

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP



Responsible Investment
Association Australasia



Post Meeting Papers

Human Rights Working Group Meeting #3-25

Thursday 5th August 2025 | 12:00pm – 1:30pm AEST / 2:00pm – 3:30pm NZST

Contents

Meeting minutes
Action Register
Attendees
Meeting Slide Deck
StockWatch Report

Minutes

Item	Action required
1. Welcome (5 min) Co-Chair – Antonia Parkes (Australia Super) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening• Acknowledgement of Country• Minutes from last meeting• Purpose and Principles• Discussions in working groups may include competitors or potential competitors. In line with competition law, members must not share or discuss competitively sensitive, non-public information such as pricing, sensitive financial data, strategic plans, tender or negotiation details, and voting intentions related to takeovers	Submit any amendments to the Minutes to Neisha Biviano (Working Groups Officer)
2. Special Presentations and Q&A (35 min) Topic: Human Rights in a shifting landscape Navigating U.S. Headwinds: Human Rights for ANZ Investors – Sireen Hajj, Director of Investor Outreach at US SIF <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the first half of 2025, about 38% of USAID (the United States Agency for International Development) projects were cut resulting in wide-ranging and significant impacts. Prior to these cuts, USAID was the largest foreign aid organisation in the United States. The funding cuts	To access the meeting papers and the recording, go on the RIAA website and select; 1. “Portal” (top bar, right-hand side), 2. “Member login” (sign into the member portal), 3. “Working Groups”

affected many organisations working on the ground, aiding in healthcare, education, economic development, and disaster relief. Risks to investors from funding cuts

- **Increased instability and insecurity:** Aid programs that once offered governance, conflict resolution, and rule of law have ceased making some countries less predictable and riskier for investors. Potential consequences include civil unrest, violence, and supply chain disruptions.
- **Economic deterioration and reduced market potential:** Foreign aid often acts as a catalyst for economic growth, funding infrastructure, education, and health systems. Cuts to USAID have halted projects that supported agricultural productivity, clean energy, and public health, leading to declines in economic stability, a shrinking consumer base, and reduced potential for long-term market growth.
- **Loss of de-risking mechanisms:** USAID and other development agencies frequently engaged in blended finance models with the private sector, taking on the highest-risk portions of projects to make them more attractive to private investors. The reduction in aid funding has limited these opportunities, leaving private investors to bear risk.

Damage to reputation and brand: Investors may face reputational risks if they are profiting in regions where humanitarian crises are worsening due to aid cuts, potentially leading to public backlash. Some responses to mitigate risk arising from USAID cuts include: Blended finance: where public funds are used to derisk a project and make it more attractive; Public funding risk-sharing; Impact investing; Development finance institutions; Microfinance (smaller institutions); and Community Development Financial Institutions.

Modern Slavery Risks in a Shifting Aid Landscape - Serena Grant, Director of Business and Human Rights at Walk Free

- These financial cuts are coming at a time where global instability is high and where vulnerable populations are facing challenges. There is an intersectionality of ESG risks including modern slavery. Without the help from large civil society actors – from NGOs and grass root organisations – there is the risk that exploitation in supply chains goes unchecked. Investors play a role in both mitigating these challenges and actively building the systems in place to uphold human rights.
- At the beginning of 2025, the US government issued a stop work order on existing foreign aid. This freeze resulted in the termination of 69 international initiatives that were focused on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking, including the subsequent withdrawal of 500 million US dollars' worth of grants – undermining initiatives across more than 40 countries within the Oceania, Latin America and Africa regions.
- The Centre for Global Development (2024) recorded the USAID's absolute cut (the total dollar amount during FY2024) as an estimated 9.2 billion U.S dollars. The report outlined that each of the sectors in which funding was cut, closely linked with modern slavery vulnerability indicators described in the global slavery index. Some of these examples include agricultural resiliency, basic access to education, disaster relief, maternal and child health, vaccinations, governance, rule

