

# UN Business and Human Rights Regional Forum Australia and New Zealand

*Strengthening responsible business practices in turbulent times*

26 - 27 August 2025 | Melbourne

## Inaugural Australia-New Zealand Business and Human Rights Research Workshop *'Strengthening business respect for human rights in our region and beyond in challenging times'*

26 August 2025  
Melbourne, Australia

### Background

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 hosting a Business and Human Rights Research Workshop in Melbourne on August 26, 2025. 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](http://www.unbhrforumanz.org).

The Workshop will bring together academics and civil society members who engage in research in the field of Business and Human Rights (BHR) to reflect on the theme of the Workshop. The objective is for participants to present their research projects in an interdisciplinary, collaborative workshop setting and receive feedback from peers. This Workshop is an in-person event, held at RMIT University, City Campus – Melbourne, Australia.

### Venue

"Green Brain" Conference Room - Level 7, Storey Hall,  
RMIT University City Campus, 342 Swanston St (near corner of Latrobe St.)

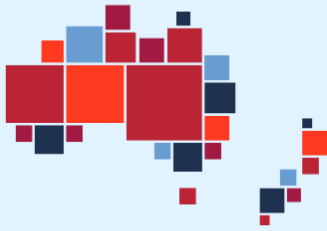
Easily accessible by public transport:

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

### Co-Convenors

Associate Professor Jonathan Kolieb – Business and Human Rights Centre, RMIT University  
Professor Justine Nolan – Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney  
Professor Surya Deva – Macquarie University

For questions, please contact El Den Elzen, BHRIGHT Centre Coordinator:  
[el.den.elzen@rmit.edu.au](mailto:el.den.elzen@rmit.edu.au).



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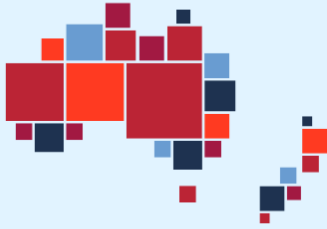
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## Australia-New Zealand Business and Human Rights Research Workshop

### Schedule

**Tuesday, August 26**

9.30 – 10.00am	<b>Arrival, registration and morning coffee</b>	Storey Hall
10.00 – 10.40am	<b>Forum Welcomes</b> (combined with business + civil society)	Main Auditorium, Level 5
10.45 – 11am	<b>Welcome to the Research Workshop</b>	Green Brain, Level 7
11 – 11.45am	<b>Keynote + Q&amp;A - Prof. David Kinley, University of Sydney</b>	
11.45am – 1.00pm	<b>Session 1: <i>Accountability, technology and conflict</i></b> Presentations x 6 mins each + Q&A	Green Brain, Level 7 Storey Hall
1 – 2pm	<b>Lunch</b>	
2pm – 3.15pm	<b>Session 2: <i>Supply chains, climate, finance and gender</i></b> Presentations x 6 mins each + Q&A	Green Brain, Level 7 Storey Hall
3.15 – 3.30pm	<b>Afternoon tea</b>	
3.30 – 4.45pm	<b>Session 3: <i>Modern slavery and Due Diligence</i></b> Presentations x 6 mins each + Q&A	Green Brain, Level 7 Storey Hall
4.45pm – 5pm	<b>Closing remarks from convenors</b>	
5pm – 7.30pm	<b>Networking drinks and Forum evening plenary</b> (combined with business and civil society)	Main Auditorium, Level 5 Storey Hall



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## Presenters

### **Session 1**      *Accountability, technology and conflict*

**Moderator: Jonathan Kolieb**

**Carol Bond** (RMIT) *The role of business in promoting conditions of peace*

**Damian Copeland** (Article 36, Legal), *Lawful by Design - integrating legal compliance into the design of military new technologies*

**John Croker** (Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, Oxford University), *Business, Human Rights and Emerging Technologies: Risks and Rewards*

**Emily Elvera Edward** (Dayak International Organization (DIO), Sabah Sarawk Rights – Australia & New Zealand Inc (SSRANZ) and Sabah Sarawak Borneo Natives Organisation Inc. Australia), *Crimes Against Humanity and the Void Malaysia Agreement 1963: Legal and Political Redress for Sabah Sarawak Borneo under Malayan Corporate Colonization*

**Lisa Hsin** (University of London, Birkbeck), *Blind spots in 'compliance data chains' and Implications for Human Rights Due Diligence law*

**Suzanne Varrall** (UNSW/University of Melbourne), *Arms-Length Accountability? Strengthening Business and Human Rights Mechanisms for Transnational Arms Transfers in Challenging Times*

### **Session 2**      *Supply chains, climate, finance and gender*

**Moderator: Surya Deva**

**Ebony Birchall** (Macquarie University), *Mapping human rights violations overseas linked to Australian corporate activity*

**Fiona David** (Fair Futures), *Supplying the transition: Charting a just path to Net Zero*

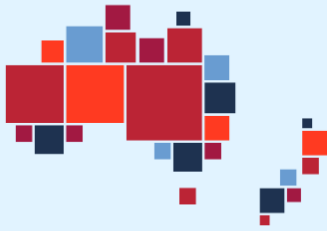
**Roanna McClelland** (University of Melbourne), *Corporate Climate Accountability with a Human Rights Lens: Strengthening Frameworks in Challenging Times*

**Fiona McGaughey** (University of Western Australia), *Climate, human rights and the corporation: disjoin and weak regulation*

**Erin O'Brien** (Griffith University), *Political investorism and the role of the state: Enabling or constraining responsible investment on human rights issues*

**Gail Pacheco** (New Zealand Human Rights Commission), *Occupational Segregation by Gender in New Zealand: A Long-Run Perspective*

**John Southalan**, *'Touched you last!' Responsibility for government impacts connected with company operations*



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## **Session 3**      **Modern slavery and Due Diligence**

**Moderator: Shelley Marshall**

**Nick Dexter** (University of Wollongong), *Measuring Impact and creating value in Modern Slavery Risk Management in the Property and Construction Sector*

**Heather Moore** (RMIT /Australian Anti-Slavery Commission), *Nudging Corporate Conscience: Testing Choice Architecture to Improve Remediation Responses to Slavery in Supply Chains*

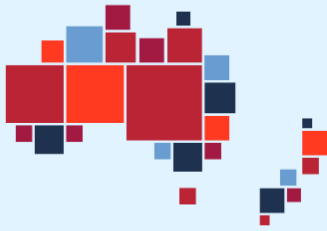
**Puvan J Selvanathan** (Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya), *Direct Worker Voice for HRDD and A2R*

**Laura Simic** (RMIT), *Conceptual Connections and Chasms: A Socialist Feminist Analysis of Informal Work and Modern Slavery in Fragmented and Outsourced Work*

**Kyla Raby** (University of South Australia), *Modern slavery in university operations: the limited recognition of risks to staff and students and deflection of responsibility*

**Jemima Roe** (Herbert Smith Freehills), *Are corporates responsible for the human rights of workers in their global value chain? Implications of Limbu v Dyson considered in the Australian context*

