10 Actions initiative, the firm's key leadership bodies have held a number of sessions focused on both education as well as accountability for progress. Regional executive members continue to analyse local needs and formulate longer-term plans. For example, each member of the UK Regional Executive has nominated themselves as executive sponsor for a particular Action.

Progress in gender equity


In Gender Equity Matters (GEM), we have a range of networks supporting both women and allies in influencing change, including supporting networking and sponsorship, career development and client engagement.


We first set gender targets in 2014, and since then, the number of female partners has grown from 81 to 135, a rise of 67%, despite the overall number of partners in the global firm remaining largely stable. The percentage of our partners who are women is now 28%, with a target of having 35% of partner and partner leadership roles filled by women by 1 May 2023. We lead most other global law firms in female representation in the partnership.

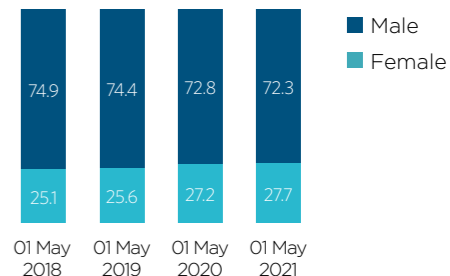
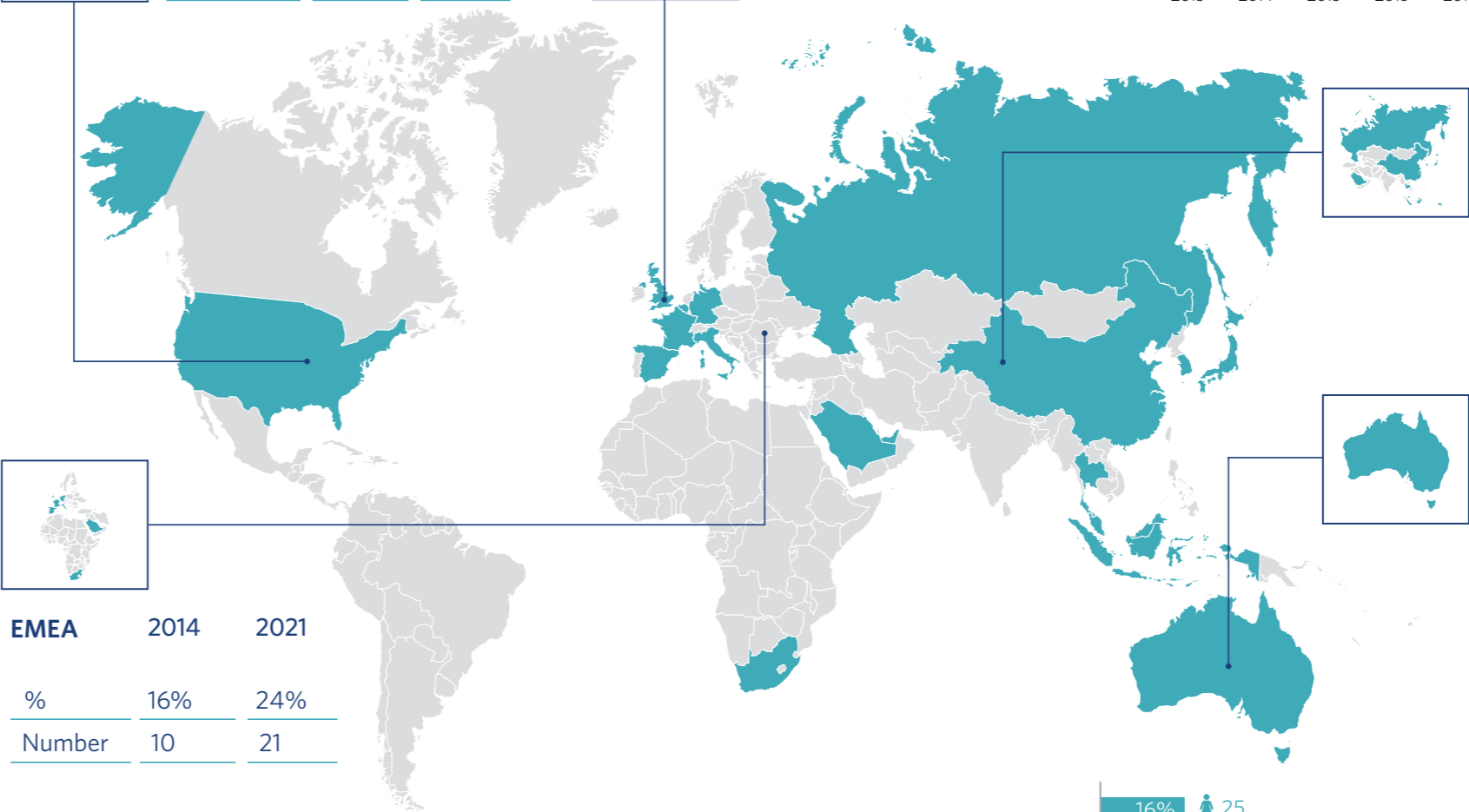
We have many initiatives in place to encourage better gender diversity, including continued analysis of our talent pipeline, addressing biases within promotion and reward decisions, and continuing to improve support for all parents returning from leave. We have worked with the University of Cambridge to better understand the impact of our culture on gender diversity, and we participated in the Law Society's research into increasing gender equality within the legal profession. This identified that in some areas, women perceive our culture less positively than others, and that we need to do more to demonstrate how individuals are evaluated fairly, and to improve sponsorship.

Our [2020 Pay Gap Report](#) goes beyond the statutory requirement to report employee data and also includes compensation for partners and includes ethnicity data.