(Scroll down to '*Human Rights Working Group*' and click '*learn more*')

If you require any assistance, please contact [Neisha Biviano](#) (Working Groups Officer)

<p>of law and human rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has also been a reduction of monies dedicated to anti-trafficking programs or initiatives to address forced labour with a focus on domestic agendas. This has become part of a growing trend beyond the United States e.g. UK and Brazil. • The size of a funder like the US government means that philanthropic work can't "plug" the extent of the funding gaps. • NGOs have highlighted that the impacts of the cuts were felt beyond just those who were funded by USAID with vulnerabilities growing in communities and demand for services increasing. A survivor organisation reported that they now must fund rescues and survivor support "from their own pocket," limiting their ability to carry out essential work. <p>Practical takeaways for investors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of these cuts and their potential impacts on supply chains, particularly where investee companies rely on civil society or worker-led organisations for responses to labour exploitation or modern slavery. • Assess whether civil society or worker-led organisations can still provide adequate support and how gaps can be addressed. • Consider potential investor engagement questions and actions for investee companies with operations or supply chains in high risk jurisdictions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage on the impact of aid cuts or pauses on the ground ○ Seek that investee companies conduct risk assessments regarding human rights (including modern slavery) and labour-related risks ○ Seek that investee companies develop a modern slavery action plan. 	
<p>3. Working Group Governance Updates (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jess Rowe (RIAA) shared an update regarding the governance of the working group. Måns Carlsson OAM will now be stepping down as co-chair of the working group after four and a half years. Throughout his tenure, Måns has made significant contributions to both the working group and the wider industry. Jess reflected that Måns has been central to the leadership of this group, notably supporting advocacy on modern slavery, leading the recent toolkit launch, and much more. He was thanked for his expertise, time, and generosity. • Antonia and the Working Groups team acknowledged and deeply appreciate Måns's immense contributions, particularly his generosity in sharing insights and knowledge. • Jess Rowe announced the opening of the Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for the Co-Chair position. Details about the process will be shared in the upcoming member wrap later this August, including a link to submit EOIs and a governance document outlining the procedure. 	<p>For any questions regarding the governance process of the working groups, please contact, Jess Rowe (Manager of Working Groups)</p>
<p>4. Subgroup Updates (15 min)</p> <p>Digital Tech and Human Rights (10 min)</p> <p>Janelle Morrison (Subgroup's point person Ausbil)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janelle shared insights from her recent visits to China, Taiwan and 	

South Korea, speaking to companies involved in the AI value chain – AI developers, hardware manufacturers and data sensor developers. Each company is approaching AI integration very differently.

- Janelle shared how responsible AI legislation and mandated standards are utilised in China. The government supports AI development but also considers the long-term significant risks that could disrupt free-market AI development.
- Companies advised of making investment in high-quality data sourced from credible datasets, often acquired from their own operations, customer base, or partnerships. This information is often anonymised, with companies employing dedicated teams to manage the data specifically.

Practical takeaways for investors:

- In Australia, it is expected that AI will continue to be a prominent theme in company reporting. It is important for investors to consider how AI models are trained, as data plays a key role in model output – a key risk outlined in the [RIAA Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights Investor Toolkit](#).
- The data supply chain can be labour intensive, forced labour can be found in the electronics supply chain at the Tier 2, Tier 3 level and beyond. Potential engagement actions with investee companies include encouraging companies to do deeper analysis to uncover modern slavery within their supply chains.

Human Rights Due Diligence – insights from the UN Special Rapporteur report on corporate forces behind destruction of Palestine (5 min)

Jess Rowe (RIAA) presented

- As part of the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) workplan, one workstream focuses on Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD), including *heightened* HRDD (hHRDD).
In June 2025, UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese presented a report to the Human Rights Council titled: “From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide”
- Jess provided an overview of the report and highlighted further the link to business activities to violations of international law and serious human rights abuses such as discrimination, forced displacement, pillage, and starvation.

