RIAA launches new Impact Investment Forum

RIAA recently announced the launch of the Impact Investment Forum to support the development of the growing impact investment market in Australia and New Zealand, with growing interest and demand in impact investing across all sectors, including government, philanthropy and the superannuation industry.

Impact investing seeks to achieve measurable social or environmental impact alongside financial returns. RIAA's Impact Investment Forum will act as a dedicated hub to connect and deepen the participation of organisations and individuals in this growing field.

The forum will build on the foundational work of the Australian Advisory Board on Impact Investing and Impact Investing Australia to catalyse the market for impact investing. It will receive assets Impact Investing Australia has incubated, including the Impact Investor Survey and Benchmarking Report on impact investment activity and performance.

As the market enters its next phase of development, RIAA's Impact Investment Forum will take forward these critical pieces to develop market based data and practice. Together with other market based initiatives, this will complement the ongoing work of the Australian Advisory Board on Impact Investing and the initiatives Impact Investing Australia continues to drive, including Impact Capital Australia and the Impact Investment Ready Growth Grants.

"RIAA's mission is to see more capital being invested more responsibly. Through the Impact Investment Forum, we want to develop and amplify the significant work done by Impact Investing Australia, and help take impact investing to scale," said RIAA CEO Simon O'Connor.

Read more

RIAA's Impact Investment Forum is a program for all RIAA members. If you aren't a member and want to get involved visit here.

8th Annual ESG Research Australia Awards

Retail supply chain management, workplace safety, gender diversity on boards, farming and antibiotic use, and climate change are among the key issues being researched by broking firms in Australia to inform responsible investment strategies.

At the 8th Annual ESG Research Australia Awards held in Sydney on the 9th May, Citi and Credit Suisse took out the awards for excellence in ESG research.

The Awards, attended by over 80 of Australia’s leading superannuation funds, fund managers and broking firms, recognise excellence in environmental, social and governance (ESG) research with three awards, including best new ESG research, best ongoing research and best ESG broking firm.
The winners of this year’s ESG Research Australia Awards are:

**Best Piece of New ESG Research by an Individual Analyst or Team:**
Get Inside the Carbon Black Box, Look Down the Carbon Value Chain by Sandra McCullagh and Zoe Whitton, Credit Suisse

**Best Piece of Ongoing ESG Research by an Individual Analyst or Team:**
Safety Spotlight: ASX100 Companies & More by Elaine Prior and Joel Quintal, Citi

**Best ESG Broking Firm:**
Citi

Elaine Prior, the outgoing Managing Director/ESG Analyst of Citi Research was also presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her long-standing leadership and service to the ESG industry.

The nominated research from 2016 explored a variety of ESG topics, with coverage of social issues continuing to grow, and new topics emerging including food safety. There was also a resurgence in the coverage of environmental issues including environmental rehabilitation, alongside a continued focus on climate change.

“At a time when responsible investment has become the benchmark of good investment practice, it’s becoming even more critical that we have high quality ESG research” said Simon O'Connor, CEO of the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA).

You can read the full media release [here](#) and the Research Report [here](#).

Thank you to our event sponsors:

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**Welcome to our new members!**

RIAA is pleased to see our active network of members continuing to grow strongly, from 147 members as at July 2015 to over 170 members today who combined manage well over $1 trillion in assets globally. We’re pleased to welcome our latest members to join:

- Terra Capital (Asset Manager)
- ANZ Investments New Zealand (Asset Manager)

Interested in joining RIAA? See our membership guide [here](#), or feel free to get in touch with us at info@responsibleinvestment.org

**New Certifications**

Congratulations to Paul Pellegrino of Partners in Planning who is the latest RIAA financial adviser member to become certified under RIAA’s Responsible Investment Certification Program!

If you are a financial adviser who would like to proudly state your expertise in responsible investment to your clients or to differentiate yourself in the market using our Certification Symbol, contact RIAA on info@responsibleinvestment.org to find out how you can become certified.

RIAA has over 120 certified investment products under the Responsible Investment Certification Program, to find certified products visit [Responsiblereturns.com.au](http://www.responsiblereturns.com.au)
RIAA IN THE NEWS

Ethical investing comes of age
AFR: 21 May 2017
Green is the new black in investing as billions of dollars pour into ethical funds and a rush of financial products with environment and social themes targets mainstream investors.