**Ramona Vijeyarasa** (University of Technology Sydney), *Gender-responsive due diligence and supply chain exploitation: Giving meaning and purpose to the gendered lens*



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## Presenter Details

### *Session 1*

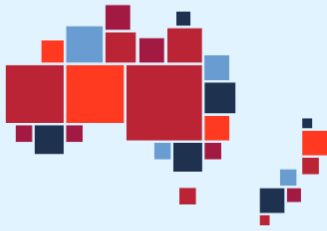
**Carol Bond, PhD - *The role of business in promoting conditions of peace***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** RMIT University

**Abstract:** The pace of change around urgent cumulative social and environmental changes is accelerating. With the destabilisation of the international political order by war and the rise of fascism, businesses have increasing opportunity to lead in creating and supporting local conditions of peace. This workshop builds on original research foregrounding 'peace' as a core business outcome especially for multinational enterprises operating across the globe. Foregrounding peace as a core business outcome can bring substantial benefits. Peace is a concept external and internal stakeholders understand. Research shows that when c-suite leaders start reframing their day-to-day decisions in terms of peace outcomes, they are more likely to create efficient and cost-effective solutions to environmental, social and economic business challenges. In this workshop, principles of peace-building and human rights imperatives will be interrogated for their utility as guides for corporations prioritising durably stable operating environments.

**Bio:** Dr Carol Bond is an accomplished researcher in the resources and energy sectors. Her methods include social impact assessments, social services evaluations, stakeholder engagement tool development, socio-economic baseline studies, and related social due diligence (including Human Rights impact assessments). Carol currently researches business opportunities relevant to the emerging energy transition. Carol is Lecturer in Management at RMIT University, Australia. Over the course of her career, Carol's work has been focused on investigating and analysing how government policy and investment in the energy and resources sectors in Australia affects socio-economic factors.

Core research themes are policy impacts on businesses, energy-related equity & distributive justice issues, and circular economy opportunities. In the course of pursuing this agenda, Carol has published journal articles, a monograph, industry-facing articles, and research reports related to the energy & resources sectors within the field of management studies. Key outputs have been published in: Journal of Business Ethics, Australian Journal of Management, and Ecological Economics.



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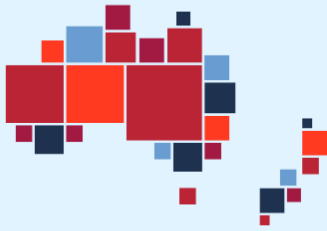
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## **Damian Copeland - *Lawful by Design - integrating legal compliance into the design of military new technologies***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Article 36 Legal

**Abstract:** The military is increasingly relying on the technology industry to develop innovations for use in the defence sector. This trend extends beyond artificial intelligence to other emerging technologies, as seen in the AUKUS alliance's second pillar capabilities, which include quantum computing, cyber capabilities, and hypersonics. This growing dependence on industry is paired with mounting pressure to acquire technology swiftly, creating challenges for traditional regulatory measures, including legal reviews. This paper advocates for early engagement with industry to ensure they fully understand the legal obligations of the state and its military. Such proactive collaboration aims to integrate legal compliance into the design process, ensuring that new technologies are developed with legality in mind, rather than treating the law as an afterthought. The Lawful by Design initiative seeks to achieve this through both voluntary commitments and explicit requirements in government tender processes.

**Bio:** Dr Damian Copeland is the Director of Article 36 Legal, a specialist law firm advising industry, states, NGOs and academics on the legal review of new technologies for use in the military domain. Damian spent over 30 years in the Australian Defence Force and was responsible for conducting Article 36 legal reviews of new weapons in ADF. He is the founder and chair of the annual expert meetings on the legal review of autonomous weapon systems.



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## **John Croker - *Business, Human Rights and Emerging Technologies: Risks and Rewards***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, Oxford University

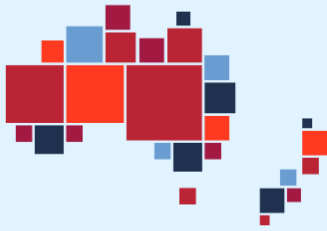
**Abstract:** The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents business, government and society unparalleled opportunities. All uses of AI must be underpinned by appropriate social capital. A key component of this is the use of human rights frameworks to ensure technologies are used in a lawful and proportionate manner that boost business objectives whilst also ensuring consumers and communities are brought along with technology innovations. This presentation will outline the contours of human rights law, AI and business. While businesses across all sectors are piloting AI use cases in their operations, there is a lack of consistency in ensuring such uses are deployed underpinned by human rights. The code on which AI is built ‘become[s] the de facto ontology for decisions and de facto policy.’ This presents challenges to administrative and public law safeguards, as AI code is opaque by design, and ‘shielded’ from scrutiny through commercial in confidence contractual arrangements. Similarly, the point at which business procures AI is the point at which assurance processes for human rights must be considered.

It is the point at which the vendor is most likely to be receptive to accommodating such requirements. And it is a process that emerging scholarship must engage with, as the locus of where aspects of human rights law are determined ‘systematically’. This presentation will highlight how related fields of law, such as administrative law, are engaging with procurement processes in order to ensure human rights standards are embedded in AI technologies, requiring certification of the tools ‘provenance and efficiency, the disclosure of any commercial interests involved, and an evaluation of its likely impacts on affected subjects, particularly by reference to the specific context in which the technology is deployed. This is where public law should go – in the regions of procurement which, until now, it has hardly touched.’

**Bio:** John Croker is a human rights lawyer advising governments in Australia, most recently as the Managing Principal Solicitor responsible for human rights within Victoria Police. His expertise extends to advising clients across all aspects of human rights law, including hospitals, schools, prisons and his current role with the police. He is the Deputy Chair of the AI Ethics Committee at Victoria Police, a role which requires assessment of any form of AI use by law enforcement to ensure lawful compliance, with particular reference to human rights obligations.

John has also undertaken research into AI and human rights, including as a researcher at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oxford. He has qualifications from the University of Oxford (Master of Philosophy in Law), the University of Melbourne (LLM) and the Australian National University (LLB/B Asia Pacific Studies).





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## **Emily Elvera Edward - *Crimes Against Humanity and the Void Malaysia Agreement 1963: Legal and Political Redress for Sabah Sarawak Borneo under Malayan Corporate Colonization***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Dayak International Organization (DIO), Sabah Sarawak Rights – Australia & New Zealand Inc (SSRANZ) and Sabah Sarawak Borneo Natives Organisation Inc. Australia

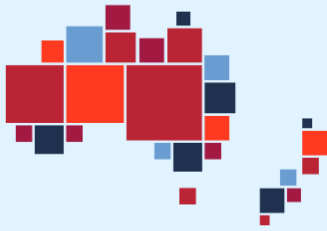
**Abstract:** This research in progress explores how the continued enforcement of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63)—widely regarded as void by legal scholars and Indigenous rights advocates—has enabled prolonged Crimes Against Humanity and corporate colonization in Sabah and Sarawak (Borneo). Grounded in interdisciplinary human rights analysis, the paper interrogates the political, economic, and legal mechanisms used by the Malayan Federal Government and its political proxies, particularly UMNO and Petronas, to exploit the natural resources of Borneo while systematically violating the rights of its Indigenous peoples. Key themes include: the illegality of Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), imposed without genuine free, prior, and informed consent; the Cobbold Commission's flaws; the Petroleum Development Act, which has allowed Petronas to extract 95% of Sabah-Sarawak's oil and gas wealth; and land dispossession, deforestation, and militarized suppression under a false promise of "equal partnership." The research also highlights evidence of cultural erasure and displacement, as revealed in the MOPOT Report, and the widespread marginalization of Indigenous voices through denial of legal standing ("locus standi") under Malaysian courts.