Key Corporate Activities Identified:

- Supplying/transporting weapons and dual-use goods
- Construction and maintenance of settlements
- Operating/investing in industrial zones in occupied territories
- Profiting from resource extraction (e.g. quarries, agriculture)
- Providing surveillance tech used for population control
- Trading in goods produced in settlements
- These findings apply not only to Palestine but also to business operations in Western Sahara, Ukraine, DRC, Myanmar, and Sudan.
- **Risks to Businesses:**
 - **Reputational:** Public scrutiny from investors, consumers, and civil society
 - **Operational:** Exposure to sanctions, boycotts, divestment, and local instability

For more information regarding the Digital Tech Subgroup, please contact [Janelle Morrison \(AusBil\)](#)

For more information regarding the Human Rights Diligence Section, please contact, [Jess Rowe \(Manager of Working Groups\)](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legal: Possible criminal liability under IHL and universal jurisdiction laws • The report finds conventional HRDD inadequate in conflict zones. hHRDD requires analysis of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The company's risk of impacting conflict dynamics 2. Heightened risk of human rights violations • Businesses must also integrate International Humanitarian Law (IHL) into due diligence – termed “IHL-informed due diligence” – requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of links to armed conflict or occupation ○ Assessment of contribution to or benefit from IHL violations <p>To view the resources discussed during the presentation please see below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese presented a report to the Human Rights Council - Forever-Occupation, genocide, and profit: Special Rapporteur's report exposes corporate forces behind destruction of Palestine OHCHR • Further information regarding the link to hHRDD and IHL with the UN Report - https://trustworksglobal.com/business-activities-in-conflict-affected-areas-why-business-leaders-must-heed-the-uns-report-on-palestine/ • The RIAA Armed Conflict toolkit - https://www.responsibleinvestment.org/research-and-resources/resource/investor-toolkit-on-human-rights-and-armed-conflict • Trust Works Global- Business activities in conflict-affected areas: Why business leaders must heed the UN's report on Palestine TrustWorks Global 	
<p>5. Industry Updates (15 min)</p> <p>RIAA Policy and Advocacy Update (10 min)</p> <p>Nayanisha Samarakoon (Head of Policy and Advocacy RIAA)</p> <p>Australian Modern Slavery Act Review: The Australian Government is seeking to strengthen the operation of the Modern Slavery Act 2018. Public consultation has now opened with submissions due by 1 September 2025. View the Attorney-General's department consultation paper and create your submission here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIAA is proposing to submit a submission on behalf of RIAA members. To aid in the development of the RIAA submission, RIAA will engage with the Human Rights Working Group through email and survey for any input that members may have to the consultation questions, in particular, any examples or case studies that could be utilised in the submission to help support proposed amendments to the legislation. • This is also an advocacy opportunity for RIAA members with members able to make their own submissions. <p>New Zealand Modern Slavery Bill: Engagement on this continues and we are monitoring the situation.</p> <p>StockWatch Report (5 min)</p> <p>Phil Sloane (Associate Director, Head of ESG Client Success APAC ISS Stoxs)</p>	<p>For more information on RIAA's policy and advocacy work, please contact: Nayanisha Samarakoon (Head of Advocacy and Policy)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wesfarmers (Kmart): Allegations of sourcing from factories with links to forced labor of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China. An application for pre-litigation discovery has been made in the Federal Court. • Woodside Energy: UNESCO World Heritage Site (Murujuga) designated, <i>but</i> under 'major threat' from Woodside's industrial emissions. Traditional owners are pushing for stronger protection. • Qantas: Major cyberattacks impacting 5.7 million customers with data breach including personal information. Focus on data security and customer protection and access to ID protection services. • Newmont & Harmony Gold (PNG): Legal challenge in Papua New Guinea regarding deep-sea tailings placement (DSTP) at Wafi-Golpu mine. • Rio Tinto & BHP: Ongoing legal battle to halt transfer of Oak Flat (sacred Apache site) to mining company – requires full environmental impact assessment, to ensure no significant harm is created before conveying the land • BHP (Brazil): Lawsuit by five municipalities seeking R\$780 (AUD \$220) million in damages from 2015 dam collapse. Claiming exclusion from recent renegotiation agreements created significant water contamination impacts and loss of tourism 	<p>For more information regarding the Stock Watch Report, please contact, Phil Sloane (ISS STOXX)</p>
<p>6. Workplan Updates (15 min)</p> <p>Workplan for 2025 progress update (Jess Rowe) (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on the progress against the current workplan was shared. These details are included in the slides below. • Please reach out to Jess Rowe and provide suggestions on anything investors are seeing as a gap that RIAA can delve into or any feedback on the progress against the 2025 workplan. <p>Workplan for 2026 development (Antonia Parkes, Co-Chair - RIAA's Human Rights Working Group) (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions to inform the 2026 workplan were invited. The workplan will be richer from contributions made so it reflects the topics important to members. 	<p>To provide input into the 2026 HRWG Workplan please use the following a link – Access here</p>
<p>7. Closing remarks (5 min)</p> <p>Antonia Parkes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key upcoming dates: keep dates remove description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Aotearoa New Zealand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - August - CERD review of New Zealand's 23rd and 24th periodic reports on racial discrimination ○ For Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 29 August – Wear it Purple Day ○ For International: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 19 August – World Humanitarian Day - 18 September – International Equal Pay Day • Next Meeting: Thursday 23 October 12-1.30pm AEST / 2pm-3.30pm NZST – Register here 	<p>Register for the next meeting on Thursday 23 October (12-1.30pm AEST / 2pm-3.30pm NZST) - Register here</p>