Ethical fund assets grew 62 per cent in 2015 to $52 billion, shows the latest RIAA Benchmark Report. The sector has doubled in two years as responsible investing redefines the investment landscape.

“There’s been a massive awakening in ethical investing,” says RIAA CEO Simon O’Connor. “Investors have realised they can invest in a way that helps rather than harms the planet, without sacrificing returns. We are rapidly heading towards a ‘tipping point’.

Read more

Moving impact investment into the next phase
Pro Bono Australia: 18 May 2017
Impact investing is being primed for growth with the launch of the a new forum designed to support the development of the market in Australia and New Zealand.

Read more

Citi Research dominates ESG Awards
Investor Daily: 10 May 2017
Citi’s research team has won two of the Responsible Investment Association of Australia’s 2017 ESG research awards, with Credit Suisse winning best piece of new ESG research.

Read more

RIAA POLICY SUBMISSION UPDATES

Draft Guidelines for ESG Engagement
Australian Investor Relations Association recently sought submissions to their Draft Guidelines for ESG Engagement: Recommended Practices for Listed Companies. RIAA’s submission can be read here.

Inquiry into Modern Slavery
Inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia: RIAA recently made a submission to this Joint Standing Committee inquiry expressing strong support for the establishment of a Modern Slavery Act in Australia.

New Zealand New Financial Advice Regime
RIAA recently made a submission in response to the draft Financial Services Legislation Amendment Bill focused on ensuring that the Code of Professional Conduct for advisers should explicitly require advisers to consider the ESG and ethical preferences of their clients. Read our submission here.

NZX Corporate Governance Code
NZX Releases new Corporate Governance Code with strong requirements for disclosure of non financial factors by issuers on the NZX, with recommendation 4.3 stating that issuers “should provide non financial disclosure at least annually, including considering material exposure to environmental, economic and social sustainability risks and other key risks.” RIAA welcomes this addition to the Code that is consistent with our submission to the review process. The new Code comes into effect from 1 October 2017. Read more here.

RIAA has over 200 media mentions this financial year alone. For daily updates, follow us on Twitter @RIAANews
UPCOMING EVENTS

RIAA EVENTS

RIAA Investor Field Trip
June 2017

RI Benchmark Report Launch AU & NZ
Melbourne 25 July 2017
Auckland 2 August 2017

New Zealand RI Conference
31 October 2017

Australian RI Conference
15 -16 November 2017

INDUSTRY EVENTS

Investor webinar on Access to Vaccines Index with ICCR & PRI
31 May 2017
More Info

UNAA 2017 Climate Collaboration Forum
7 June 2017
More Info

Women in Super National Roadshow
Australian Capital Cities
2 August - 7 September 2017
More Info

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Introducing RIAA’s Impact Investment Forum
Simon O’Connor, RIAA Originally published in the RIAA Blog, 19th May 2017

RIAA is excited to be announcing the launch of an Impact Investment Forum (media release here), a new initiative targeted squarely on the objective of bringing impact investment to scale in our region.

As those of you who have been involved or watching impact investing will know, there is a lot of activity, groups involved, forums, and of course investments going on, so you’d be forgiven for wondering why the heck RIAA needs to jump on the theme as well. Well, let me explain.

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MEMBER NEWS

Mercer wins university investment mandate
Swinburne University based in Melbourne has appointed Mercer as its new investment manager and awarded $215 million to two of the investment managers social responsible funds.
Read more

ANZ Investments New Zealand launches new fund focused on responsible investing
New Zealand’s largest fund manager, ANZ Investments New Zealand has launched a new fund which excludes investments in companies involved in weapons and tobacco trade.
Read more

Social Ventures Australia launches new SIB
Social Ventures Australia has launched a new $7 million social impact bond called the Resolve Social Benefit Bond which aims at improving mental health outcomes.
Read more

AXA IM divests from companies most exposed to coal
AXA Investment Managers have announced their intention to divest from companies that derive more than 50% of their reviews from coal related activities effective June 30.
Read more