Women in the partnership


	USA		2014	2021
	%		0%	17%
	Number		0	2

	UK		2014	2021
	%		19%	24%
	Number		29	39

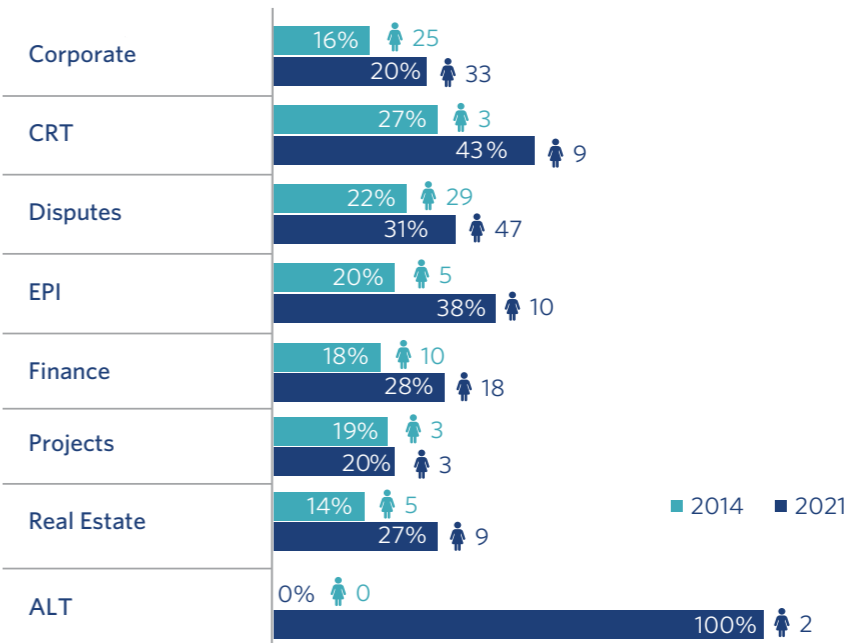
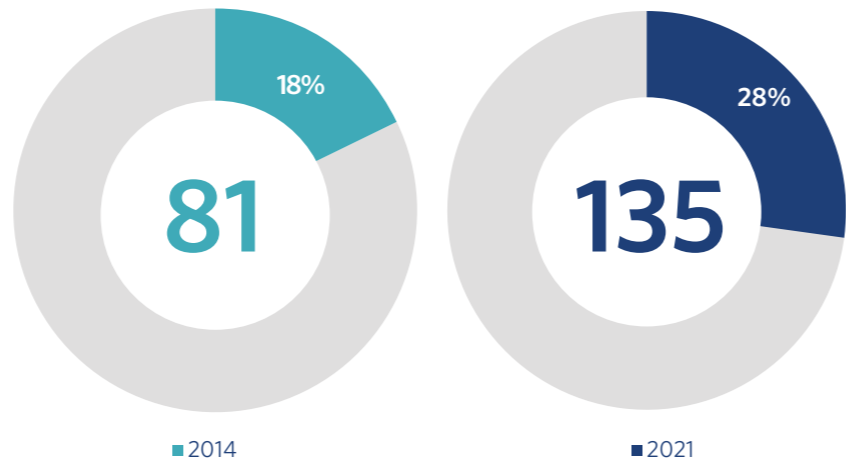


	Asia		2014	2021
	%		18%	32%
	Number		8	22

	Australia		2014	2021
	%		20%	32%
	Number		34	51

	EMEA		2014	2021
	%		16%	24%
	Number		10	21

Global





LGBT+ inclusion

LGBT+ (IRIS), our global network for LGBT+ colleagues and allies, promotes change and education across the firm, and offers a sense of community and support, particularly for those in countries where it is difficult to be open about sexual orientation or gender identity.

We have a market-leading and long-standing commitment to LGBT+ inclusion. As a global firm, we operate within diverse legal and cultural settings. This can make it difficult or even unsafe for LGBT+ people and clients to be themselves outside the office, so as part of our strategic approach to LGBT+ inclusion, we have formally adopted an Advocate / Embassy model. Through this approach, our offices are designated as such based on the local legal, social and cultural context for LGBT+ inclusion. In an 'embassy', the organisation implements protective policies and initiatives, creating a safe space for people within the office without engaging externally to avoid placing our people at increased risk. In the 'advocacy' model, the organisation is public in its support for LGBT+ inclusion, which may include external campaigning or advocacy.

Against the backdrop of an ever-changing context for LGBT+ inclusion and rights, this model allows us to maintain a consistent approach, whilst also responding to the local situation. This way, we can best support our people and clients, create safe and inclusive environments and use our influence to advocate for change.

IRIS (see diversity networks), our global network for LGBT+ colleagues and Allies, continues to play a major role in ensuring people across our network feel safe and supported.

In 2020, we re-launched our global trans and non-binary inclusion guidelines, enhancing the support available to individuals, teams and managers, including offering one-to-one coaching.

Disability - building confidence and support

Our Ability network supports our people who have long-term health conditions or disabilities, as well as those with caring responsibilities, and has specific chapters for topics such as mental health, dyslexia and dyspraxia, and autism..

To complement the support and advocacy provided by the network, we signed up to the Valuable 500, a collective of leading global businesses. In signing up, we made the following commitments in ensuring our workplace is more inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities:

- Improve access to and understanding of workplace adjustments
- Empower, educate and provide the support that enables all of our people to talk openly about mental health (see separate section)
- Champion the recruitment and retention of those with autism

We work with organisations such as My Plus Consulting to ensure we're up to date on best practice for recruiting and supporting individuals with a disability, and run an annual graduate recruitment session specifically for students with disabilities. In other partnerships, we've teamed up with PurpleSpace to build disability awareness and education within the firm, we are members of the Australian Network on Disability, and we hosted a Recruitment Roundtable with Autism Forward.