Action Register

Ref.	Action	Delegation	Status
<i>New</i>			
17/25	Register for the next meeting on Thursday 23 October (12-1.30pm AEST / 2pm-3.30pm NZST) - Register here	All	Pending
16/25	To provide input into the 2026 HRWG Workplan please use the following a link – Access here	All	Pending
15/25	Submit any amendments to the Minutes to Neisha Biviano (Working Groups Officer)	All	Pending
<i>Previous</i>			
14/25	Register for the next meeting on Thursday August 7 12-1.30pm AEST / 2pm-3.30pm NZST – Register here	All	Complete
13/25	Submit any amendments to the Minutes to Shelina Fernando (Working Groups Officer, RIAA)	All	Complete
12/25	For more information regarding the Stock Watch Report, please contact Phil Sloane (ISS ESG)	All	Ongoing
11/25	For more information on RIAA's policy and advocacy work, please contact Nayanisha Samarakoon (Head of Advocacy and Policy)	All	Ongoing
10/25	For more information regarding the Modern Slavery Subgroup, please contact Jess Rowe (Manager of Working Groups)	All	Ongoing
9/25	Register for the next meeting on Wednesday June 5 (12-1.30pm AEDT / 2pm-3.30pm NZDT) - Register here	All	Complete
8/25	Submit any amendments to the Minutes to Shelina Fernando (Working Groups Officer, RIAA)	All	Complete
7/25	EOI form here , or contact Jess Rowe (RIAA) or Mans Carlsson (Ausbil) if you have any questions on becoming Co-Chair	All	Complete
6/25	For more information regarding the Stock Watch Report, please contact Phil Sloane (ISS ESG)	All	Ongoing

5/25	For more information on RIAA's policy and advocacy work, please contact Nayanisha Samarakoon (Head of Advocacy and Policy)	All	Ongoing
4/25	For more information regarding the Modern Slavery Subgroup, please contact Jess Rowe (Manager of Working Groups)	All	Ongoing
3/25	For more information regarding the Digital Tech Subgroup, please contact Janelle Morrison (AusBil)	All	Ongoing
2/25	Form to volunteer for any aspects of the Working Group Plan is available here.	All	Ongoing
1/25	Form to indicate your interest for contributions to updating the Human Rights toolkit is available here.	All	Complete