This paper argues that these actions collectively amount to structural and intentional crimes against humanity, necessitating international legal intervention. The research aims to propose viable pathways for legal redress, including the invocation of international legal instruments, third-party investigations, and the recognition of Sabah and Sarawak's right to self-determination under international law. This work-in-progress contributes to the discourse on decolonisation, transitional justice, and corporate human rights accountability, and calls on regional and global legal scholars to assist Borneo's Indigenous people in pursuing justice through lawful, peaceful, and internationally recognized means.

**Bio:** Emily Elvera Edward is a Dayak Indigenous rights advocate from Sabah, Borneo, deeply engaged in human rights research, international advocacy, and environmental justice. She currently serves as President of Sabah Sarawak Borneo Natives Organisation, Goodwill Ambassador, Sabah Sarawak Rights - Australia & New Zealand (SSRANZ), and Cultural Ambassador, Dayak International Organization in Australia. Emily is the founder of 18 Indigenous-centered research initiatives, including EmpowerBorneo: Reforestation Project, HRE Advocates, Koidupan BORNEO Hydrologic Resilience Innovation Hub, and BORNEO EcoRoad Pioneers. Her work addresses generational trauma, colonization, and structural oppression under Malaysia's post1963 political framework, which she challenges as illegitimate and unjust.

Now based in Melbourne, Australia, Emily uses academic, legal, and multimedia platforms to expose long-standing injustices under the Malaysia Agreement 1963, advocating for international recognition of Sabah and Sarawak's right to self-determination. She also leads community projects on environmental restoration, mental health, and social development, offering a holistic model for Indigenous-led nation-building. Her research contributes to current conversations on transitional justice, decolonization, and business and human rights violations in the Asia-Pacific region, with a mission to restore justice for the people of Borneo.





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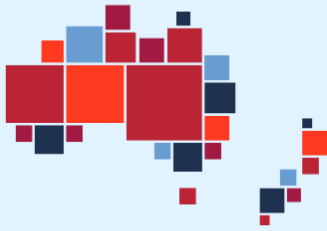
## **Lisa Hsin - *Blind spots in 'compliance data chains' and Implications for Human Rights Due Diligence law***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of London, Birkbeck

**Abstract:** Since the Modern Slavery Act was adopted in the UK in 2015, there has been a growing worldwide movement to legally require companies to undertake human rights and environmental due diligence. In turn, this has increased corporate demand for expertise and generated 'compliance data chains', through which risk is outsourced to a range of new commercial services using emergent technology to expedite regulatory compliance and facilitate corporate internal processes. Using section 54 of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 as a case study, this paper empirically examines the response of actors involved in s 54's implementation, dissemination, and compliance to illustrate how the role of data has become central to compliance with human rights due diligence rules. It highlights how 'compliance supply chains' have permitted emerging, unregulated private actors to commercialise human and environmental data, with the help of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning software. Regulators have so far overlooked the opacity around who, where, how, why and when data is being collected, which undermines the transparency objectives of the entire Business and Human Rights movement and could contribute to the greenwashing of the ESG industry.

In this paper, I explain that ESG rating mechanisms and providers such as MSCI ESG Research, Sustainalytics, ISS ESG, Moody's, and S&P Global ESG, and data management systems such as Sunhat, Eco Vadis and others may have perpetuated a 'tick box' culture, permitting sustainability practitioners and investors to assume such shorthand ratings represent substantive strategies to prevent exploitation and reliable progress toward the elimination of risks to human rights. I highlight the blind spots of this automated data industry and explain that emerging due diligence regulations must stipulate parameters and standards on data collection and require publication of digitisation methodologies. The success of mandatory due diligence law will require careful scrutiny of the potential and adverse impact of emerging technology.

**Bio:** Dr Lisa Hsin is Associate Lecturer in Advanced Commercial Law at Birkbeck and Tutor at the University of Cambridge in ESG Risk Management. Lisa is committed to linking scholarship with applied work and has extensive experience in both, having spent time in practice as Counsel in ESG at Kirkland & Ellis and as a Research Fellow in Business and Human Rights at the University of Oxford, where she also taught Private Law subjects at postgraduate and undergraduate levels. Lisa obtained her DPhil at the University of Oxford and an LLM from the University of California, Berkeley. For a decade prior to academia, Lisa specialised in commercial dispute resolution and corporate investigations in law firms in London and Auckland. Lisa is a qualified solicitor in both jurisdictions. In 2020, she led a joint research project with the British Institute of International and Comparative Law funded by the UK Research and Innovation Strategic Priorities Fund and the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence on the effectiveness of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, including a comparison of corporate enforcement mechanisms. In 2022, she advised the Business and Human Rights Unit (B-Tech Project) of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on regulatory initiatives relating to the technology sector.



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## **Suzanne Varrall - *Arms-Length Accountability? Strengthening Business and Human Rights Mechanisms for Transnational Arms Transfers in Challenging Times***

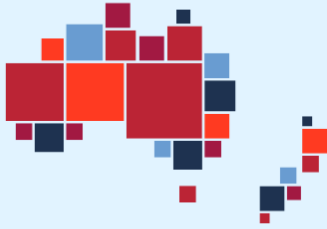
**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of Melbourne

**Abstract:** In a climate of heightened geopolitical tensions, where multilateralism and the rules-based international order appear increasingly fragile, the regulation of transnational arms transfers has (re)emerged as a critical global challenge. This paper examines how Business and Human Rights (BHR) frameworks can be strengthened to address corporate accountability for transnational arms transfers, particularly into regions experiencing conflict and instability. Through an examination of three existing initiatives – the UN Global Compact, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) – the paper identifies critical shortcomings presently undermining corporate accountability in this high-risk sector.

The paper highlights three key limitations across these initiatives: limited arms industry engagement; insufficient contextualisation of human rights standards for arms transfers; and inadequate mandatory obligations for ‘downstream’ impacts when transferred weapons are used by third parties. While voluntary mechanisms have established normative expectations, their implementation by arms companies has been notably poor. Although the CSDDD represents progress toward mandatory regulation, it contains problematic exemptions for export-controlled products and downstream impacts that effectively exclude arms transfers from meaningful oversight.