Mental health and wellbeing

Our global mental health strategy, Thrive, sets out our vision to be a place where our people can do rewarding work, where they can access support for themselves and others and openly discuss mental health. By championing the importance and relevance of mental health and wellbeing to performance, culture and engagement, we also aim to challenge the stigma associated with mental ill-health. At the heart of Thrive is our Mental Health Champions programme (see box).


In our most recent engagement survey, our people told us they value our commitment to health and wellbeing and appreciated our heightened focus throughout the pandemic. While leaders have encouraged setting clearer boundaries between work and personal life to

promote more sustainable ways of working, it's also clear we need to do more to ensure our strategic commitments translate into everyday experiences for our people. This will continue to be a priority for us over the coming year.


- Thrive initiatives




- Additional mental-health training for those with people responsibilities.




- Our global This is Me video series, featuring interviews of partners, lawyers and business services people discussing their experience of mental health.




- Our global How We Work guidelines, which encourage more efficient and sustainable working practices.



- Publishing our Commitment to Health & Wellbeing.



- Regular mental-health campaigns as well as speakers and panel events.



- Building mental-health concepts into many of our career development programmes, as well as our career conversation guides.

Working families

Our Family network is a community for colleagues with a range of caring needs, hosting seminars on parenting and caring topics. To support our working families, we have enhanced parental leave pay in a number of our offices and fund emergency childcare, and the Family network provides support for colleagues with a range of caring needs. We introduced a market-leading parental leave policy within Asia enabling all employees to share primary childcare responsibilities with their partner. And in Australia, we have amended our paid parental leave policy by removing any reference to gender, primary or secondary carer, to encourage more fathers to take leave, and improved the flexibility of how parental leave can be taken. We also offer coaching to help individuals returning from parental leave to manage the transition back into the workplace and continue their career progression.

Agile working

Through the pressure and worries of the pandemic, many employees have greatly valued the flexibility of how, where and when they work, gaining more time for their families, health and other commitments. However, we also recognise that the office will remain an important place for connection, collaboration and learning, both with clients and with each other. So we have introduced our new Agile 60 guidance, with people spending on average 60% of their time in an office. By setting this benchmark for post-pandemic operations, we hope to give our people the flexibility to design a working pattern that suits them, their colleagues and our clients.



Social Mobility (UK) network

This network supports individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds in progressing through the firm and raises awareness of the challenges and opportunities brought by a diversity of social backgrounds.

Military (UK) and Veterans (Australia) networks

These networks raise awareness of the unique skills of those who have served in the military, with a focus on encouraging the attraction and recruitment of people with military experience, and enhancing our support for those who serve as reservists, and their families.

Mental Health Champions

Our global Mental Health Champions programme equips volunteers from every part of our business to support colleagues. While not professional counsellors, they are colleagues with an interest in, and understanding of, mental health, and a strong knowledge of the resources available and training necessary to hold confidential and supportive conversations. Since launching the programme in 2019, we now have over 500 champions in all regions of the firm

“

Flexible working policy has been implemented well in my team - I feel comfortable to choose whether to work in the office or at home, knowing the work will get done.

”

RESPONSE FROM INSIGHTS SURVEY



Learning & Development

This year we continued to foster a culture of learning across the organisation, where our people have the knowledge, skills and mindset to adapt to the evolving business and legal challenges faced by our clients, and can thrive in the face of disruption and uncertainty.

Naturally our key development programmes are normally presented in person. Yet the need to support our people during the pandemic was arguably greater than before. We took this as an opportunity to redesign the programmes rather than simply delivering the existing content virtually. Working with leadership and executive coaching specialists, the Neuro-leadership Institute, we applied best practice from neuroscience to create a 'brain-friendly' virtual-learning curriculum to support our people in learning new skills and developing new habits.

The new curriculum is a global offering that connects our people across all regions. Running the programmes virtually has enhanced inclusion and collaboration, with attendance from outside of the UK increasing by 30% compared to 2019. Of course, the reduced travel also brings a positive environmental impact.

Case study: Leadership in Practice

The future will require a new level of leadership capability and behaviour. Strong leadership and relational skills are differentiators in the changing landscape of the legal market and its technological advancements. Our Leadership in Practice programme, which spans four months, is designed to help our top talent develop into strong leaders.

It comprises a series of one-to-one coaching sessions and virtual workshops. Delegates learn about and reflect on their own leadership styles and strengths, and apply them to real challenges for social enterprises. This new focus on the practical application of leadership skills is a positive evolution of the programme that also provides targeted support to selected community partners.



Our D&I client offering

We have worked with clients to address current challenges that organisations face on topics including: mental health and wellbeing, gender diversity, LGBT+ and disability. Our D&I team has a wealth of experience managing diversity and inclusion globally, in developing and executing targeted D&I initiatives and strategies within the firm, and in consultancy with our clients. Examples of our client engagement, often in conjunction with other specialist teams, include:

- helping a global energy provider on their D&I strategy and approach to workplace behaviour
- working with a large funds manager, and advising on setting up effective D&I networks and committees
- communicating our approach to mental health with a number of clients
- providing team members on secondment to clients to help develop best practice, as well as giving presentations and leading discussions with clients on inclusivity and inclusive briefing practices

Awards

- Asian Diversity Initiative of the Year Award (Asia Legal Awards 2020)
- FT Top 100 LGBT+ Executives – Justin D’Agostino (2013-2019)
- Lawyers Weekly Legal Firm of Choice (2020)
- Legal Island Best LGBT+ Initiative & Highly Commended Best Employer Equality & Diversity (2020)
- Ranked 7th - Social Mobility Employer Index 2020
- Stonewall Top Global Employers for LGBT inclusion (2015 – 2020)

Climate change

We are decarbonizing our operations and supply chain through our science-based net zero commitment. Our plans include reducing our own carbon emissions as well as engaging with our supply chain. We are committed to procuring our electricity where possible from renewable sources, and we are specifically tackling our business air-travel emissions.