Attendance (39):

	First Name	Last Name	Company
1	Amber	Sun	Adamantem
2	Melissa	Jones	Airlie Funds Management
3	Alex	Safran	Alvarium/Pathfinder
4	Janelle	Morrison	Ausbil Investment Management
5	Emily	Dafter	Australian Retirement Trust
6	Antonia	Parkes	AustralianSuper
7	Kutlu	Karayol	Cbus Super
8	Dilan	Ashton	Equity Trustees
9	Charlotte	O'meara	Fidante Partners
10	Callum	Morris	Funds SA
11	Tom	Treffry	Hub24
12	Phil	Sloane	ISS STOXX
13	Debaprasad	Sengupta	ISS STOXX
14	Lauren	Maccheroni	Macquarie
15	Grace	Gow	Macquarie
16	Ayesha	Azeem	Maple-Brown Abbott
17	Sadhika	Nanda	Maplecroft
18	Frida	Panayi	Metrics Credit Partners
19	Tania	Sibree	Millsoakley
20	Marcel	Scougall	MSCI
21	Kat	Sayers	NAB
22	Emily	Simso	New Forests
23	Bridgette	McDonald	Pamoda Consult
24	Lauren	Solomon-Walters	Perpetual Group

25	Abi	Curtis	PRI
26	Sonia	Auld	QIC
27	Morgan	Ellis	Resolution Capital
28	Briony	Doyle Galovic	RIAA
29	Jess	Rowe	RIAA
30	Neisha	Biviano	RIAA
31	Estelle	Parker	RIAA
32	Nayanisha	Samarakoon	RIAA
33	Lisa	Domagala	Solaris Investment Management Limited
34	Michelle	Davey	TelstraSuper
35	Catherine	Bodnar	Trust Management
36	Rachel	Alembakis	U Ethical Investors
37	Sireen	Hajj	USSIF
38	Olivia	Lieberthal	USSIF
39	Serena	Grant	Walkfree

Human Rights Working Group Meeting #3

Thursday 7 August



Responsible Investment
Association Australasia



Human Rights Working Group Meeting #3



Antonia Parkes, Senior Director, ESG & Stewardship – Workforce Integration, and Co-Chair of RIAA's HRWG

Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we are calling in from today. We would also like to pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Purpose

The HRWG is a forum for members to:

- exchange information and resources
- update on members' activity
- collaborate on policy and research, implementation and advocacy opportunities on matters relating to human rights relevant to investors, researchers and advisers.

All this is aimed at building members' understanding and capabilities for assessing and respecting human rights, mitigating risks in investment and strengthening the companies in which funds are invested.

RIAA Working Group – Principles

- Confidentiality
- No self-promotion
- Declaration of conflicts of interest
- Representation
- Collaboration between members
- Positive change in practice / policy
- Not engage in or discuss competitively sensitive information
 - Discussions in working groups may include competitors or potential competitors. In line with competition law, members must not share or discuss competitively sensitive, non-public information such as pricing, sensitive financial data, strategic plans, tender or negotiation details, and voting intentions related to takeovers, **anti-competitive agreements (strictly prohibited)**
- Apolitical

Special Presentation & Q&A



Sireen Hajj, Director of Investor Outreach at US SIF



Serena Grant, Director of Business and Human Rights at Walk Free

Human Rights Working Group

COVERING:

Perspective from the US

PRESENTED BY:

Sireen Hajj – Director, Investor Outreach

DATE:

