

Inaugural Australia-New Zealand Business and Human Rights Research Workshop

*‘Strengthening business respect for human rights
in our region and beyond in challenging times’*

Melbourne, Australia – August 26, 2025

The Business and Human Rights Centre at RMIT University, BHR Access2Justice Lab at Macquarie University and the Australian Human Rights Institute at UNSW Sydney are pleased to announce the Business and Human Rights Research Workshop in Melbourne on August 26, 2025. The workshop will take place immediately preceding the **inaugural United Nations’ Business and Human Rights Regional Forum – Australia & New Zealand hosted at RMIT University on August 26 and 27 2025** - for more info on the UN Forum, visit: www.unbhrforumanz.org.

The Workshop will bring together approximately 15 – 30 academics and civil society members who engage in research in the field of Business and Human Rights (BHR).

This Workshop will be an in-person event, held at RMIT University, City Campus – Melbourne, Australia.

We welcome submissions of paper proposals for the workshop on *any* BHR issue within the broad theme of the Workshop, i.e. considerations of strengthening business respect for human rights in the challenging times that we are living in. This may include (but not limited to):

- the potential and limits of human rights due diligence and modern slavery laws in a period of economic and geopolitical uncertainty.
- how companies should manage their human rights responsibilities when having operations/supply chains in countries experiencing economic, social or political unrest or even armed conflict.
- the challenges to human rights presented by emerging technology, including the possibility and contours of responsible regulation of AI and the human rights responsibilities of technology companies.
- the role of investors, financial institutions and companies in general in driving respect for human rights even as governments’ commitments to global norms fluctuate.
- the role of business in the ‘just transition’ and in addressing global biodiversity and climate challenges.

The objective is for participants to present their research project in an interdisciplinary, collaborative workshop setting. Scholars from all disciplines are invited to apply, including business ethics, international relations, law, management and politics. Submissions from early career researchers, and from researchers from the Asia-Pacific region are particularly welcome. We encourage submissions from all parts of the world and we strive for gender balance in our selection.

The focus is on paper development. Therefore, papers should outline research in progress or near-completion and must not be already under consideration for publication at the time of presentation. Workshop organisers will work with editors of relevant peer-reviewed journals to provide publication pathways for participants following the workshop. Details tbc.

Cost

There is no cost for participation in the workshop. Travel and accommodation costs will be borne by participants.

Co-Convenors

Associate Professor Jonathan Kolieb – Business and Human Rights Centre, RMIT University
<https://www.rmit.edu.au/research/centres-collaborations/business-and-human-rights-centre> .

Professor Justine Nolan – Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney
<https://www.humanrights.unsw.edu.au/>

Professor Surya Deva – Macquarie University
<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/research-centres-groups-and-facilities/groups/access-to-justice-lab>

For questions, please contact Jonathan Kolieb at Jonathan.kolieb@rmit.edu.au.