NET-ZERO CARBON BY 2030 OUR SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS



SDGs



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

We support SDG 10 by announcing a new climate change strategy - our intention is to reduce our carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. Our leading partnerships, including our work as a Global Alliance Member of The Earthshot Prize.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

We support SDG 7 in a number of ways:

- Our commitment to transition to 100% renewable energy where possible - up from 48% now.
- Our offset project, supporting
- Our work supporting our clients on the energy transition, see page 32.

Climate change and the law

Climate change is already affecting how companies do business, and when that happens, it affects the law. The energy sector in particular is under the spotlight, but other sectors like infrastructure, real estate, and insurance are all adjusting to very real climate-related issues. Investors want more transparency on climate-change risks and opportunities, while the financial sector is changing the conditions it places on companies who need financing.

Climate change is therefore already affecting a wide range of legal practices, and while environmental law touches every part of the economy, other practitioners need to be ever-more conversant with the effects climate change will have on their work. Climate change is a global challenge requiring collective effort, and all lawyers have a role to play. In the transition towards a more sustainable future, we can help our clients understand the changes and adapt their business practices accordingly, by:

- guiding them through the rapidly changing regulatory environment, as well as contributing to the dialogue between industries and governments
- ensuring they have appropriate governance frameworks in place for climate-change risks
- helping them protect the innovations that will advance the energy transition.


In addition, as a global business, we are conscious of our own environmental impacts, and are addressing them by developing sustainable business practices, while reporting our most significant impacts. Accordingly, in December 2020, we announced a new climate change strategy - our intention to reduce our carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.



In 2019, **we met our 2020 targets** and as a continuation of this we set our new science-based targets.

Cut our overall emissions by **50%**


reduce emissions from **travel** by at least **35%**


transition to **100% renewable energy** where possible - up from 48% now


by 2025, ensure that **55% of our suppliers** (by spend) have **science-based targets** for reducing their emissions

- **Offset part of our emissions we produce from 2020 to 2026**
- **Remove any emissions produced to achieve net zero by 2030**

Our targets are certified by The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), and our data and progress are audited and verified externally.

Our progress

This year, for the first time, we are reporting our environmental data to CDP, a leading charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts. Additionally, we will validate our carbon footprint through a specialist external audit to ensure high-quality data and reporting standards aligned with international best practice.

Here's a bit more detail on each of our goals and initiatives.



Net zero lawyers

Joining other legal-sector leaders in the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance

As a new coalition of international law firms, the **Net Zero Lawyers Alliance (NZLA)** is committed to helping the world achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. We were proud to be part of its launch at London Climate Action Week on 30 June 2021.

“

Many of our clients have signed up to this by embedding net-zero ambitions into the heart of their own strategies. They're already embarking on ambitious decarbonisation journeys, and they look to us for support.

”

JUSTIN D'AGOSTINO, CEO

Emissions targets

To achieve the overall 50% reduction, in conjunction with renewable electricity use, we need to reduce emissions from all our business travel by at least 35% by 2030, compared to 2019. This emissions target may be affected by reduced travel as well as energy efficiency in aviation. The change in behaviour created by remote working since early 2020 is a great opportunity to sustain the reduction, and senior leadership play an important role in setting an example. With our Global Travel Team, we are also recommending a range of guidelines for achieving our aim. These include a change of mindset to consider virtual meetings, using economy class and optimising routes for air travel, considering rail travel, and publishing emissions results and data to encourage informed decision-making and internal competition for successful reduction.

Renewable energy

The renewable energy market is developing quickly, and its share in meeting world energy needs is growing. Currently, 48% of our total electricity comes from renewable energy - thanks to its use in our UK, Madrid and Brussels offices, though the figure has been affected by those offices remaining closed during the pandemic. Next we will focus on where we buy electricity directly from the landlord - Sydney and Melbourne. Many of our clients have already committed to procuring 100% renewable energy.

Procurement

Our Procurement team work with our suppliers, encouraging them to set their own science-based targets by 2025. We have identified a list of suppliers covering purchased goods and services, and capital goods.

Carbon offsetting and removal

The Science Based Initiative states that we should not use carbon offsetting for the pathway to net zero, but use carbon removal. So the offsetting we have done, and will do, supports our wider climate-change plan but will not count towards our net zero commitment. We will continue with our carbon-offsetting pledge to support 5,000 families through The Sichuan Household Biogas Programme by 2026 (see case study). We will select a carbon-removal project during this period, as the market - which is still in its infancy - develops. Carbon dioxide removal refers to activities that remove CO2 from the atmosphere and durably storing it in geological, terrestrial, or ocean reservoirs, or in products. Potential measures include reforestation, land restoration, carbon capture and storage, ocean alkalisation and many others.

Sustainable consumption

To reduce materials and waste across the network, we are building on existing initiatives where our people can make informed decisions and take action such as:

- phasing out single-use plastic
- using central recycling stations rather than under-desk bins
- reducing paper use
- using recycled paper for printing.

Adapting our business to aim for leadership in combatting climate change:

While we have made a promising start in moving towards our net-zero carbon commitment, there are several interrelated areas we will focus on in our drive to becoming a leader in the legal sector in combating climate change. These include:

- Transparent and proactive governance - we have conducted an internal audit of our Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and plan to repeat this regularly.
- Understanding our clients - our priority is to recognise our clients' needs and goals in this fast-evolving area and support them in their own climate change efforts.



