



**Global Compact**  
Network Australia



**Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission**

# 2019 Australian Dialogue on Business and Human Rights

## Doing Business with Respect for Human Rights in the Asia Pacific Region

17 October 2019  
Melbourne

**The Global Compact Network Australia and Australian Human Rights Commission welcome you to Australia's annual national multi-sector, multi-stakeholder forum aimed at driving the business and human rights agenda forward.**

For the fifth time, the Dialogue brings Australian business, government, civil society, investors and academia together to share knowledge, explore continuing challenges, and encourage collaboration to support continued implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

This year's Dialogue recognises the importance of the Asia-Pacific region as a major trading partner and host to many suppliers and customers of Australian companies. The Dialogue will highlight the diverse challenges Australian companies may face in respecting human rights in Australia and the region and practical solutions to address them.

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# Agenda

8.30am	<b>Registration</b>
9.00am—9.30am	<p><b>Welcome to Country and Opening</b></p> <p>Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM, President, Australian Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Vanessa Zimmerman, Director, Global Compact Network Australia and Chair, Human Rights, Global Compact Network Australia</p> <p><i>Master of ceremonies: Padma Raman, Chief Executive, Australian Human Rights Commission</i></p>
9.30am—10.00am	<p><b>Keynote Address: The state of business and human rights in our region: progress, challenges and opportunities</b></p> <p>Debbie Stothard, Secretary-General, International Federation for Human Rights and Coordinator of the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma</p>
10.00am—11.00am	<p><b>Plenary: What is leadership in relation to respecting and promoting human rights in the Asia Pacific region?</b></p> <p>Debbie Stothard, Secretary-General, International Federation for Human Rights and Coordinator of the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma</p> <p>Louise Davidson, CEO, Australian Council of Superannuation Investors</p> <p>Tammy Medard, Head of Diversified Industrials (Institutional) and former CEO of ANZ Laos, ANZ Banking Group</p> <p>Ryan Swenson, Head of Sustainable Development, Officeworks</p> <p><i>Facilitated by Dr Helen Szoke AO, former Chief Executive, Oxfam Australia</i></p> <p>Aim: The opening plenary will focus on what it means to do business with respect for human rights across the region and why leadership is a fundamental cornerstone to achieving this expectation. The session will explore the key business and human rights issues in the region and if, due to the geopolitical, economic and social context, expectations on business to respect human rights are different in the Asia-Pacific and how this could be addressed. Finally, we will hear from business leaders about the strategies that they are implementing to help promote and realise human rights.</p>
11.00am—11.30am	<b>Morning Tea</b>
11.30am—1.00pm	<p><b>Breakout session: Human rights defenders and civic space in the region</b></p> <p>Sharon Flynn, Executive Vice President, Head of External Affairs and Social Performance, OceanaGold</p> <p>Emmanuel Peni, PNG Human Rights Defender, President of Kapul Champions and Coordinator of Project Sepik</p> <p>Amy Sinclair, Regional Representative for Australia, New Zealand &amp; Pacific, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre</p> <p>Kitty Potter, Human Rights and Engagement Asia Lead, Apple</p> <p><i>Facilitated by Vanessa Zimmerman, Director GCNA and Chair, Human Rights</i></p> <p>Aim: This session will explore who are the human rights defenders relating to business conduct in the region and the spectrum of challenges that they face. The session will provide companies with a perspective on what they need to do to respect the rights of human rights defenders and growing expectations to also take proactive steps to protect them. This discussion will focus on collaborative efforts</p>

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between businesses, unions, workers and civil society organisations, and the challenges and opportunities faced by each stakeholder in ensuring open and meaningful communication between human rights defenders and business.

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## **Breakout session: Operational grievance mechanisms: Building trust and ensuring access to remedy**

Aim: This session will explore the challenges workers and communities in the region face in accessing operational level grievance mechanisms for business related human rights harm. The session will draw on regional lessons and experiences in developing, designing and implementing operational level grievance mechanisms and provide practical tools and ideas for facilitating a stronger worker and community voice.

Anjali Nayar, Founder & CEO, TIMBY (This is My Backyard)

Gary Shaw, CSR Manager, Kathmandu

Rekha Chakravarthi, Policy Advisor, Corporate Accountability, Cividep India

Megan Christensen, Senior Vice President Corporate Social Responsibility & Environment, Oil Search

*Facilitated by Lauren Zanetti, Senior Policy Officer, Business and Human Rights, Australian Human Rights Commission*

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1.00pm–  
1.45pm

## **Lunch**

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1.45pm–  
1.50pm

## **Kate Lynch, Principal Advisor, Australian National Contact Point (AusNCP)**

Aim: This session will explore the updates on the Australian National Contact Point (AusNCP) and provide a means for businesses to collaborate with AusNCP.

