SPERACO
what price trust

Credigro

SUSTAINABILITY*NOW*

Systemic Sustainability

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY FOR RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

Developed by Speraco, Credigro's strategic advisory partner

About Us

Who We Are

Founded in 2021, Credigro is a domain-deep venture built on decades of hands-on experience in regulated services, policy design, and digital transformation. We unite AI innovation with regulatory insight to help responsible businesses scale responsive and resilient operations.

Our Vision

A global economy where every regulated and services-based enterprise can deliver measurable, net-positive outcomes through intelligence, impact-driven, responsible practices. Credigro is building the operational backbone for responsible growth and safeguarded value in people-first and impact-sensitive industries.

Our Mission

To operationalise sustainability at scale by aligning practices, obligations, and behaviours. so that organisations in high-trust sectors can lead with integrity, adapt fast, and grow with confidence.

Our Purpose

Credigro empowers responsible businesses to thrive in complexity. We believe sustainability is a core advantage, not a box to tick. Our tools and systems are designed to unlock operational resilience, elevate outcomes, and safeguard trust in the sectors where impact matters most..

What We Do

Credigro empowers businesses in care economy and other regulated sectors to:

- Automate compliance workflows aligned to live regulatory changes
- Engage teams in intuitive, impact-focused collaboration
- Track performance with real-time insights and human context
- Deliver credible disclosures and governance artefacts that build trust

Our platform is built to scale, ready to expand into professional services, financial services, travel, tourism, and other high-compliance industries. With AI-augmented workflows and sector-tailored frameworks, Credigro turns sustainability leadership from a vision into a competitive reality.

Disclaimer: This material is provided for informational purposes only and reflects insights drawn from publicly available Australian regulatory, market, and industry sources. It does not constitute legal, financial, or compliance advice. No part of this content may be reproduced, distributed, or adapted without prior written permission from Speraco. All referenced trademarks remain the property of their respective owners. Developed by Speraco, Credigro's strategic advisory partner.

CONTENT

Executive Summary

Sustainability in 2025 is a structural imperative for Australian companies, especially those in impact-intensive industries. Embedding responsible practices provides the certainty needed to navigate complex regulatory obligations, meet stakeholder expectations, and build long-term resilience.

From 1 January 2025, the Treasury Laws Amendment (Financial Market Infrastructure and Other Measures) Bill 2024 initiated the phased rollout of mandatory sustainability disclosures, aligned with the Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards (ASRS). As a result, the scale and complexity of regulatory change has become an immediate operational priority for many Australian businesses.

However, several businesses aiming to integrate sustainability into their business models face key challenges, including:
- High costs of establishing compliance and reporting frameworks.
- Limited automation in sustainability data collection and analysis.
- Evolving regulations, requiring continuous adaptation.
- A lack of expertise in managing complex supply chains and material risks.

This paper provides a practical roadmap for businesses to align with sustainability, supporting standards, and market-specific guidance by:
- Establishing strong governance mechanisms for sustainability oversight.
- Setting measurable targets supported by structured frameworks.
- Enhancing risk management and business resilience.
- Building robust data infrastructures to ensure transparent and verifiable disclosures.

Standing up and improving internal capabilities to meet these evolving mandated sustainability reporting obligations demands a coordinated program of work, based on risk-driven, compliance-focused frameworks. Embedding these capabilities requires increased use of structured, credible and verifiable approaches that can streamline and scale responsible business practices. Success in this multi-stakeholder environment depends on a culture of collaboration, backed by strong governance and championed by senior leaders of the business.

Businesses that successfully integrate sustainability into their core operations strengthen their long-term market position and unlock new opportunities for responsible growth.

“You have to do this now. It’s simply not an option to put this off until after legislation has passed and then scramble to comply.”

Keynote speech by ASIC Chair Joe Longo at the Deakin Law School International Sustainability Reporting Forum,
22 April 2024

MinterEllison (2024). Mandatory climate reporting: “You have to do this now”, says ASIC Chair. Retrieved from https://www.minterellison.com/articles/mandatory-climate-reporting-you-have-to-do-this-now-says-asic-chair

Sustainability in Australian Business: Challenges of Integration

Sustainability has become a strategic priority and an operational imperative for leading Australian businesses. ASX100 companies continue to advance best-practice integration, with 97% publicly reporting on their sustainability performance[1]. These companies are embedding sustainability and aligning with recognised standards to build business resilience, drive long-term value creation, and embed corporate purpose across the organisation[2].