The Earthshot Prize

We are one of 13 of the world’s leading companies that form the Global Alliance to support and help scale the innovative and ground-breaking solutions developed by the finalists of The Earthshot Prize.

Founded by Prince William, the Earthshot Prize seeks extraordinary solutions to the world’s greatest environmental challenges over the next ten years. Every year from 2021 until 2030, The Earthshot Prize will find and reward inclusive solutions to the five ‘Earthshot’ goals: Protect and Restore Nature; Clean our Air; Revive our Oceans; Build a Waste-Free World; and Fix our Climate.

Other initiatives

Signing up to help save the planet

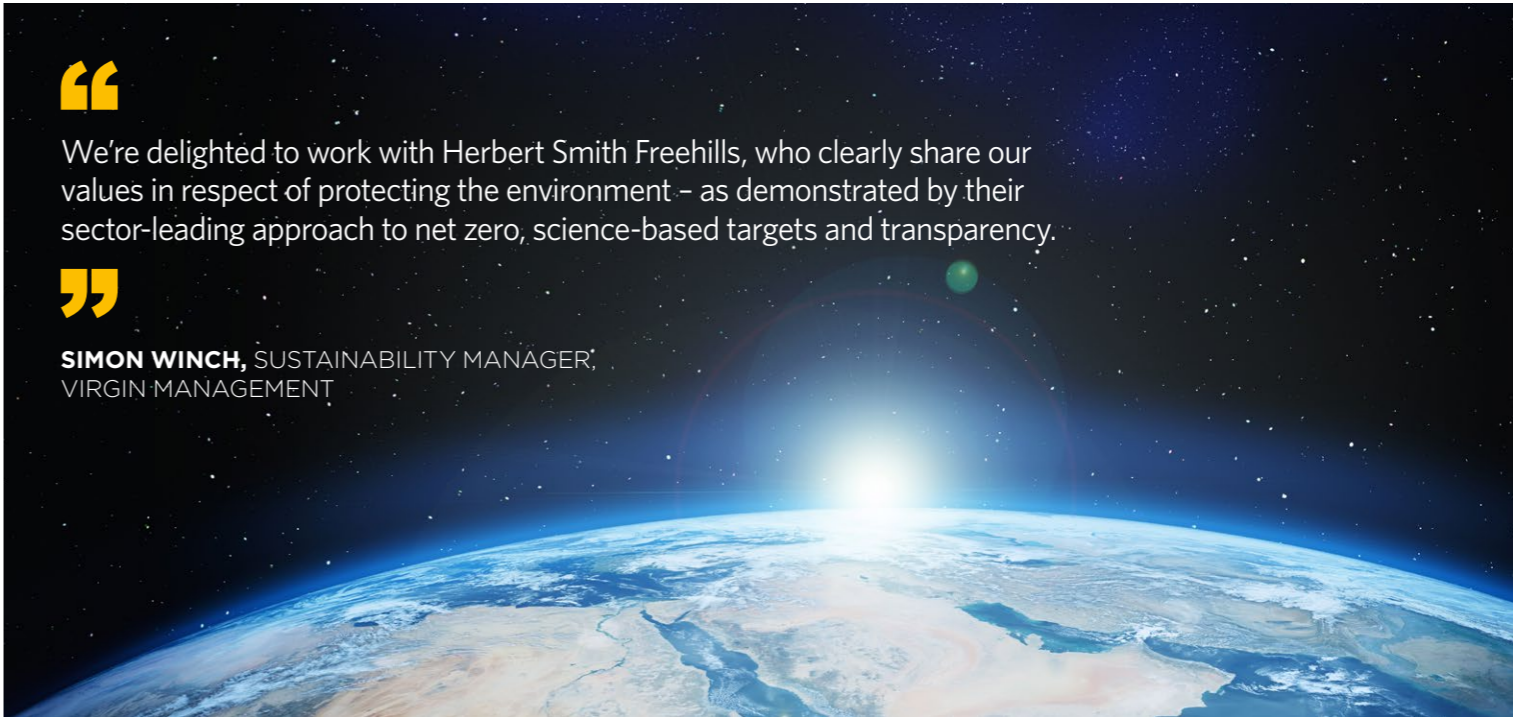
We’ve recently become involved with a number of environmental initiatives, including:

- The Green Pledge, showing our commitment to the [Campaign for Greener Arbitrations](#), which raises awareness of the international arbitration community’s carbon footprint and promotes best practice in managing arbitrations sustainably through practitioners signing up to a series of eight commitments.
- The [Greener Litigation Pledge](#), which in a similar style, sets out the practical changes UK litigators need to make to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.
- The Race to Zero, the global campaign to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery.

Case study: Considering people and planet at our new Melbourne office

Located in a recently completed 38-storey building, our new Melbourne office is designed to support our people’s wellbeing, enhance the client experience and minimise environmental impact. Using sustainable building materials and energy and water-efficient equipment, it has earned a 6-Star Green Star rating – the highest sustainability rating given by the Green Building Council of Australia.

Our Chief Administrative Officer, Alan Peckham, explains how the new workplace will be a healthy one for our employees: “The office design integrates physical, cognitive, and social wellbeing considerations, encouraging high performance while supporting mental resilience. We have prioritised access to natural light for all workstations, incorporated extensive planting, and ensured that a café and internal staircase are featured in the design.”



We’re delighted to work with Herbert Smith Freehills, who clearly share our values in respect of protecting the environment – as demonstrated by their sector-leading approach to net zero, science-based targets and transparency.