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1.50pm–  
3.00pm

## **Plenary session: Human rights and climate inaction—The rise of climate change and what it means for business' human rights risk management**

Aim: The aim of this session is to provide insights into the adverse impacts of climate change on internationally recognised human rights. In particular, the way that climate change already disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable and marginalised communities across the region. The panel will seek to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the way that climate change impacts interact with the corporate responsibility to respect human rights. It will also highlight the potential risks faced by businesses that fail to adequately address climate-related human rights risks, including regulator and community pressure, shareholder activism and climate-related litigation.

David Barnden, Principal Lawyer, Equity Generation Lawyers

Brynn O'Brien, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Corporate Responsibility

Professor Jacqueline Peel, Melbourne University Law School

Katerina Teaiwa, Associate Professor, Australian National University and Vice-President, Australian Association for Pacific Studies

*Facilitated by Kylie Porter, Executive Director, Global Compact Network Australia*

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3.00pm–  
3.30pm

## **Afternoon Tea**

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3.30pm–  
4:30pm

## **Breakout session: Key human rights risks and challenges in the Asia Pacific**

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## **Governance challenges: Working in countries where national laws conflict with international standards**

Aim: The aim of this session is to explore how weak governance can impact on a



business' ability to respect human rights and inadvertently expose companies to potentially unethical conduct. Additionally, this session will explore the role of business in respecting human rights in regions where national laws do not align to, or conflict with, international standards. This breakout session will allow attendees to not only understand the nexus between weak governance and human rights, but provide practical insights on how to 'walk the walk' of respecting human rights in the Asia Pacific region, despite governance challenges.

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### Empowering women and girls in the region

**Aim:** This session aims to equip participants to take a gender focused approach to understanding and assessing business impacts on human rights in the region. Panellists will provide insights into the challenges and hurdles faced by women and girls, with a focus on economic exploitation, sexual harassment and violence at work and community consultation.

Melinda Kenny, Head of Key Relations, CARE Australia

Sonya Rand, Group Sustainability & Ethical Sourcing Manager, Cotton On Group

Marie Apostol, President/CEO, The FAIR Hiring Initiative Inc

*Facilitated by Natasha De Silva, Senior Policy Executive – Partnerships & International Engagement, Australian Human Rights Commission*

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4.30pm–

### Short Break

4.40pm

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4.40pm–

### Plenary: Bringing human rights home—innovative cross-sector collaboration to support vulnerable communities in Australia

5.15pm

Ciara Sterling, Director and CEO, Thriving Communities Partnership

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5.15pm–

### Summary and Closing

5.30pm

*Padma Raman, Chief Executive, Australian Human Rights Commission*

*Kylie Porter, Executive Director, Global Compact Network Australia*

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5.30–7.30pm

Networking drinks

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### Notes for participants

1. **Engagement.** The Dialogue is convened as a safe space for all stakeholders, and participants are asked to adopt an approach of respectful engagement that builds understanding, capacity and cross-sector relationships and collaboration.
2. **Chatham House Rule.** The Dialogue is being held under the Chatham House Rule. Participants may use the information received during the event, but may not disclose the identity or affiliation of any speaker or other participant, or attribute any information or comments to any person or organisation.
3. **Social Media.** With absolute consideration for the Chatham House Rule, we encourage participants to post their insights to social media using the hashtag #bizhumanrightsAU and the handles @globalcompactau and @AusHumanRights
4. **Photography.** Photographs will be taken at this event. You may be identifiable in any photographs that are taken. Please note that by attending the event, you are consenting to the use of those photos in various forms of media, on the web and in print by the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Global Compact Network Australia.

## **About the Global Compact Network Australia**

As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compact is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Launched in 2000, the mandate of the UN Global Compact is to guide and support the global business community in advancing UN goals and values through responsible corporate practices. With more than 9,500 companies and 3,000 non-business signatories based in over 160 countries, and more than 70 Local Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

In Australia, the business-led Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA) brings together participants to the UN Global Compact, including a number of Australia's leading companies, civil society organisations and universities in a platform for dialogue, learning, influence and action that is practical and leading edge. We guide businesses on how a principles-based approach to doing business by advancing the Ten Principles and the contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) drives long-term business success.

<http://www.unglobalcompact.org.au/>

## **About the Australian Human Rights Commission**

The Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is Australia's national human rights institution. The Commission operates under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) as well as federal laws that seek to ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, sex, sexual orientation, intersex status and gender identity. The Commission provides direct services to the Australian community, in particular by assisting people to resolve disputes about discrimination and breaches of human rights. At policy level, the Commission encourages government, businesses, industry and community groups alike to see fundamental rights and freedoms realised.

[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)