



Global Compact
Network Australia



**Australian
Human Rights
Commission**

MEDIA RELEASE

Business engages with civil society, government, investors and other stakeholders at national dialogue on business and human rights

Sydney, Australia – November 2016

Over 100 sustainability leaders and experts met in Sydney for the third annual Australian Dialogue on Business and Human Rights, in late October.

Business, government, civil society, investors and academia will come together to discuss ways in which all stakeholders can work together to better prevent and address human rights harm linked to business.

The Dialogue is being co-convened by the Global Compact Network Australia and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

“Human rights remains a key risk for Australian businesses both domestically and overseas. The issue is critical for every business to understand, both in terms of direct and indirect impacts such as through supply chains. Engaging with NGOs and other stakeholders is an important part of understanding and managing this risk, and the Dialogue is an opportunity for this,” said Alice Cope, Executive Manager, Global Compact Network Australia.

“This is a prime opportunity for business to hear what other stakeholders expect in terms of effective human rights risk management at home and abroad. It is also a chance for business to highlight to other stakeholders including the government what support it needs to make real progress on the ground.” said Vanessa Zimmerman, Chair of the Global Compact Network Australia’s Human Rights Leadership Group.

Since the first Dialogue was held in 2014, the business and human rights agenda in Australia has continued to evolve, with pressure growing on Australian businesses to demonstrate that they understand and are managing their human rights impacts. The Australian Government has also taken steps in this area, having announced an intention to conduct national consultations on business and human rights during 2016.

“We are on the cusp of great change in Australia’s business landscape, where human rights play an increasingly important role in the development and longevity of private and public industries. But the only way this can be genuinely achieved is through the best possible relationships with stakeholders. This should be a priority for all of us seeking to apply human rights principals to policies, investments, employment and activities,” said Professor Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

“There is no question that effective and strategic management of human rights impacts – in relation to supply chain, engaging with public or private security, labour practices or, engaging with indigenous peoples or other community stakeholders to name a few examples – can be integral to the effectiveness of business operations’ said Rachel Nicolson, Partner at Allens Linklaters, sponsors of the Dialogue.

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About the Global Compact Network Australia

The Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA) is the Australian business-led network of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative. The UN Global Compact is a call to companies everywhere to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions that advance societal goals. In Australia, the GCNA brings together Australian signatories to the UN Global Compact, including a number of Australia's leading companies, non-profits and universities, to advance corporate sustainability and the private sector's contribution to sustainable development. (www.unglobalcompact.org.au)

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