SIMON WINCH, SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER,
VIRGIN MANAGEMENT

Case study: Making a difference to the Earth’s atmosphere while improving lives

By offsetting the carbon emissions associated with travelling, we’re supporting thousands of impoverished families in rural China. Our commitment to the Sichuan Household Biogas Programme began with offsetting the carbon associated with travel for our 2017 Hong Kong Global Partners Conference and has continued ever since - aiming to support 5,000 families by 2026. Over the course of 2020 and Q1 2021, we have offset all our global travel activity, and in total we have supported over 2,800 families.

The [Gold Standard-certified*](#) programme gives people on low-incomes access to clean, free biogas for cooking, heating and lighting. Its aim is to install 1 million biogas digesters. These recover methane emissions from animal manure to provide clean fuel

and smoke-free stoves in family homes. In this way, the programme has helped not only to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, but also to improve respiratory health in a region where air quality suffers from reliance on coal for fuel. It also brings financial benefits, through salaries paid to local workers for constructing biogas digesters.

*Gold Standard sets the global standard for climate and development interventions by quantifying and certifying their impact. Considered the most rigorous by many NGOs, it also confirms that offsetting creates more value for local communities and ecosystems and contributes in a measurable way to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Client-based cases

Supporting the energy transition

We recognise the challenges facing our clients in the energy sector, as they seek to provide more energy to a growing global population as they and the world shift from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption to renewable energy sources. We see our role as providing leadership and support to our clients as they navigate this transition. The scale and multinational reach of our clients brings great potential to the climate change initiatives they are exploring, through ground-breaking research and development.

For those with business activities in the hydrocarbon sector, we support them as they increase their presence in the renewables sector. We also act for clients in the nuclear and renewable energy sectors and have been involved in decarbonisation projects, such as the world's earliest hydrogen or carbon capture and storage projects. Nearly a third of transactions managed by our Energy practice are in the renewables sector, an area that will continue to grow as the market matures.



Advising on Australia's largest sustainability-linked loan facility

In May 2021, advised Australian financial giant, ISPT, on the restructure of A\$2.8 billion in bank facilities to incorporate sustainability-linked loans for its flagship fund, the ISPT Core Fund. It is the largest such facility in Australia to date. ISPT invests in and develops commercial, retail, logistics, warehousing and residential property in Australia to generate returns for its investors, some of Australia's largest industry superannuation funds. Ultimately, over half of working Australians have retirement savings invested in property through ISPT.



Advising clients on sustainability issues across the globe

We have supported a range of clients on the energy transition:

- Google on a major project to convert its regional data centre in Singapore to green power, including a proposed programme to implement solar generation on rooftops across Singapore.
- The financiers to Powering Australian Renewables (PowAR) in relation to its acquisition of Tilt Renewables Ltd (ASX: TLT) in partnership with Mercury NZ Limited. The NZ\$3.07 billion acquisition of Tilt completed as a scheme of arrangement on 3 August 2021 and comprised senior debt financing of A\$1.2 billion. The acquisition of Tilt reinforces PowAR's position as the largest owner and operator of wind and solar generation in Australia.
- Acciona and Plug Power on their JV to establish a leading green hydrogen platform. The platform will develop, operate, and maintain green hydrogen projects, and also will provide storage, transportation, and delivery services to its customers.
- Vitol on the its carbon capture joint venture with Phillips 66 and participation in the Humber Net Zero project.
- Orix Corporation UK, on its acquisition of a 70% stake in Gravis, an alternative asset management company which manages funds investing primarily in the UK infrastructure, renewable energy and real estate sectors, with a significant ESG focus.
- International Finance Corporation (IFC), the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in developing countries. IFC is proposing to invest up to US\$100 million, in German waste management company, Alba, as it develops and manages new hazardous-waste treatment and biowaste treatment projects in China.
- Blueleaf Energy, a portfolio company of Macquarie's Green Investment Group, on a 1.25GW solar partnership in the Philippines. A combination of political will and commercial commitment is creating a rapid acceleration in Asian renewables capacity, characterised by this major investment in the Philippines renewables market.
- We have been advising in relation to the development of a 2,000MW UK - France Interconnector. This subsea and underground power transmission will link the British and French electricity power grids to make energy markets more efficient, improve security of supply and reduce carbon emissions.
- Schneider Electric on issuance of a €200 million bond, due in 2025, under its US\$7.5 billion EMTN programme, to fund low-carbon R&D programmes.
- The African Development Bank on the issue of US\$100 million SOFR-linked Green Bonds issued under its Global Debt Issuance Facility.



Responsible procurement

We recognise our impact includes our supply chain of goods and services, so we work with suppliers who share our values and help us meet our responsible business goals. Our Responsible Procurement Policy outlines our expectations of our suppliers in social, ethical and environmental issues.

We require our suppliers to conform with our Procurement Compliance Standards and have their own policies and procedures that ensure they share our commitment to the areas set out within it, and ensure compliance with all local laws. We use our influence to advocate for wider change on certain issues and collaborate to share knowledge and develop solutions.

Engaging with suppliers on D&I

Our supplier compliance standards include express reference to expecting our suppliers to share our commitment diversity and inclusion. We engage with our suppliers to ensure they are aware of our approach, and the behaviour we expect of all those working and interacting with our people and clients. We conducted diversity surveys with key suppliers in 2020, assessing the policies they have in place.

We are always looking for ways to involve suppliers in our activities, for example, the trans-inclusive training for our on-site catering, reception and security (contractors) in London. In addition, our 10 Actions for Change includes a commitment to work with more businesses and social enterprises owned by Black, First Nations, Asian and minority ethnic people.



Contributing to net-zero emissions

As part of our commitment to net-zero emissions by 2030, we have launched different initiatives across our supply chain. We have started to investigate the availability of renewable electricity for our offices. In addition, we are investigating how best to ensure contractors for our office building fit-outs projects align with the United Nations sustainable development goals. For this to occur we require our contractors to ensure:

- fully sustainable material inputs that are renewable, recyclable or reusable
- no waste to landfill and incineration
- full resource recovery, with all materials and products recovered and recycled or reused at end of use.

