
Capability Statement

Business and Human Rights Centre

2021



Overview

The RMIT Business and Human Rights Centre (BHRIGHT) is an interdisciplinary team of researchers with deep expertise in the application of human rights to business contexts. We offer a range of research, advisory and design services to Australian and international corporate, NGO and government partners.

Our mission is to engage with business to help make them aware of and meet critical obligations in upholding the human rights of workers, customers and communities they impact, as well as throughout supply chains.

We explore how business behaviour can be better shaped by, and respond to, regulation to address the most significant human challenges facing business and society. These include achieving gender equality, mitigating climate change, transitioning to carbon neutral energy, humanising big data and digital technologies, and tackling precarious labour and modern slavery in global supply chains and gig work.

Our Unique Value

As Australia's first and only research centre focusing on the nexus of business and human rights, we are uniquely placed to inform the strategies, policies and practices of businesses from all sectors, particularly those with complex stakeholder environments.

We offer insight to support the actions businesses can make in response to the expectations laid out in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These principles suggest businesses avoid contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, address impacts when they occur and prevent impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.



What We Offer

BHRIGHT undertakes a range of knowledge activities. Partners can benefit from:

- Evidence of business impact. We conduct empirical studies to build evidence of human rights and business impact - amplifying the voices of affected communities and workers.
- Analysis of contemporary business and human rights problems. We use a range of conceptual frameworks and methods in analysing contemporary problems in business and human rights and develop solutions for a future that is fairer, more equitable and sustainable.
- Training and capacity building. We run master classes, consultancies and design labs to generate and share innovation as well as train current and future leaders to develop and integrate human rights standards in their respective industry contexts.
- Human rights in business education. We promote human rights in business education through the Global Network of Business Schools for Human Rights.
- Influence on law reform and public policy. We proactively participate in law reform and public policy debates.
- Critical engagement with existing corporate social responsibility, accountability and broader business literature. We advance methodological and theoretical development, providing editorial leadership on relevant journals.



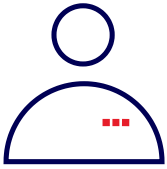
What We Do

BHRIGHT was established in 2020 by convening researchers with a strong impact track record across the six research themes that make up its programmatic structure. These concern human rights and:

- Labour in Supply Chains
- Gender
- Peace and Conflict
- Climate Change
- Digital Technologies
- Health
- Ethical Enterprises

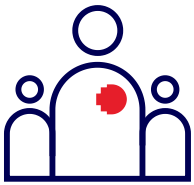
To demonstrate the diversity of partnered projects undertaken by BHRIGHT, some projects currently underway include:

- Resilience of Garment Global Supply Chain supported by the Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work. Understanding how garment workers in Myanmar are navigating COVID and the recession, and what this tells us about supply chains resilience.
- How are social enterprises creating value in a post-covid world? In partnership with Moral Fairground, this study identifies key factors that drive or hinder their ability to navigate crisis, and survive and thrive.
- Surveillance and tracking in times of emergency. Understanding trends in surveillance and tracking of individuals in Australia, including during the COVID-19 pandemic and determining whether surveillance measures are compatible with Australia's human rights obligations.
- Reducing modern slavery with new digital and enforcement technologies in partnership with the Cleaning Accountability Framework, United Workers Union and supported by the Australian Research Council, this project explores the uses of blockchain, crowdsourced data and machine learning for reducing modern slavery.



Our Leadership

- Associate Professor Shelley Marshall – BHRIGHT Director: Expertise in corporate accountability, labour regulation in developing countries and supply chains, transnational human rights mechanisms and digital technologies.
- Professor Thuy Nguyen – BHRIGHT Deputy Director: Expertise in accounting, information systems and management processes, especially in the context of performance measurement and control.
- Dr Elizabeth Shi – Leads Supply Chains theme: Expertise in the changing nature of work in relation to informal work, and gender in relation to low paid women's work and collective organisation.
- Dr Kate Grosser – Leads Gender theme: Expertise in Corporate Social Responsibility and gender.
- Dr Jonathan Kolieb – Leads Peace and Conflict theme: Expertise in responsible business in conflict affected areas, business and peace building and children's rights and the accountability of transnational corporations under international law.
- Dr Leanne Morrison – Leads Climate Change theme: Expertise in property law, climate change and environmental law and policy, and sustainable transport.
- Professor Penelope Weller and Dr Natalya Turkina – Leads Health theme: Expertise in health, government and business (e.g. conditions of detention and obligation of private providers, public health and urban regulation, inclusive practices and health, and the workplace).



Contact Us

BHRIGHT welcomes enquires and expressions of interest to partner from businesses, governments, NGOs and community organisations both from Australia and abroad.

For enquiries please contact:

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