Where Australian Businesses Stand

Upon widening the aperture, a clear sustainability leadership gap emerges between the ASX200 and the broader Australian market. While large, listed companies increasingly view sustainability as a strategic lever for long term value creation, many other companies continue to treat it as a compliance hurdle. The marked divergence in approach signals a critical opportunity to reframe sustainability as a lever for unlocking long-term growth, and as a driver of resilience and competitive advantage. Recent snapshots show:

- ASX 101-200 companies are showing improvements though sustainability remains secondary to financial performance (Australian Council of Superannuation Investors, 2024).[3]
- ASX 201-500 companies demonstrate limited alignment, with sustainability often viewed as a compliance burden (Australian Securities and Investments Commission, 2024). [4]
- And privately held businesses typically adopt a reactive, compliance-driven approach rather than leveraging sustainability for strategic advantage (Grant Thornton Australia, 2024).[5]

This landscape points to a systemic and persistent capability gap across current market segments, which is limiting the adoption of responsible business practices, even where such practices are expected or mandated to protect stakeholder (including shareholder) interests.

[1] KPMG (2024). Sustainability Reporting in Australia: Trends and Insights from the ASX100. KPMG Australia. Retrieved from Sustainability reporting survey | ASX 100 insights - KPMG Australia
[2] Capgemini. (2024). Sustainability and Corporate Strategy: Balancing Profit with Purpose. Capgemini Research Institute. Available at: https://www.capgemini.com/insights/research-library/sustainability-trends-2024/
[3] Australian Council of Superannuation Investors (ACSI). (2024). ESG Reporting Trends in the ASX200. Retrieved from https://acsi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ESG-Reporting-Trends-in-the-ASX200.Sep20.pdf
[4] Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). (2024). Climate Change Content in ASX 300 Annual Reports. Retrieved from https://download.asic.gov.au/media/4871341/rep593-published-20-september-2018.pdf
[5] Grant Thornton Australia. (2024). Why ESG is Important for Private Businesses as They Look to the Future. Retrieved from https://www.grantthornton.com.au/insights/blogs/why-esg-is-important-for-private-businesses-as-they-look-to-the-future/

In a climate of performance-focussed accountability, businesses lacking in-house expertise and sustainability-supporting infrastructure continue to fall behind. Designing and deploying credible pathways across governance, technology, data and finance functions to achieve integrated capability upgrades requires multi-domain program of work, one that is guided by governance uplift with capabilities to identify and commit to addressing material issues.

Translating that commitment into capital allocation and sustaining executive sponsorship builds the institutional capacity to deliver early wins and demonstrate reasonable progress over time.

Where such a strategic and structural approach is absent, business valuations and capital inflows are already being adversely impacted. Financial markets are increasingly favouring businesses that pair strong performance with demonstrable resilience and a public commitment to responsible growth.

A framework-based approach, supported by expert guidance and tailored technology infrastructure, is essential to embedding responsible and reasonable practices that form the foundation of mandated sustainability disclosures. Oversight and consistency in executing these practices build long-term confidence and lay the groundwork for independent assurance. These disclosures will become a legal requirement for many Australian companies from 1 July 2030 and must align with the auditing standards issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (AUASB).

Progress by leading ASX-listed Australian companies in preparing for assurance offers a valuable blueprint for other businesses seeking a proven approach to align performance with regulatory expectations and market credibility.

Among the ASX100, some of the leading companies include Lendlease, Westpac and Australian Ethical Investment. Lendlease[1] has emerged as a leader in sustainable property development, integrating carbon-neutral goals and responsible sourcing into its core business (Lendlease, 2024).

[1] Lendlease. (2024). Annual Report 2024. Retrieved from https://www.aspecthuntley.com.au/asxdata/20240819/pdf/02839827.pdf

Westpac[1] has embedded climate risk assessments into its investment and lending decisions, aligning financial performance with sustainability outcomes (Westpac, 2024). And within the financial services sector, Australian Ethical Investment[2] public disclosures have shown how sustainability principles with investment strategies can drive long-term profitability while retaining stakeholder trust.