As companies face increasing pressure to respect human rights, this paper argues that BHR frameworks need to be tailored to address these challenges if they are to be relevant to the arms sector. The finalisation and implementation of the CSDDD, along with ongoing negotiations for a UN BHR treaty, offer critical opportunities to strengthen corporate accountability by eliminating sectoral carve-outs; explicitly including downstream impacts in due diligence requirements; mandating meaningful stakeholder engagement with affected communities; and establishing accessible remediation mechanisms. This paper contributes to ongoing debates on how to strengthen business respect for human rights in challenging times by highlighting how tailored BHR responses are needed to address sector-specific challenges in high-risk industries with significant human rights implications.

**Bio:** Suzanne is an ARC Laureate Research Fellow in the Laureate Program on Transforming International Law for Corporate Climate Accountability, based with Professor Jacqueline Peel at Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne. Her areas of expertise include transnational corporate accountability, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, and arms control and disarmament. Suzanne’s doctoral research examines corporate accountability and global regulation of transnational arms transfers. She has over 15 years’ experience in legal, policy, strategy, research and governance roles, including with the Commonwealth Government focusing on defence and foreign affairs.



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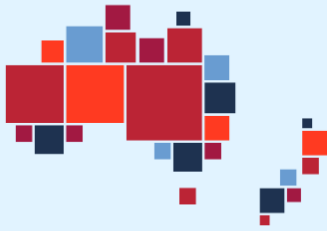
## Session 2

### **Ebony Birchall - *Mapping human rights violations overseas linked to Australian corporate activity***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Macquarie University

**Abstract:** A significant deficiency in Australia's implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) is the absence of effective remedial mechanisms for individuals affected by extraterritorial human rights violations linked to Australian corporate activity. Many Australian corporations and financial institutions have been associated with serious human rights abuses occurring abroad. Rights holders impacted by these abuses face considerable obstacles in seeking remedy. Legal systems in their own countries are often underdeveloped, lack independence, or are otherwise inaccessible. Efforts to seek remedy through the Australian legal system are similarly fraught with challenges, including legal barriers, procedural complexity, and prohibitive costs. AHRC (2016), HRLC (2018), AHRC and AHRI (2021) reported on this concern and proposed recommendations which have largely not been realised. Moreover, HRLC's 2018 report included ten case studies to explore the issues involved. While some research exists to document this deficiency, there is currently no research aimed at exposing the degree of the problem. This is unsurprising given the complexity involved, including that violations are underreported, and fear of reprisal is increasingly silencing human rights complaints. This research-in-progress discussion cannot promise to provide a full picture of extraterritorial human rights violations linked to Australian corporations. However, it does seek to start a discussion on research pathways that could collect reporting of such violations to begin mapping the problem. Having a better understanding of the scale of the problem should be useful for law reform advocacy and may inspire other initiatives aimed to address this deficiency in Australia's implementation of the UNGPs.

**Bio:** Dr. Ebony Birchall is a Lecturer at Macquarie University's Law School and Deputy Director of the BHR Access to Justice Lab (A2J Lab). Her work aims to bridge power imbalances between corporations and communities by conducting research, developing practical tools, building capacity, and offering pro bono assistance to affected rights holders to seek access to justice for corporate human rights abuses. Prior to joining Macquarie University, Ebony practised as a lawyer for over a decade at the forefront of Australian-based strategic litigation. Her notable cases include the Manus Island Class Action, Australia's largest human rights case at the time of resolution, which resulted in the Australian Government and the corporations who operated the detention facility paying \$90million in compensation and costs.



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## **Fiona David - *Supplying the transition: Charting a just path to Net Zero***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Fair Futures

**Abstract:** Australia's transition to a 'net zero' economy will require huge changes to the way we produce and use energy. Replacing power generation, manufacturing and transport infrastructure with green technologies requires both the creation of new supply chains and the rapid expansion of existing ones.

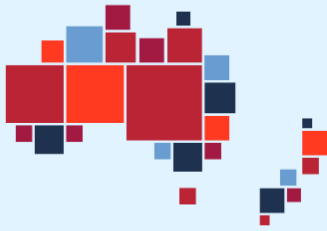
While several reports project future scenarios for a net zero Australia, including impacts of increasing demand for critical 'green' minerals, materials and technologies both here and overseas, the focus has largely been on engineering challenges and economic opportunities. Social dimensions of the transition, including human rights and equity, have received less focus, even though several key technologies required for this transition rely on supply chains linked to human rights abuses.

This paper considers both challenges: the urgent need to achieve net zero and the need to respond to the realities of human rights abuses in renewable supply chains. We do not question whether or not the Net Zero transition needs to occur, as this is taken as a given. Rather, we recognise that in overhauling the energetic foundations of the Australian economy, Net Zero exposes us to vastly magnified human rights risks and opportunities. We aim to trigger conversation on the reforms needed to ensure that Australia's transition occurs in ways that are consistent with human rights and a 'just transition'.

Using published Net Zero modelling as the basis, we quantify the human rights risks embodied in key renewable energy technology supply chains and analyse Australia's legal and policy framework through a human rights lens. This highlights the urgency of filling key gaps in laws and policies, including through a Human Rights Act, imposing obligations on entities to undertake human rights due diligence, and a clear policy statement that Australia intends to meet emissions targets in ways that are consistent with human rights.

Co-authors: David Tickler, PhD, Oceans Institute, University of Western Australia, and Shannon Hobbs

**Bio:** Fiona David, BA LLB (Hons) MAAPD FRSA, is an expert in forced labour and slavery, and CEO and Founder of Fair Futures, providing specialist consulting at the intersection of human rights and climate change. She created the Global Slavery Index, and has published widely, including co-authoring the International Law of Migrant Smuggling, published by Cambridge University Press, 2014 with Dr Anne Gallagher.



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## **Roanna McClelland - *Corporate Climate Accountability with a Human Rights Lens: Strengthening Frameworks in Challenging Times***

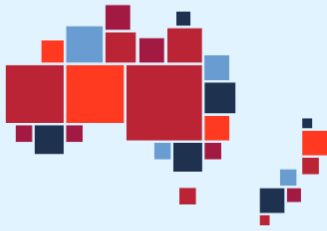
**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of Melbourne

**Abstract:** Non-state actors — including investors, financial institutions and companies — play a critical role in achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, with significant human rights implications particularly for vulnerable communities in the Global South. While transnational norms and guidance on the ways in which the corporate sector can promote and protect human rights in working toward net-zero emissions are emerging, mechanisms remain largely ad hoc across sectors and scales and the human rights dimensions remain underdeveloped, particularly in contexts of economic volatility and geopolitical tension.

This paper examines how the concept of accountability in the corporate context, namely the role of regulation, legal standards and compliance/enforcement tools, can simultaneously promote a net-zero transition and protect human rights in line with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The UN High-Level Expert Group's Integrity Matters report (HLEG 2022) notes that transparency and accountability for corporate net zero pledges and plans are critical for encouraging ambition, ensuring a level playing field (especially for multinational companies) and establishing trust and credibility about the contribution of corporate actors to emissions reduction. This paper reviews how current accountability tools advance climate goals consistent with both 1.5°C pathways and human rights standards and explores whether a transnational concept of 'corporate accountability' in the corporate context is emerging. This work-in-progress research is part of a larger research project that will be undertaken by Professor Jacqueline Peel's ARC Laureate Program on Transforming International Law for Corporate Climate Accountability.