August 7, 2025

Developments in US

Healthcare

Education

Economic
Development

Disaster Relief

Environmental
Protection



Risks



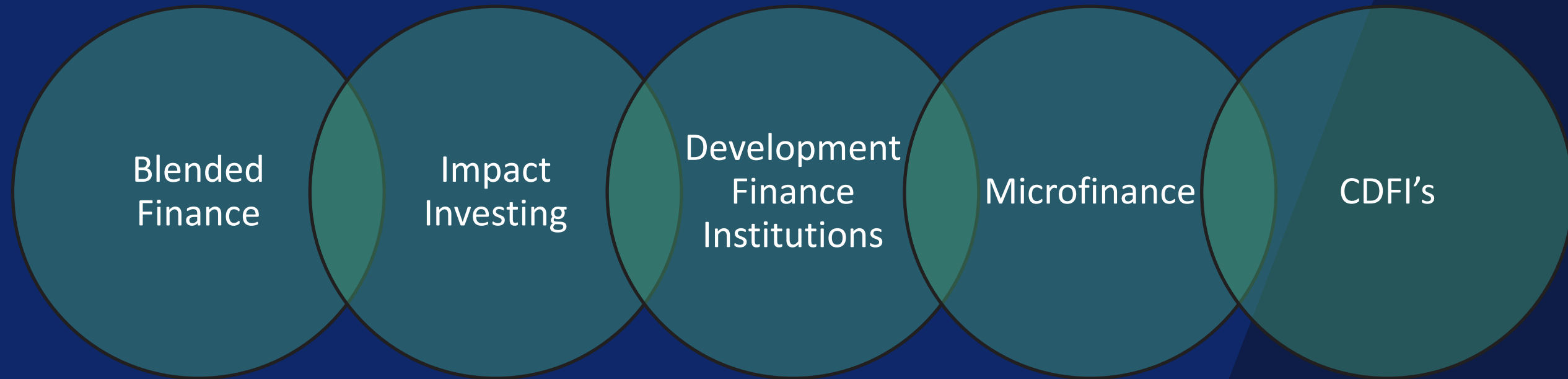
**Increased Instability
and Insecurity**

**Economic
Deterioration and
Reduced Market
Potential**

**Loss of “De-Risking”
Mechanisms**

Reputational Risks

The world can no longer depend solely on public finance



Key Takeaways

Look for the Opportunity

Build Institutions

Engage in the ecosystem

Understand the social impact





THANK YOU

GET IN TOUCH

Maria Lettini – mlettini@ussif.org

Sireen Hajj – shajj@ussif.org

Olivia Lieberthal – olieberthal@ussif.org

VISIT US

www.ussif.org

Subgroup updates

- **Digital Tech and Human Rights**
(Janelle Morrison, Ausbil)
- **Human Rights Due Diligence**
(Jo Saleeba, NewForests)
- **Modern Slavery**
(Måns Carlsson OAM, Ausbil)

Industry Updates

- **RIAA Policy and Advocacy Update**
(Nayanisha Samarakoon, RIAA)
- **StockWatch Report**
(Phil Sloane, ISS Stoxx)

- **Wesfarmers (Kmart):** Allegations of sourcing from factories linked to forced labour of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China. Legal challenge underway seeking transparency.
- **Woodside Energy:** UNESCO World Heritage Site (Murujuga) designated, *but* under ‘major threat’ from Woodside’s industrial emissions. Traditional owners pushing for stronger protection.
- **Qantas:** Major cyberattack impacting 5.7 million customers; data breach includes personal information (names, addresses, DOBs). Focus on data security & customer protection.
- **Newmont & Harmony Gold (PNG):** Legal challenge in Papua New Guinea regarding deep-sea tailings placement (DSTP) at Wafi-Golpu mine. Community fears over marine ecosystem damage & food security.
- **Rio Tinto & BHP:** Ongoing legal battle to halt transfer of Oak Flat (sacred Apache site) to mining company – requires full environmental impact assessment.
- **BHP (Brazil):** Lawsuit by five municipalities seeking R\$780 (AUD 220) million in damages from 2015 dam collapse. Claiming exclusion from recent renegotiation agreements.

2025 Workplan progress update

Objective

1. Modern Slavery Policy and Advocacy

- a) Monitor policy and advocacy opportunities in AU/NZ /elsewhere.
- b) RINZ panel session (Sept 2025)
- c) RIAU panel session (May 2025)
- d) Update Human Rights with a focus on supply chains toolkit.
- e) Host Investor Round Table on Modern Slavery with the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

Status

- a) Ongoing.
- b) Under planning. Initial panel design underway pending availability of speakers.
- c) Completed.
- d) Completed.
- e) Completed.