The Cost of Inaction

Delaying decisions and action on sustainability in 2025 means falling behind economically. As investors and customers increasingly prioritise responsible business performance, return on investment is now closely tied to credibility, resilience, and strategic alignment. Businesses that delay risk:

- Losing market position to sustainability-aligned competitors that adapt faster and capture emerging opportunities.
- Restricted access to capital as investors prioritise companies demonstrating credible, long-term value creation.
- Reputational damage from insufficient oversight or exposure to material risks such as greenwashing and impact washing, which undermines stakeholder trust.

[1] Westpac. (2024). Climate Change Position Statement and Action Plan. Retrieved from https://www.westpac.com.au/content/dam/public/wbc/documents/pdf/aw/sustainability/Climate_Change_Position_Statement_and_Action_Plan.pdf
[2] Australian Ethical Investment. (2024). 2024 Annual Report. Retrieved from https://www.australianethical.com.au/globalassets/pdf-files/annual-reports/2024-annual-report.pdf

Mandatory Sustainability Disclosure: The New Normal

On 9 August 2024, the Australian Parliament legislated to formalise increased requirements for corporate disclosures[1]. This Bill marked the start of an era of greater corporate transparency and accountability in reporting on non-financial risks.

Notable Compliance Milestones

From 1 January 2025, the first reporting cohort of companies must include climate-related financial information in their annual sustainability reports. Directors are required to declare that the statements in the sustainability reports are based on reasonable steps taken by the company, ensuring compliance with the Corporations Act.

- From 1 July 2026, the second cohort of reporting companies meeting specified thresholds of corporate size, assets value and reporting requirements under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 are required to prepare sustainability reports. And the reporting cohorts can be directed by ASIC to confirm, explain or amend inaccurate statements i.e. incorrect, incomplete or potentially misleading.

- From 1 July 2027, reporting obligations will apply to companies meeting two of the following three criteria:
  - Consolidated revenue of $50 million or more.
  - End-of-financial-year consolidated assets of $50 million or more.
  - 100 employees or more.
- From 1 July 2030, audit and assurance requirements will apply across all reporting cohorts. This is intended to further strengthen compliance with the AASB sustainability reporting standards[1].

ASIC's RG 280 and accompanying resources can guide and supporting companies within the various reporting cohorts, including requirements for Director's declaration.

[1] AASB (2024). Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards AASB S1 and AASB S2 now available on the AASB Digital Standards Portal. Australian Accounting Standards Board. Retrieved from https://www.aasb.gov.au/news/australian-sustainability-reporting-standards-aasb-s1-and-aasb-s2-are-now-available-on-the-aasb-digital-standards-portal/

How Leading Companies Are Preparing

Australian companies within the ASX100 index have been aligning with evolving sustainability disclosure requirements, well ahead of 1 January 2025. A reduced cost of equity capital[1] and borrowings[2], along with enhanced investor confidence has been key driver for early action. There is also much to learn and benchmark from their journey to integrate sustainability into their business models, regardless of difference in operational footprints, scale and sector.

BHP[1] has successfully embedded comprehensive climate risk disclosures into its sustainability strategy, integrating scenario analysis and carbon footprint tracking (BHP, 2024). Similarly, Coles sustainability reporting aligns with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework, ensuring that its climate-related financial risks and opportunities are transparently communicated to investors and regulators (Coles, 2024).Qantas publishes its Climate Action Plan, laying out its pathways to decarbonising its operations, supported by carbon offset programs and sustainable aviation fuel investments. These businesses are proof that early action on sustainability reporting can position organisations ahead of regulatory shifts, while enhancing market trust.

Their efforts show how to embed sustainability into the operational fabric of large enterprises. As early movers in institutionalising sustainability-related reporting capabilities, these companies through their years of public disclosures offer valuable insight and evidence-based blueprint for others preparing for the new normal for governance and corporate transparency. Common measures across these leaders include:

- ·Internal governance uplift focussed on overseeing sustainability risks
- Long-term investments in building and upgrading data infrastructure, and digital toolsets for real-time monitoring of impacts, performance and externalities
- Public commitment to science-based targets (SBTs), and transparency measures to support annual disclosures

Responsible leadership in these companies frames sustainability disclosures as a strategic necessity. It is essential for managing long-term risks, capturing new sources of value, and sustaining investor appetite and regulatory confidence in the resilience of their business models.