Co-author: Suzanne Varrall, University of Melbourne

**Bio:** Roanna is an ARC Laureate Research Fellow in the Laureate Program on Transforming International Law for Corporate Accountability, based with Professor Jacqueline Peel at Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne. Roanna's doctoral research focused on emerging transnational rights-based approaches to water, climate and environment. Roanna has extensive experience across academia, policy and media, including as adviser to the Premier of South Australia, and to former Prime Minister Julia Gillard. She is also an award-winning writer of literary fiction.



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**Fiona McGaughey - *Climate, human rights and the corporation: disjoin and weak regulation***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of Western Australia

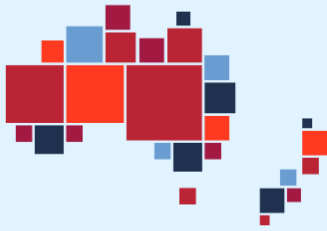
**Abstract:** Globally, the climate change – human rights nexus has gained growing recognition in recent years; so too has the impact of business activities on both climate change and human rights. Although there have been some attempts to consolidate regulation of business activities in relation to both human rights and climate change (such as recent European Union Directives), more commonly these have been tackled separately.

This work-in-progress paper examines the potential for improved regulation with regard to business, human rights and climate. Using an Australian case study, it begins by analysing the recent introduction of mandatory climate reporting following the passing of the Treasury Laws Amendment (Financial Market Infrastructure and Other Measures) Bill 2024 (Cth) in 2024. Under this law, from 1 January 2025, large Australian businesses will be required to prepare annual climate-related financial disclosures. The paper examines the regulation of these climate-related financial disclosures and compares this with reporting obligations under Australia's Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) which is also a business reporting law. It presents the growing research indicating that this, and similar reporting obligations under the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015, are ineffective.

Requiring corporations to submit reports is among one of the weakest options in a regulatory toolkit, and yet is commonly used and often lacks sufficient regulatory oversight and enforcement powers. This paper examines the tenacity of reporting requirements as a proposed solution to tackle large scale, complex transnational challenges, explores the human rights-climate disjoin, and drawing on comparative law, considers solutions.

**Bio:** Dr Fiona McGaughey (She/Her) is an Associate Professor of international human rights law at the University of Western Australia Law School where she is also Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching). Fiona has published widely on a range of human rights topics including modern slavery, United Nations human rights bodies, Indigenous rights, and NGOs in international human rights law. She co-convenes UWA's interdisciplinary Modern Slavery Research Cluster.





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**Erin O'Brien - *Political investorism and the role of the state: Enabling or constraining responsible investment on human rights issues***

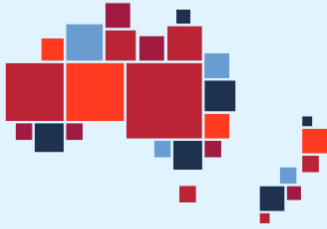
**Affiliation/Organisation:** Griffith University

**Abstract:** Investors have a long history of aligning political, ethical, and religious values with investment decisions. In recent years, civil society groups have actively mobilised shareholders, pension fund members, and clients of banks and other financial institutions to put pressure on corporations over human rights issues through shareholder resolutions, divestment campaigns, and other forms of investment-based political participation. These tactics can collectively be described as 'political investorism' – the use of a financial stake in a firm, fund, or financial institution to express political values. This paper examines the role of the state in political investorism. While political investorism targets the market as an arena for social change, the state is fundamentally intertwined in this form of action. In some instances, the state serves as an enabler of political investorism, such as in the case of the Modern Slavery Acts adopted in Australia and the UK, which mandate corporate reporting on modern slavery in supply chains with the expectation that investors (alongside consumers and other actors) will use this information to punish or reward corporations for their efforts. In other instances, the state serves as a repressor of political investorism, such as in the case of recent moves by some State Governors and Attorney Generals in the United States of America to prevent state investment funds from considering shareholder resolutions on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues as part of a so-called 'war on woke capitalism'.

Adapting Hysing's (2018) propositions for understanding the relationship between political consumerism and the state, this paper illuminates how the state creates the conditions for and actively relies upon political investorism in some instances, while also acting to limit or outright ban some forms of investment-based political participation, and impede responsible investment on human rights issues.

**Bio:** Dr Erin O'Brien is an Associate Professor in the School of Government and International Relations at Griffith University. Her research examines political activism, advocacy, and participation, studying the interplay between activists, market actors, and the state in the construction of knowledge and formation of policy to combat global problems including modern slavery and environmental degradation. Dr O'Brien's current research investigates political consumerism and investorism - the mobilisation of consumers and investors for political causes. She has recently completed an Australian Research Council (ARC) DECRA Fellowship examining the adoption of ethical consumerism as a solution to complex multi-jurisdictional issues, and is currently leading an ARC Discovery Project (with Ainsley Elbra, Martijn Boersma and Justine Coneybeer) examining the role of proxy advisors in influencing ethical investment norms.





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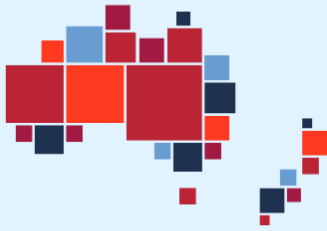
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## **Gail Pacheco – *Occupational Segregation by Gender in New Zealand: A Long-Run Perspective***

**Affiliation/organisation:** New Zealand Human Rights Commission

**Abstract:** This paper examines the evolution of occupational segregation between women and men using New Zealand census data from 1976 to 2023. We construct a gender-specific crosswalk between occupational classification systems to consistently measure segregation over time. Our primary metric is the Duncan Segregation Index, which expresses the proportion of women (or men) who would have to change occupations for the occupational distribution of men and women to be equal. We find a continued decline in segregation, with the Duncan Index falling from 0.689 in 1976 to 0.461 in 2023. We then decompose this development to distinguish the effects of changes in the occupational mix from shifts in gender composition within occupations. Most of this decline (around 75%) is driven by changes in gender composition within occupations, rather than shifts in the distribution of occupations themselves. The analysis also highlights greater occupational integration among younger age groups and tracks persistent gender imbalances in particular job categories. These findings provide a long-run perspective on progress toward gender equality in the labour market and contribute to policy discussions on occupational mobility and workplace diversity.

**Bio:** Professor Gail Pacheco is the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at the NZ Human Rights Commission. Gail has been a Professor of Economics and Director of the NZ Policy Research Institute at AUT, and a former Commissioner at the NZ Productivity Commission. She has written and researched widely on numerous social policy issues, while leading large-scale funded projects involving both academic and public sector collaborations. Gail was a recipient of the NZIER Economics Award in 2018 for outstanding contributions to the advancement of economics and its applications in NZ; and awarded the 2019 AUT Medal in recognition of her research, scholarship and application of integrated data to inform social policy and wellbeing.