Perpetual tops the charts
Perpetual’s Wholesale Ethical SRI Fund has been listed as the top performing share fund with annual return more than twice average annual return of the Australian share market.
Read more
AMP: Antibiotics the next ethical investment battleground
AMP Capital has released a landmark report flagging the regulatory and earnings dangers of businesses using antibiotics in the food chain.
Read more

LGS again achieves number one ranking in AODP
For the third time since 2012, Local Government Super has achieved the number one ranking in the global Asset Owners Disclosure Project which annually assesses how 500 of the world’s largest investors mitigate climate change risk in their portfolios.
Read more

MSCI: Mutual funds have exposure to controversial weapons
MSCI research has found that 6,500 funds sold to retail investors around the world have high exposure to controversial weapons such as cluster munitions, casting doubt over asset managers efforts to invest responsibly.
Read more

UCA FM shows ethical funds can perform and do good
Ethical investors want to know more than simply fund performance. They also want to know what 'good' their money is doing. UCA Funds Management tells them this exactly with a new-look, impact-focused annual report.
Read more

Fourth annual FTSE Russell Smart Beta Survey marks peak in ESG interest
FTSE Russell confirms that the percentage of asset owners reporting an existing smart beta index allocation has reached a new peak of 46%, up from 36% (an increase of 10%) from last year.
Read more

INDUSTRY NEWS

Petrol cars will vanish in 8 years, says Stanford economist Tony Seba
The whole of land transport will switch to electric vehicles by 2025, a Stanford economics professor has predicted.
Read more

Oil Search yields on climate risk assessment
Oil Search chairman Rick Lee has confirmed support for a climate trajectory of 2 degrees Celsius and said the company had started testing its business against both 1.5 degrees and 2 degree scenarios.
Read More

ESG holds the key to adviser client retention
Financial Advisers that aren’t doing more to incorporate ESG concerns into investment portfolios may be left in the dust by millennials.
Read more

The rise of faith-based investing
The opportunity to invest along religious lines is gaining momentum, with two new US ETF’s on offer, however there are Australian opportunities also.
Read more

Investor’s statement in support of World No Tobacco Day
Investors are invited to sign on to a statement that supports tobacco control measures being taken by governments around the world. This initiative is supported by AXA, AMP Capital and CalPERS. Sign on via PRI portal here.

Australian investors should be doing more to de-carbonise
Australian institutional investors should be taking more measures to de-carbonise their portfolio, argues US fund manager Mellon Capital.
Read more

Insurers join pension plans in filtering out tobacco
Divestment advocates say that they aim to raise awareness and put pressure on the insurance industry to follow suit.
Read more

Energy giants target ‘zero net emissions’ by 2050
AGL Energy, Origin Energy and Energy Australia have backed a call by The Climate Institute for a 2050 carbon emissions target consistent with Australia’s obligations to aim at zero net emissions.
Read more
Business case for considering human rights
A new report detailing the strong business case for considering human rights in investment decisions was released by the Australian Human Rights Commission and EY.
Read more

Financial Advisers still hamstrung by APL’s
The number of ethical products appearing on approved product lists is greater than what it was three years ago, however the progress made in the retail services sector falls short that achieved within the wholesale sphere.
Read more

Media Super to fund clean energy, tech and R&D
Media Super to set aside $30 million to lend to small to medium companies to fund their research and development efforts in clean energy.
Read more

Australian fashion retailers have work to do
Baptist World Aid report on Ethical Fashion highlights that Australian fashion retailers have work to do with several being non-responsive to research and demonstrating no transparency.
Read more

New guide to climate change disclosure
The IGCC and Asia IGCC release new guide to help improve transparency and better inform stakeholders of the way climate change risk and opportunities are being tackled by the institutional investment community.
Read more

Funding Grants for Women’s Leadership Development
Women & Leadership Australia (WLA) is administering a national initiative to support the development of female leaders across Australia’s finance sector. The initiative is providing women with grants to enable participation in a range of leadership development programs. The leadership development programs are part-time and delivered nationally via WLA’s blended learning model. Scholarship funding is strictly limited and will be awarded based on a set of selection criteria being met. Find out more and register your interest by completing the Expression of Interest form here prior to June 7, 2017.

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