2025 Workplan progress update

Objective	Status
2. Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD)	
a) Workshop on HRDD including hHRDD.	a) Completed.- RIAA ConfAU and online 4 part series.
b) Case studies on the application of the Conflict and Human Rights toolkit.	b) Under planning.
c) Monitor continuing policy and advocacy opportunities	c) Ongoing.

2025 Workplan progress update

Objective	Status
3. Digital Tech and Human Rights	
a) Monitor continuing policy and advocacy opportunities.	a) Ongoing.
b) Support a campaign during Australia's AI month (14 October 2024 to 15 November 2024 and in 2025) on the toolkit uptake.	b) Ongoing. Initial post in 2024. Pending 2025.

2025 Workplan progress update

Objective	Status
4. Host Keynote Speakers	
a) CSDDD (what companies & investors are putting in place).	a) Completed. Meeting #2 2024.
b) How emerging EU law on CSDDD and CSRD will impact Australasian investors.	b) Completed. Meeting #2 2024 and workshop in August 2024.
c) Modern Slavery in renewable supply chains.	c) Completed. Commissioner Dr James Cockayne.
d) Enhancing modern slavery assessment in our portfolio companies. Going beyond a risk assessment. "Find it, fix it, prevent it" global workstream.	d) Ongoing.
e) Hearing from solar panel companies.	e) Seeking speakers.
f) Intersection of Human Rights and Nature.	f) Coverage to some extent in the FNPRWG and NWG.
g) Geopolitics and Human Rights: Relationship to responsible investment	g) Completed. Meeting #3 2025 and RIAA Australia Conference and

2026 Workplan development

RIAA Human Rights Working
Group work plan survey 2026



Key Upcoming Dates

- **For Aotearoa New Zealand:**

August- CERD review of New Zealand's 23rd and 24th periodic reports on racial discrimination

- **For Australia:**

29 August - Wear it Purple Day

- **For International:**

19 August – World Humanitarian Day

18 September – International Equal Pay Day

Working Group Member Portal

All Working Group meeting minutes and recordings are uploaded to the RIAA Member Portal. Access the portal using your [Glue Up credentials here](#):



Upcoming Working Group Meetings

Nature Working Group #3,
Thursday 4 September - 12pm–1pm AEST / 2pm–3pm NZST

Aotearoa Collaborative Working Group #3,
Thursday 16 September - 2pm–3:30pm NZST/12pm-1:30pm AEST
Hybrid event, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland & online

First Nations Peoples' Rights Working Group #4,
Thursday 14 October - 12pm–1:30pm AEDT / 2pm–3:30pm NZDT

Human Rights Working Group #4,
Thursday 23 October - 12pm–1:30pm AEDT / 2pm–3:30pm NZDT

View full list of [RIAA's events here](#).



Responsible Investment
Association Australasia



**RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALASIA**

Level 2, 696 Bourke St
Melbourne Vic, 3000
Australia

+61 3 7068 9456

info@responsibleinvestment.org
responsibleinvestment.org



Responsible Investment
Association Australasia

Recent human rights controversies – Update

Wesfarmers Limited

An Australian Uyghur group is taking Kmart to court, alleging the retailer sources products from factories in China linked to forced labour camps, specifically in the Xinjiang region. The Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association (AUTWA) is alleging that Kmart sources garments from at least two factories linked to forced labor of Uyghurs. They reached this conclusion by comparing Kmart's supplier list to reports detailing companies connected to forced labour practices. Kmart, which is owned by Wesfarmers, strongly denies these allegations, stating they have a 15-year-old Ethical Sourcing Program with regular monitoring and publicly available supplier lists. The Uyghur group is seeking documents to verify Kmart's claims of ethical sourcing and is prepared to call for divestment if links to forced labour are found. Experts point to weaknesses in Australia's Modern Slavery Act, which requires reporting but not action, and the need for stronger laws like those in the EU and US. The case highlights growing concern over forced labour in supply chains and the potential for Australia to become a destination for goods produced unethically due to its less stringent regulations. [[ABC news, 5/08/2025](#)]

Woodside Energy Group Ltd.