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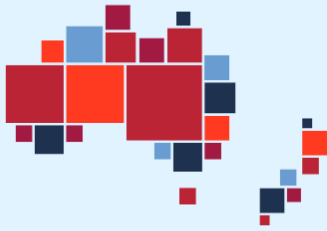
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## **John Southalan - ‘Touched you last!’ Responsibility for government impacts connected with company operations**

**Abstract:** This paper explores the complex landscape of corporate accountability when human rights violations are committed by government officials in connection with company operations. Increasing numbers of legal proceedings allege legal responsibility of companies for impacts involving government officials. This is seen in domestic court proceedings in Australia (eg. Anvil Mining), Canada (Nevsun Resources), Belgium (Total), Guinea (Vale-BSGR), Sweden (Lundin), the Netherlands (Booking.com), the UK (Barrick Gold) and the US (Royal Dutch Petroleum). These claims also arise in other proceedings including international arbitration, human rights courts and committees, National Contact Point cases about the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the World Bank’s Compliance Advisor Ombudsman, and grievance mechanisms (both multistakeholder and individual).

While the 2011 UN framework established principles for business responsibility to respect human rights, significant questions remain about corporate obligations when governments are the primary violators. Complexities arise for traditional understandings of responsibility between state and company. The child’s game ‘touched you last’ is a simple way of assigning responsibility. It is certainly not how I suggest we ought to understand responsibility between the state and a company; but company executives and advisers may sometimes feel that is the new rule. This paper unpacks these complexities, offering practical guidance on international mechanisms and tools for this critical frontier where business, government, and human rights intersect.

**Bio:** John Southalan is a mediator (NMAS), barrister (Western Australian Bar Association) and adjunct academic (Universities of Dundee, Western Australia, Murdoch, Curtin). He has extensive experience in advising and representing parties affected by human rights impacts from business, particularly Indigenous groups in rural Australia and communities in Myanmar. After initial years in commercial litigation, from 1998 John has worked primarily on human rights issues (volunteer work in Thailand and Myanmar; policy work with Australia’s National Human Rights Institution; legal advice and representation with Indigenous organisations; barrister and mediator). Currently an Independent Examiner with Australian National Contact Point for Responsible Business Conduct (part time); Barrister in the Western Australian Bar Association (full time); Adjunct / Clinical Professor (University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, Curtin University – ad-hoc); and General Editor, Native Title Service LexisNexis Australia (part time). John has an MBA, LLB and CELTA, Mediator (NMAS) and is a member of the Business & Human Rights Committee of the International Law Association.



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## Session 3

### **Nick Dexter - *Measuring Impact and creating value in Modern Slavery Risk Management in the Property and Construction Sector***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of Wollongong

**Abstract:** The property and construction industry is recognised as high-risk for modern slavery. However, the industry's risk management often focuses on implementing strategies and roadmaps without robust mechanisms to assess effectiveness - an area consistently identified as underdeveloped in benchmarking studies of corporate modern slavery disclosures.

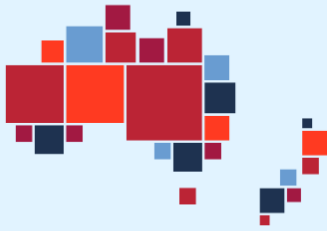
This paper responds by proposing a framework for assessing the effectiveness of organisational systems for managing modern slavery risk. This paper adopts a conceptual development methodology, synthesising theoretical insights and practice-based knowledge to propose a framework designed to fill a recognised gap in modern slavery governance. Specifically, the research examines publicly available data including the Property Council of Australia's (2024) Pathway to Respecting Human Rights, insights from individuals with lived experience of exploitation, and recent critiques of human rights due diligence frameworks that highlight their procedural focus and limited impact on rights-holders. The framework is informed by Bovens' understanding of accountability as a relational mechanism for evaluating organisational performance against public expectations.

The proposed practical framework is structured around four domains: governance and strategy; responsible procurement and purchasing practices; collaboration with affected stakeholders; and access to grievance and remedy. Each domain includes maturity-based metrics to help organisations progress from activity-based inputs toward outcome-oriented accountability.

Designed to strengthen industry guidance and enhance organisational capacity to measure meaningful progress, the framework also offers a scalable model that can be adapted by other industries facing similar challenges in evaluating the effectiveness of their human rights risk management systems. Co-author: Dr Stephanie Perkiss, University of Wollongong

**Bio:** Nick Dexter is a Principal Consultant at Edge Impact, a Director of Be Slavery Free, and a Board Member of MillionMakers.org - a global worker voice platform redefining human rights due diligence by placing data ownership in the hands of workers. He is also a National Industry PhD candidate at the University of Wollongong, supported by the Australian Government's National Industry PhD Program. His research, conducted in partnership with Edge Impact, explores how direct worker voice data can be used to build corporate accountability frameworks grounded in the lived experiences of workers, particularly in the property and construction sectors.

Nick has over a decade of experience in sustainability governance, modern slavery risk management, and forensic traceability, and has advised a wide range of private and public sector organisations on operationalising the UN Guiding Principles and OECD Guidelines. He led the development of the Property Council of Australia's "Pathway to Respecting Human Rights." He has helped shape practical tools and frameworks that enable businesses to move from compliance to meaningful action on modern slavery and ethical sourcing. Passionate about shifting accountability closer to where harm occurs, Nick's work challenges top-down risk models and advocates for worker-led insights as a foundation for systems change.



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## **Heather Moore - *Nudging Corporate Conscience: Testing Choice Architecture to Improve Remediation Responses to Slavery in Supply Chains***

**Affiliation/organisation:** RMIT University/Australian Anti-Slavery Commission

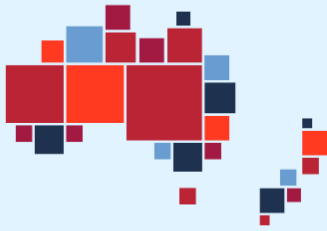
**Abstract:** As due diligence and transparency laws emerge around the world, slavery in supply chains is now squarely on the corporate agenda; however, the question of how to effectively remediate harm remains a key challenge. The literature indicates that firms struggle to respond to modern slavery because it is unfamiliar, ambiguous and complex. This research applies theoretical insights from behavioural science to explain how corporate actors struggle with complex remediation decisions, even when legal frameworks impose obligations to act.

This paper presents results of a controlled experiment testing the proposition that choice architecture, in the form of a decision tree designed utilising behavioural decision-making heuristics (mental shortcuts), will help to reduce barriers to victim-centred remediation decision-making compared to government-issued guidance or no guidance. Results showed that, compared to government-issued guidance, participants found the decision tree made victims more salient, modern slavery less ambiguous and prompted users to deviate from status quo decision-making. When it came to remediation response quality, the treatment differences were not significant and overall remediation quality scores were low.

The findings demonstrate the positive potential of structured decision assistance to make victims of slavery more prominent in the decision-making process and to help disrupt conventional decision-making and “structural inertia” (Crane 2013), that favours firm interests over those of rightsholders. It also underscores the limits of cognitive interventions when substantive legal obligations and expertise are weak or absent.

