

UN Business and Human Rights Regional Forum Australia and New Zealand

Strengthening responsible business practices in turbulent times

26 - 27 August 2025 | Melbourne

Civil Society Dialogue on Advancing Corporate Accountability

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

26 August 2025

Melbourne, Australia

Background

The Human Rights Law Centre, Jubilee, Australian Council of Trade Unions, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and World Vision New Zealand are coming together to organise the civil society dialogue on advancing corporate accountability.

The workshop will take place as part of 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 objective of this dialogue is to bring together stakeholders - civil society organisations and community representatives to assess the current state of business and human rights in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, explore pathways for reform, and build power to advance corporate social responsibility.

Venue

Storey Hall, RMIT University City Campus, 342 Swanston St (near corner of Latrobe St.)

Easily accessible by public transport:

- Trams along Swanston St or Latrobe Streets.
- Trains via Melbourne Central Station on the City Loop.
 - o [Google Maps link](#)

Co-Convenors

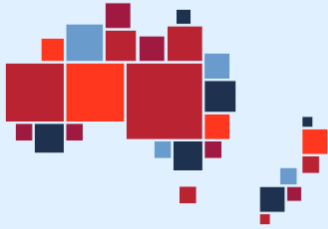
Rebekah Armstrong - World Vision New Zealand

Freya Dinshaw - Human Rights Law Centre

Luke Fletcher - Jubilee Australia

Clare Middlemas - Australian Council of Trade Unions

Jack Foster - New Zealand Council of Trade Unions



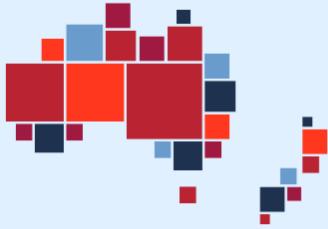
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Program

Time	Item	Moderators and participants	Notes
9.30 – 10.15am	Arrival and registration and morning coffee		
10.15 – 10.50am	Welcome to Country	All attendees of UN forum	The UN forum will formally open with Welcome to Country for all participants
11.10 – 1.00pm	State of play on business and human rights in Australia & NZ	<p>Moderators: Jack Foster (NZCTU) and Clare Middlemas (ACTU)</p> <p>Keynote address: Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner Chris Evans</p> <p>Speakers: Fleur Fitzsimmons (NZCTU) Rebekah Armstrong (World Vision NZ) Claire Charters (Independent expert)</p>	<p>An interactive discussion on recent wins, setbacks, and emerging trends in the BHR space across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. We'll unpack how developments such as modern slavery legislation, gender equality efforts, engagement with Pacific communities, and the rights of First Nations peoples are shaping corporate accountability, and discuss strategies to build stronger regional cooperation and practice.</p> <p>We are thrilled to be joined by Australia's inaugural Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Chris Evans, who will address how civil society can work together to better support the needs of people at risk in corporate supply chains, and shape a proactive law reform agenda in our region.</p>

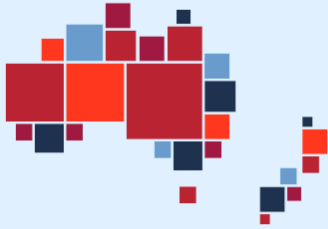


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		<p>Carolyn Kitto (Be Slavery Free)</p> <p>Lauren Zanetti (Independent expert)</p> <p>Anirudha Nagar (National Native Title Council)</p> <p>Tim O'Connor (University of Melbourne)</p>	
1.10 – 2pm	Lunch	Academics and CSO's join for lunch	
2pm – 3.30pm	Workshop with Robert McCorquodale: Shifting the dial on corporate accountability reform	<p>Moderators:</p> <p>Rebekah Armstrong (World Vision NZ)</p> <p>Freya Dinshaw (HRLC)</p>	Join Professor Robert McCorquodale, member of the UN Working Group on Business & Human Rights to explore pathways for advancing mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (mHREDD) laws in the region, drawing on global trends and lessons from the UN. The workshop will also include the launch of a new messaging guide on human rights due diligence laws by the Global Initiative for Corporate Accountability and the Human Rights Law Centre.
3.15 – 3.45pm	Afternoon tea		Afternoon tea available at this time.
3.45 – 5.00pm	Workshop with human rights defenders: The fight for justice & access to remedy	<p>Moderators:</p> <p>Luke Fletcher (Jubilee Australia)</p> <p>Adrianne Walters (HRLC)</p> <p>Speakers:</p>	This session centres impacted communities and advocates challenging corporate harms. Speakers will share experiences of holding Australian and NZ companies to account - from environmental destruction to human rights violations. Participants will workshop ways to strengthen access to remedy, ensure community voice, and identify NGO capacity gaps.



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		Ramila Chanisheff (AUTWA) Vani Tuvuki (Fiji) Peter Bosip (CELCOR, PNG) NZ speaker TBC	
	Closing remarks		Sum up and key takeaways
5pm – 7.30pm	Networking drinks and Forum evening plenary (combined with all stakeholders)		