Eliminating the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking

Although we consider the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking in our business and supply chain to be low, we continue to assess the risk regularly. We have worked with our high-risk offices to identify the highest-risk suppliers (based on the services they provide to our firm) and are assessing these suppliers. We plan to continue these assessments. Please visit [our website](#) to read our Modern Slavery Statement in full.

Social impact

Our aim is to increase access and inclusion across our society, the justice system, our communities and our firm. We focus on access to justice and access to opportunity for all. Through our pro bono legal practice, NGO partnerships and community programmes, we prioritise issues where there is the greatest unmet need and where we can have the highest impact.

SDGs



Reduce inequality within and among countries

We are working to support targets 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3 through our policies and social impact commitments.

- Our Reconciliation work in Australia
- Our Social Mobility work in the UK
- Our commitment to our 10 Actions for Change



Access to Justice and Rule of Law

We focus our pro bono practice on ways to help strengthen the fundamental principle on which justice is based- the rule of law, in support of SDG 16.3, Access to Justice and Rule of Law. We also prioritise matters and projects that focus on social inclusion and capacity building in communities of need. We place enormous emphasis on skills sharing, training and collaboration with our pro bono clients, whether they are well-established global charities, community legal centres, or an innovative thought-leader in community service delivery. For example, our work this year included strategic advice to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) for a ground-breaking project on the relationship between human rights and technology; legal support for immigrants and refugees; and helping underserved populations break barriers to employment opportunities.





Case Study: Understanding the human rights implications of today's technology

This year, we provided extensive pro bono and strategic advice, as well as a secondee from our Digital Law Group, to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) for a ground-breaking project on the relationship between human rights and technology.

In an interconnected world, human rights abuses have the potential to affect every community in complex ways, and the world of artificial intelligence (AI) opens up further human rights law implications - from the use of AI in decision making, to facial recognition and biometric technologies. We have been helping the AHRC develop a clear understanding how human

rights problems can arise in practice through the use of AI, and what companies can do to address these problems at the earliest possible stage.

Our secondee, Holli Sargeant, was instrumental in identifying how the use of AI in a typical commercial scenario can result in algorithmic bias - which in turn can lead to unfairness and unlawful discrimination. Her work was important in providing general advice on the steps companies can take to reduce their legal and reputational risks, working alongside technical specialists whose expertise is primarily in AI and data science.



Technology will not eradicate the vagaries of human judgement or bias...but can prevent potentially harmful, or insufficiently rights-protective, practices. This project brought together invaluable insights to promote the deployment and design of technology to enable stronger rights protections. My secondment to the AHRC was an incredible experience both as a project for the firm to expand, and for my personal development.



HOLLI SARGEANT, HSF DIGITAL LAW GROUP



HSF's pro bono contribution to the AHRC's Human Rights & Technology Project has enabled us to undertake a far more detailed and useful analysis than we would have been able to do on our own.



EDWARD SANTOW, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER AT THE AHRC



MSF staff work alongside local hospital staff in Hôpital Immaculée Conception in Les Cayes, Haiti. Two months after the earthquake that struck southern Haiti, the number of patients arriving in the emergency room and the number of surgeries remain very high. ©MSF/Alexandre Michel

Continued support for Médecins Sans Frontières

Our global charity partner, Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF), continues to play a vital role in fighting the global pandemic. It has been providing healthcare and protective equipment to vulnerable patients and using its expertise in fighting infectious diseases to advise health authorities and medical facilities worldwide.

Since we launched our partnership with the charity, we've been able to support their work by increasing our direct donations and fundraising, increasing our pro bono support, and encouraging more volunteers across the firm to support their work. This year, teams in Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand have been advising MSF on local laws affecting its regional fundraising efforts.

This includes laws on local registration and permits, as well as proper handling of donors' personal data. Many offices this year also planned virtual fundraisers to support MSF's work, including the Brussels office 'Breaking a sweat for charity!' in a joint workout session over Zoom that generated over EUR 1,000 in donations.



Case study: Legal support for immigrants and refugees

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) is a community legal centre providing free immigration advice, legal assistance and legal education to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Queensland. Since 2019, HSF lawyers and graduates have assisted RAILS' clients through offering a legal clinic, as well as providing pro bono legal support to RAILS on employment matters.

In April 2021, Ebony Franzmann, a solicitor in our Brisbane office, completed a two-day a week secondment for just over two months, as a legal

caseworker. Ebony primarily worked with Papua New Guinean women seeking protection from domestic and family violence, generally gathering information about their claims, and helping them complete protection visa applications. She was also able to help clients from other countries such as Pakistan and Colombia, working with interpreters to obtain information, sometimes with extremely urgent deadlines. Ebony was also able to draft child visa submissions, helping provide certainty for the children and families concerned.

Case study: Helping refugees break barriers to employment

Many refugees in the UK struggle to find fulfilling work, despite often being skilled professionals. The charity, Breaking Barriers, helps refugees in London acquire the knowledge, confidence and experience to obtain stable and fulfilling employment. Breaking Barriers works with a variety of professional firms to provide support and insight for their clients, and we have been helping them for four years. This year, we co-hosted an interview skills workshop and practice session with J.P. Morgan, and with insurance business Willis Towers Watson, co-hosted a virtual workshop on transferable skills.

In the first, four of our lawyers joined a team of seven from J.P. Morgan to provide tips on virtual interviews and how best to prepare for them, as well as conduct a mock interview with each attendee. Our volunteers also spoke about their own careers. For the second, five of our team, alongside four from Willis Towers Watson, presented a session on developing transferable skills and talking about them at interviews. This also included advice on adapting to career changes and building confidence and resilience through the job application process in the UK.