[1] BHP. (2024). Climate Transition Action Plan 2024. Retrieved from https://www.bhp.com/-/media/documents/investors/annual-reports/2024/240827_bhpclimatetransitionactionplan2024.pdf

Higher sustainability ratings appear to be associated with lower cost of capital... The findings of the study add to the growing body of literature which is finding a strong association between sustainability (however defined) and the firm's cost of capital.

CPA Australia. (2017). Sustainability Information and the Cost of Capital – An Australian, United Kingdom and Hong Kong Listed Company Study. CPA Australia.

Available at: https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au

Operationalising Sustainability: Immediate Steps for Businesses

Embedding Sustainability into Core Business Strategy

To build a resilient and credible sustainable profile in the marketplace, companies need to develop a clear roadmap of critical capabilities. This includes committing to and championing a coordinated program of work that progressively builds and embed safeguard mechanisms, fosters continuous organisational engagement, and ensures consistent oversight. Performance should be monitored using a verifiable evidence base to generate trust in the credibility and integrity of sustainable operations.

- *Conduct a Materiality Assessment*

Identify and prioritise sustainability risks and opportunities relevant to business performance, as well as stakeholders. This forms the basis for laying out the capabilities uplift roadmap, and the commitment to ongoing disclosures.

- *Develop a Sustainability Framework*

Define specific, measurable, and realistic sustainability targets. Alignment with industry-recognised sustainability and supporting standards is necessary for wide recognition and of the commitment, efforts and the outcomes claimed in the disclosures.

- *Strengthen Governance and Oversight*

Establish board-level responsibility for sustainability performance, supported by sustainability committees focussed on material issues from a risk management viewpoint, executive performance and implementation of corporate strategy.

- *Leverage Data and Technology*

Digital transformation initiatives, and automated data collection pipelines can provide real-time intelligence for continuous performance and compliance monitoring, support critical incident response, resilience measures as well as periodic third-party assurance activities.

- *Foster Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement*

Maintain open and verifiable sustainability disclosures to strengthen stakeholder trust. Engage with investors, employees, and business partners on sustainability priorities.

Companies sampled for this analysis show successful embedding of responsible practices, aligned to not just compliance but also the gradual pivot towards a sustainability-focussed market expectation. For SMEs, to achieve a reasonable sustainability maturity and performance requires automation and access to a pool of experts to achieve periodic performance assurance.

How Australian Companies Are Taking Action

Companies successfully operationalising sustainability integrate technology and supply chain improvements into their core business. Telstra[1] leverages AI-powered analytics to enhance sustainability reporting and drive energy efficiency (Telstra, 2024). Meanwhile, Woolworths Group[2] has implemented sustainable supply chain initiatives, reducing carbon emissions and improving waste management (Woolworths, 2024).

[1] Telstra. (2024). Artificial Intelligence and Technology for your Business. Retrieved from https://www.telstra.com.au/content/dam/shared-component-assets/tecom/news-and-research/state-of-play/artificial-intelligence-and-technology-for-your-business.pdf

[2] Woolworths Group. (2024). 2024 Sustainability Report. Retrieved from https://www.woolworthsgroup.com.au/content/dam/wwg/investors/reports/f24/f24/Woolworths%20Group%202024%20Sustainability%20Report.pdf

The purpose of a company is to engage all its stakeholders in shared and sustained value creation. In creating such value, a company serves not only its shareholders, but all its stakeholders – employees, customers, suppliers, local communities and society at large. The best way to understand and harmonize the divergent interests of all stakeholders is through a shared commitment to policies and decisions that strengthen the long-term prosperity of a company.