The research contributes to the emerging scholarship on business responses to slavery in supply chains and responds to calls for greater theoretical and disciplinary approaches to positively impact policy and practice beyond the boundaries of academia. I make this contribution by advancing an experimental agenda to improve corporate and regulatory responses to modern slavery from a behavioural, rather than compliance, point of view.

**Bio:** Heather Moore is a counter-trafficking specialist, with over two decades’ international experience across the fields of program management, capacity building, policy and research. Her work has focused on strengthening organisational responses to contemporary forms of slavery, with emphasis on improving criminal justice responses; building high-functioning multi-stakeholder and survivor-led initiatives; and developing effective remediation strategies. She joined the inaugural Australian Anti-Slavery Commission in January 2025 as Director of Policy and Research and is writing her PhD in Law with Shelley Marshall and Janneke Blijlevens at RMIT University. The primary aim of her research is to develop practical, effective tools for organisations that make implementing victim-focused remediation of slavery in supply chains much easier. It uses ground-breaking experimental techniques to provide empirical, field-based insights into the factors shaping remediation decision-making and how these insights may improve modern slavery regulatory policy and legislation. Her thesis, due to be finished in 2025, is entitled: *Enhancing Remediation of Slavery in Supply Chains through Victim-Centred Decision Design: An Experimental Approach*.



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## **Puvan J Selvanathan - *Direct Worker Voice for HRDD and A2R***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya

**Abstract:** Social audits are widely used to assess organizational adherence to ethical labor standards, yet their effectiveness remains contested due to limited scope and inconsistent methodologies. This paper critically examines traditional social auditing practices and introduces Direct Worker Voice (DWV) as a transformative approach to improve accountability and transparency in global supply chains. Drawing from a case study involving 2,102 workers across factories in India and Malaysia, the paper contrasts the limitations of conventional audits—typically engaging only 2–3% of the workforce—with the DWV model, which gathered insights from 70% of workers anonymously and at scale.

The DWV approach enables real-time, anonymous feedback across a wide range of labor rights indicators, including union representation, discrimination, wage withholding, abuse, deception, and restriction of movement. Notably, it revealed significant gender-based disparities in perceived safety and control, and uncovered systemic issues such as retention of identity documents and excessive overtime—often missed in traditional audits. By centering worker agency and protecting anonymity, DWV fosters more honest engagement and enables employers and brands to implement timely, targeted remediation efforts.

Importantly, DWV supports the fulfillment of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) as outlined in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). It does so by providing a credible, ongoing mechanism to assess actual and potential human rights impacts directly from affected stakeholders—workers themselves. This strengthens the identification, prevention, and mitigation of risks and ensures that companies are not relying solely on third-party observations detached from worker realities.

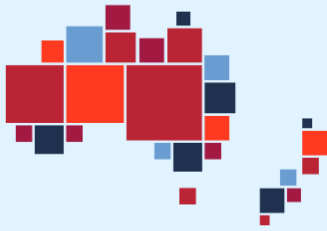
Despite its advantages, the paper acknowledges ongoing challenges, such as addressing gendered response patterns and insufficient integration of trade union perspectives. The findings advocate for a shift towards inclusive, data-driven audit models that enhance corporate responsibility and strengthen compliance with international human rights standards in global supply chains.

**Bio:** Puvan is a Human Rights, Sustainability, ESG and SDGs Expert, leading global thinking on Digital Identity and Data Property Rights for workers, farmers and consumers for equity in the Digital Economy. Puvan has over 25 years of global experience at the MNC C-suite of MNC to advising Governments and at the United Nations. Handles issues at the nexus of politics, technology and business operations, with a focus on global supply chains. Puvan is a former UN Expert on Business and Human Rights (UN Human Rights Council, Geneva), was Head of Food & Agriculture (UN Global Compact Office, New York), and Head, New York Office, of the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the UN and WTO.

Before the UN, as Group Chief Sustainability Officer for a MNC, he developed sustainability strategy and operational policies across 22 countries for Plantations, Property, Motors, Energy and Healthcare divisions. In 2015 Puvan established the Bluenumber Foundation, a 501c3 New York non-profit to work on issues including Value Chains and Forced Labour.

An Architect by profession, with an MBA, a DBA in Corporate Sustainability Strategy and completing a PhD in the Human Right to Data.





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## **Laura Simic - *Conceptual Connections and Chasms: A Socialist Feminist Analysis of Informal Work and Modern Slavery in Fragmented and Outsourced Work***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** RMIT University

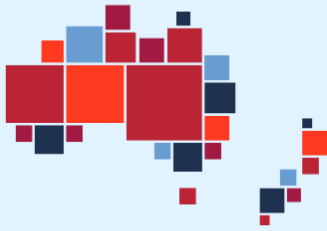
**Abstract:** Concepts shape our capacity to understand and act on phenomena, particularly in policy and law, where conceptual frameworks carry significant material consequences. This is evident in the policy and legal responses to labour exploitation, where the concepts of informal work and modern slavery dominate. While scholars have extensively analysed these concepts as separate phenomena, with informal work studied since the 1970s and modern slavery's more recent prominence, existing literature rarely connects them and has yet to explore how together they extend and hinder our understanding of labour exploitation. This conceptual paper draws on socialist feminist theory to critique how these concepts fail to adequately capture the complexity of exploitative practices proliferating in fragmented and outsourced work. Socialist feminism deconstructs binaries between society's dominant hierarchical sexual order (patriarchy) and economic system (capitalism) to uncover the complex structural foundations that see women and girls disproportionately affected by labour exploitation.

This paper contributes a novel conceptual framework, visualised through a concept map, that bridges the traditionally siloed modern slavery and informal work discourses to integrate many key concepts in policy and law relating to labour exploitation in outsourced and fragmented work. The map illustrates a crowded conceptual landscape and highlights connections and gaps in understanding the gendered and structural dynamics of labour exploitation. This understudied area of modern slavery and informal work scholarship reveals that this conceptual chasm is not coincidental but entrenched in patriarchal and neoliberal capitalism, as recognised by socialist feminist theorists like Connell, Fraser and Eisenstein. Consequently, policy and legal responses remain inadequate, limiting our ability to address how labour exploitation evolves and persists in contemporary global capitalist markets. The paper concludes by recommending further research, building on this framework and socialist feminist analysis to develop an integrated and structural conceptualisation of labour exploitation in policy and law.

Co author: Prof Shelley Marshall, RMIT University

**Bio:** Laura Simic is a second-year PhD candidate in the School of Law at RMIT University, affiliated with the Business and Human Rights Research Centre. Her research employs feminist critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to interrogate how the concepts of modern slavery and informal work shape ineffective responses to gendered labour exploitation. The study aims to explore how capitalist-patriarchal systems perpetuate women's subordination in fragmented and outsourced labour dynamics and propose alternative conceptual frameworks for more effective policy and legal interventions.

