

MEDIA RELEASE

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Environment and climate change remain top focus of ESG research in Australia

Topical issues of plastics and water scarcity, along with continued strong interest in climate change are among the key issues being researched within the finance industry to inform and drive more responsible investment in Australia.

At the 10th Annual ESG Research Australia Awards held today, Citi, Macquarie and Credit Suisse took out awards for excellence in ESG research by a broker. An additional award from the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA) was also presented to Ausbil Investment Management and the Australian Council of Superannuation Investors for new ESG research by a non-broker.

COVID-19 presents the greatest of challenges to investors, and early signs are that many responsible investment funds and companies are holding up better than their peers. Investors rely on robust and rigorous ESG research and data to help navigate turbulent times, which is why RIAA is pleased to recognise the leaders in this important research.

The ESG RA Awards, attended by Australia's leading superannuation funds, fund managers and broking firms, recognise excellence in environmental, social and governance (ESG) research published by broking firms.

The winners of this year's ESG Research Australia Awards are:

- **Best Piece of New ESG Research:**

2 degree or not 2 degree: The ins and outs of scenario analysis in real life, by Zoe Whitton and Edward McKinnon, Citi

- **Best Piece of Ongoing ESG Research:**

Macquarie's 2019 ESG Ratings Survey, by Anita Stanley and Linda Carlanita, Macquarie

- **Best ESG Broking Firm:** Credit Suisse

The winner of RIAA's ESG Research Award recognising excellence in investor relevant ESG research by a non-broking firm is:

- **Best Piece of Investor Relevant ESG Research (non-broking firm):**

Modern Slavery Reporting – guide for investors, by Mans Carlsson-Sweeny, Ausbil Investment Management and Kate Griffiths and Ian McIlwraith, Australian Council of Superannuation Investors. The Guide was an initiative of ACSI and RIAA's Human Rights Working Group.

The nominated research covered each of the environmental, social and governance topics, with carbon risk, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the social issue of obesity, and the Banking

Royal Commission all areas of focus. Citi's research on scenario analysis is particularly valuable as investors prepare to report under the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD).

"The need for high quality ESG research has never been greater, as ESG integration has become a critical foundation of good investment practice," said Simon O'Connor, CEO of the Responsible Investment Association Australasia and Chair of ESG Research Australia.

"ESG investing is about making better investment decisions over the longer term by taking into account factors that are too often glossed over or ignored in normal fundamental analysis.

"Strong research in this area is vital to the successful decision-making of some of Australia's largest institutional investors who are increasingly adopting these approaches," Simon said.

Credit Suisse's success in the "Best ESG Broking Firm" category is a first for the broker, demonstrating the commitment of the Credit Suisse ESG team over a number of years. Chair of the Research Evaluation Committee Natasha McKean commended their approach.

"Not only have Credit Suisse delivered timely and innovative ESG research, but they have delivered a comprehensive corporate access program and outstanding client service, which are highly valued by the ESG RA Committee and members respectively," Natasha said.

Supported by the Responsible Investment Association Australasia, ESG RA is an Australian initiative comprising superannuation funds, fund managers and asset consultants with the single objective of increasing the quantity and quality of ESG broker research in Australia.

ESG RA membership currently represents over 50 institutions managing well in excess of \$1 trillion in assets under management, and includes some of Australia's largest superannuation funds, fund managers and asset consultants.

For further information or to arrange an interview with Simon O'Connor, CEO of RIAA and Chair of ESG Research Australia or Natasha McKean, Chair of the ESG RA Research Evaluation Committee, please contact:

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