Davos Manifesto 2020: The Universal Purpose of a Company in the Fourth Industrial Revolution
Dec 2, 2019

Future-Proofing Business Growth: Sustaining Business Viability

Sustainability and supporting standards require continuous adaptation. Australian businesses must anticipate both short- and long-term regulatory changes, rapid shift in the geopolitical environment and the ensuing evolution of stakeholder expectations, and market sentiments on long-term risks arising from clear and present externalities.
Businesses need to approach sustainability as a risk and resilience capability, rather than an annual reporting undertaking. Absent that type of integration of sustainability within the corporate strategy, companies are increasingly exposed to litigations, disruptions and exclusions from sustainability-aligned investments portfolios.

The regulatory evolution is giving way to accelerating convergence, and businesses with international footprints need to be prepared to satisfy overlapping disclosure mandates, based on regulatory directives linked to internationally recognised or based sustainability reporting standards.

Given this environment, sustainability systems need to be designed to monitor for early warning signals, changes to regulatory thresholds for inclusions, exclusions and exemptions, and the capacity to benchmark performance within industry and operating environments.

All of this is designed to help achieve a level of corporate transparency, supported by auditable and verifiable evidence-base, and capable of providing consistent assurance to stakeholders, which preserves confidence in the value generated and delivered by the business.

Finally, such futureproofing requires forward-looking leadership, with credible track record in demonstrating transparency that shapes and not just manages stakeholder expectations.

Examples of Long-Term Sustainability Leadership

Several Australian businesses are already demonstrating leadership in integrating sustainability within their corporate strategies, and in doing so meeting current expectations and obligations and setting much needed standards and best practices, for other businesses setting out on the sustainability journey.

Macquarie Group[1] is heavily investing in renewable energy projects and green finance, ensuring that its portfolio aligns with sustainability objectives (Macquarie Group, 2024). Similarly, Fortescue Metals Group[2] has taken a bold position on green hydrogen and renewable energy, investing in long-term clean energy solutions that will sustain the company's competitive edge as industries decarbonise (Fortescue Metals Group, 2024).

These sampled companies are leading business sustainability transformations and future-proofing business value. The operationalisation of sustainability at scale within these companies prove that business models can be upgraded and retooled to support resilience and maintain both regulatory and social licence as they pursue long-term impact objectives in the sustainability economy of the future.

Future Advantage

Businesses must proactively embed sustainability into governance, strategy, operations, and reporting to sharpen competitive advantage, shape stakeholder confidence, and secure a defensible and lasting edge.

Sustainability demands a cohesive set of integrated capabilities, ones that continually respond to regulatory expectations and shifting market priorities. In doing so, businesses not only meet compliance but lead their industries by acting transparently and evolving with resilience.

As an enterprise-wide priority, sustainability must be owned and championed by leadership, enabled by digital infrastructure, and underpinned by credible, auditable data.

[1] Macquarie Group. (2024). Green Finance Impact Report 2024. Retrieved from https://www.macquarie.com/assets/macq/investor/debt-investors/green-finance-impact-report-2024.pdf

[2] Fortescue Metals Group. (2024). Green Hydrogen Initiatives. Retrieved from https://energy.fortescue.com/en/green-energy-tech/green-hydrogen

Making Sustainability Your Strategic Edge

In 2025, sustainability is more than a set of compliance obligations. It is a strategic capability that differentiates your business with clarity, confidence and conviction. For forward-looking businesses, it offers a clear pathway to resilient growth, deeper stakeholder trust, and strengthened long-term value.

Sustainability is best achieved through integrated, enterprise-wide capabilities that support cohesive purpose-driven narrative and coordinated actions, which are attuned to rapid shifts in market expectations and regulation.

In today's complex, disruptive, and interconnected business environment, transparency is a foundation for resilience. Credible intelligence, delivered through adaptive digital infrastructure, empowers responsible leadership to uphold corporate integrity, navigate complexity, and achieve both sustained impact and responsible returns on investment.

ARE YOU FUTURE READY?

START YOUR JOURNEY WITH A BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY CHECK

VISIT WWW.CREDIGRO.COM

This resource was developed by Speraco, Credigro’s strategic advisory partner, whose research informs the design of our AI-native responsible business platform.

Speraco partners with boards and executive teams to embed sustainability with strategic intent—ensuring confidence, compliance, and competitiveness.

Contact us for board briefings and tailored readiness programs.

WWW.SPERACO.COM