The Murujuga Cultural Landscape in Western Australia, home to over a million ancient Aboriginal petroglyphs, has been granted UNESCO World Heritage status after decades of campaigning. However, the decision came with concerns from UNESCO's advisory body, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which stated the site's conservation is under "major threat" due to pollution from nearby industrial facilities like Woodside's gas project. Despite these warnings the listing was approved without the stronger protections initially recommended by UNESCO, prompting continued advocacy for the site's preservation. Traditional owners are now focused on using the World Heritage listing to fight for increased protections and address the ongoing impact of industrial emissions on the irreplaceable rock art. [[ABC news, 12/07/2025](#)]

Qantas Airways Limited

Qantas has confirmed that a recent cyber-attack impacted 5.7 million customers, exposing varying degrees of personal data. The breached information ranges from names and email addresses for 4 million customers to more detailed data like addresses and dates of birth for 1.7 million others, though critical information like credit card details and passwords were not compromised. The airline has been contacting affected customers and offering access to ID security services, advising vigilance against potential scams. Despite the breach, Qantas asserts it has strengthened its security controls and is confident in the security of key systems like frequent flyer accounts. [[Reuters, 1/07/2025](#)]
[[ABC news, 9/07/2025](#)]

Newmont Corporation

Communities in Papua New Guinea are challenging an environmental permit granted to Newmont and Harmony Gold for their Wafi-Golpu mine, specifically concerning the proposed disposal of mining waste into the Huon Gulf via deep-sea tailings placement (DSTP). Locals fear the sediment and potential toxins from the waste will damage the marine ecosystem, a vital food source for approximately 400,000 people, despite the companies' claims of minimal impact. A Supreme Court decision, delayed several times, will determine if the permit adequately considered these environmental risks and community concerns. The case highlights a broader issue, as PNG is becoming a hotspot for deep-sea tailings placement, while stricter regulations prevent this practice in the mining companies' home countries like the US, Australia, and South Africa. [[Mongabay, 13/06/2025](#)]

Rio Tinto Limited and BHP Group Limited

A federal judge has granted Western Apaches and environmentalists another opportunity to halt the transfer of Oak Flat, a sacred Apache site in Arizona, to Resolution Copper a copper mining company. Resolution Copper is a joint venture between Rio Tinto (55%) and BHP (45%), with Rio Tinto as the operator. The judge is requiring the U.S. Forest Service to complete a final environmental impact statement, ensuring it demonstrates no significant harm to religious, historical, or environmental sites before conveying the land. While previous injunction requests were denied, the judge rebuked government attorneys for attempting to backtrack on a four-year-old promise to allow a challenge after the statement's release, enforcing a 60-day review period. With the Supreme Court declining to hear a related case, this legal battle represents the last significant hope for preserving Oak Flat from mining development. [[Courthouse News Service, 6/06/2025](#)]

BHP Group Limited

Five municipalities in southern Bahia are suing Vale, BHP Brasil, and Samarco for R\$780 (AUD 220) million in damages caused by the 2015 Fundão Dam collapse in Mariana, Minas Gerais. These cities claim they were excluded from negotiations regarding a recent renegotiation agreement and suffered significant environmental, social, and economic impacts, including water contamination and loss of tourism. The lawsuit seeks compensation for material, moral, and collective damages experienced by local communities and ecosystems, like the Abrolhos Marine National Park. Following a public hearing highlighting accumulated losses since 2015, the mayors jointly stated the action aims to secure "what is fair" for their populations. [[Bahia Economica, 1/07/2025](#)]