Laura holds a Graduate Diploma of International Law (University of Melbourne, 2023), a Master of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Action (Deakin University, 2022), and a Master of Business Administration (Griffith University, 2020). She has held senior roles in the Australian federal and state governments in sustainability and trade. Laura is dedicated to leveraging her academic and professional experiences to drive positive social change and contribute to dismantling systemic barriers through robust evidence-based research and advocating for policy reform.



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## **Kyla Raby - *Modern slavery in university operations: the limited recognition of risks to staff and students and deflection of responsibility***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of South Australia

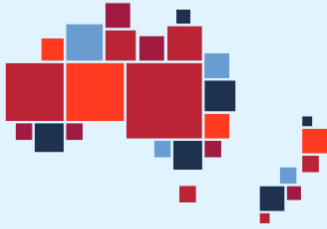
**Abstract:** Universities have historically played an important role in antislavery activism, with scholars and students playing leading roles in the abolition movement. Today, however, universities around the world are facing increased scrutiny for how they may cause, contribute to and be linked to modern day slavery. Australia's Modern Slavery Act (2018) requires Australian universities to report on how they are identifying and mitigating risks of modern slavery in their global operations and supply chains. Modern slavery is fundamentally about the exploitation of people and people (being primarily staff and students) are central to university operations. By analysing public disclosures from Australian universities, this research examines how universities understand risks of modern slavery in their operations, specifically in relation to their staff and student cohorts, and what actions, if any, they are taking in response. It identifies several gaps in relation to risk identification and mitigation, including limited and inconsistent recognition of operational risks and an overreliance on legal compliance rather than targeted risk mitigation activities. The findings suggest that universities perceive modern slavery as an external issue rather than an embedded risk requiring internal accountability and as a result, are likely to deflect responsibility onto suppliers, partners and other third parties.

This study highlights the urgent need for universities to adopt a more proactive and comprehensive approach to risk identification and mitigation. It makes recommendations for how universities can use their modern slavery reporting obligations as a lever for enacting meaningful change in their operations and fulfil their potential to engage impactfully in modern day antislavery efforts.

**Bio:** Kyla is a doctoral researcher and an established antislavery practitioner. Kyla is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of South Australia critically examining how the issue of modern slavery in global supply chains is represented in public policy. Her research related to the identification, protection and support of survivors of exploitation has been published in global anti-trafficking journals. Kyla is the co-author of *Modern Slavery in Australia*, a definitive guide on modern slavery law and policy for practitioners advising businesses and government agencies. Kyla is a casual research assistant with UniSA and Griffith University and has previously taught for UniSA, the University of Notre Dame Australia and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

As a practitioner, Kyla has designed, implemented, and managed support services for survivors of human trafficking and slavery in the United Kingdom, Greece, Bangladesh and Australia. Kyla is a protection, gender and inclusion delegate with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. She is a board member of Be Slavery Free and was an inaugural member of the New South Wales Anti-Slavery Commissions advisory panel. Kyla is the founder of Everyday Slavery, an antislavery education-based social media project funded by the Australian Government.





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## **Jemima Roe - *Are corporates responsible for the human rights of workers in their global value chain? Implications of Limbu v Dyson considered in the Australian context***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** Herbert Smith Freehills

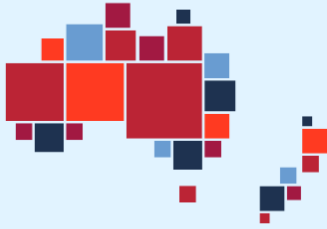
**Abstract:** There is a growing trend of international cases seeking to hold companies liable for human rights abuses of workers in their value chains on tortious grounds. While none of these suits has yet gone to trial, the interim judgements provide important insight into how courts are considering businesses' responsibility for identifying, addressing and mitigating human rights issues.

This paper first outlines the key cases seeking to establish corporate liability for human rights breaches in the value chain, including in particular the 2024 English Court of Appeal decision on jurisdiction in *Limbu v Dyson*. In *Dyson*, the CoA held that England - the principal place of business of the Dyson parent company - was the appropriate forum for claims of negligence, tortious false imprisonment and unjust enrichment arising out of alleged human rights abuses of migrant workers in Malaysian factories that supplied to Dyson, but were not owned by Dyson. The court pointed to a number of characteristics of Dyson's operations that led to its conclusion, illuminating potential risk factors relevant to other businesses in their dealings with their own suppliers.

Second, we consider whether and how cases of this nature might be successful in Australia. In doing so, we seek to help Australian companies gain a greater understanding of the litigation risks, as well as strategic and reputational risks, they may face regarding the human rights treatment of workers in their value chains.

Third, we identify practical takeaways for Australian companies arising from these findings, including lessons to inform their processes and policies for identifying, remediating and mitigating human rights issues in their value chains.

**Bio:** Jemima Roe is a senior associate at Herbert Smith Freehills, specialising in international arbitration and ESG. She advises on a range of business and human rights issues, both contentious and advisory, and has particular experience in human rights claims in the European Court of Human Rights. She has also previously undertaken research engagements on climate litigation and corporate sustainability accountability at the University of Melbourne, Columbia University and the University of Oxford. Based in Melbourne, Jemima is dual qualified in Australia (Victoria) and England and Wales and is currently studying an MBA.



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## **Ramona Vijeyarasa - *Gender-responsive due diligence and supply chain exploitation: Giving meaning and purpose to the gendered lens***

**Affiliation/Organisation:** University of Technology Sydney

**Abstract:** For the past decades, governments have sought to respond to known exploitation in the supply chain through legislation that requires forms of corporate due diligence. This paper grapples with the call made by scholars to bring sharper visibility of workers' gendered experiences of exploitation through gender-responsive due diligence. The paper has two primary goals. It first seeks to revisit this concept and elaborate on its meaning and its relationship with gender-disaggregated data collection. Second, it seeks to understand how much gender-responsive due-diligence is an advance on the current approach to supply chain exploitation. Finally, for many, due diligence risks standardized non-gendered reporting in a soft self-regulatory environment. This paper therefore seeks to gauge where gender-responsive due diligence sits as an intervention on a scale from maintaining the status quo to transformative. Ultimately, by bringing victims back to the centre of the conversation and by gendering (or perhaps re-gendering) modern slavery through gender-responsive due-diligence, we could – eventually – move towards a regulatory environment in which corporations are better held to account for exploitation in their supply chains.

**Bio:** Dr. Ramona Vijeyarasa is one of Australia's leading experts on the ways in which legal systems address gendered issues, known for her innovative work on quantifying and addressing gender inequality in law. She joined the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney in 2017 where she pioneered the Gender Legislative Index (GLI), a ground-breaking tool using human evaluators and machine learning to evaluate the gender-responsiveness of laws worldwide. Her research has had an impact on law-making in Tasmania and at the federal level in Australia. She is widely published on such themes as modern slavery, women's reproductive rights and paid parental leave. Prior to UTS, she worked for over a decade on women's rights in international organisations, non-profits and international NGOs, including the Center for Reproductive Rights, the International Organisation for Migration in Vietnam and Ukraine and as head of women's rights at ActionAid International's headquarters for six years.