Case study: Networked Scholarship Scheme

The Networked Scholarship Scheme is our flagship social mobility programme in England. It launched in 2010 to help young people from low-income backgrounds into professional careers. The scheme targets 16 year olds and follows their development for five years. We've helped 50 participants so far, recruiting five a year to the programme.

To get some sense of its impact, we talked to Sufiyaan, who joined the scheme in its very first year: "The programme really opened my eyes to the possibilities

in the City and made me realise this is what I wanted to do. None of us on the programme had ever seen what it was like inside a corporate environment, it all seemed so far away. I'd describe it as shattering the glass around the City and making it attainable. I wouldn't be where I am now had it not been for my mentor at HSF." Sufiyaan trained as an accountant with EY and today works as a Senior Associate at PwC.

Case study: A PRIME opportunity

PRIME is an alliance of law firms across the UK and Ireland, aiming to improve access to the legal profession by making it open to talent from all economic backgrounds. Every firm involved makes 'the PRIME Commitment', in fact nine combined commitments that ensure all participating firms are offering the right quality of experience across all placements. Through our PRIME programme, students get to spend time learning about and working with our clients. Michelle Nwaesei participated in the programme in February 2014 before going on to study Law LLB at the University of Warwick. She is now a Trainee Solicitor at the firm and looking forward to her third seat.

Michelle said "The programme gave me the confidence to go for a career that I had no prior knowledge of. I learnt first-hand how global law firms operate and how they work with their clients. A visit to one of the firm's biggest clients, Sky, allowed me to see how the firm maintains long-lasting relationships. If it was not for my experience on the PRIME scheme, I would not be where I am today - in the middle of a training contract at the firm I did the scheme with! It is a full-circle journey that shows that opportunities like this, for students from similar backgrounds to me, can and do work."



New York office participates in Sanctuary for Families' Economic Empowerment Programme



The Economic Empowerment Program (EEP), run by long-time pro bono client Sanctuary for Families, is New York City's only living-wage career readiness and hard-skills training initiative offered in-house at a domestic violence agency. To date, the programme has trained more than 1,000 participants, helping them break the cycle of poverty, homelessness, and abuse by providing them with literacy skills, professional development and the advanced IT training that employers seek, so they can find suitable employment.

Our New York team helped with interview skills and preparation for women seeking to return to the workforce after escaping domestic abuse. Larry Savell of the New York office says: "Over the course of each four-session cycle, and due to the determined efforts of our incredible clients, the progress they make in their interviewing skills, overall optimism and self-confidence is amazing. To see first-hand their progress in conveying their qualifications and qualities to potential employers is a tremendous joy."

Supporting education in Jakarta

The Australia & New Zealand Association (ANZA) is a not-for-profit organisation that offers a programme of community activities designed to provide practical assistance for disadvantaged Indonesians. We support one of their largest programmes, the Student Sponsorship Program, which has provided scholarships to help students from poor families remain in school. Despite the pandemic, schools in Jakarta have continued to operate by switching to online learning. ANZA has been working to ensure students can receive this, especially those without access to WiFi, phone or computer. Having sponsored 56 children last school year across elementary, junior and high school levels, we continued our support in the 2020-21 year by sponsoring 60 children.





About this report

This report serves as our 2021 Communication on Progress, in line with our commitment to implementing the principles of the United Nations (UN) Global Compact and contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Global Compact

We became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact in 2016, agreeing to align our strategies and operations with this set of universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and to respect and advance these principles through our supply chain and stakeholder relationships. This report serves as our Communication on Progress in implementing the UN Global Compact. Our UNGC index shows where relevant content on our progress can be found.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

We work with major organisations in almost every economic sector, in almost every corner of the globe. We recognise that our main contribution towards achieving the UN SDGs is through the way we manage and influence these relationships. We reflect regularly on the goals in the context of our responsibilities as a global citizen, and use them to focus our efforts as a responsible business. Due to the diverse nature of our operations and jurisdictions, we deliberately take a broad approach to our advancement of the SDGs. Throughout this report, we highlight goals that are integral to our ambitions as a responsible business, where we believe we can have a uniquely positive impact.



UNGC Index

This report serves as our fifth Communication on Progress in implementing the principles of the UNGC and supporting broader UN goals. The tables below shows where relevant content can be found in this report and on our website against the UNGC Principles.

Disclosure	UNGC Principle	Report section or further information
Human rights	<p>Principle 1</p> <p>Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.</p> <p>Principle 2</p> <p>Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.</p>	<p>Responsible procurement ESG Practice</p> <p>Third Party Compliance Standards</p> <p>Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement</p> <p>Human Rights Service web page</p> <p>Business and Human Rights web page</p> <p>Social Impact section</p>
Labour	<p>Principle 3</p> <p>Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.</p> <p>Principle 4</p> <p>Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.</p> <p>Principle 5</p> <p>Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour.</p> <p>Principle 6</p> <p>Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.</p>	<p>Eliminating the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking</p> <p>Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement</p> <p>Our People</p> <p>Our vision for diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Social Impact section</p>
Environment	<p>Principle 7</p> <p>Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.</p> <p>Principle 8</p> <p>Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.</p> <p>Principle 9</p> <p>Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.</p>	<p>Climate change section</p> <p>Our net zero carbon ambition</p> <p>Client-based cases</p> <p>ESG Sustainability and Responsible Business web page</p> <p>Climate Change Practice web page</p> <p>Sustainability web page</p>
Anti-corruption	<p>Principle 10</p> <p>Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.</p>	<p>Anti-bribery and Corruption Service web page</p> <p>Legal & Regulatory web page</p>

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