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# THE THIRD WHEEL PODCAST SERIES: ESG IN AUSTRALIA

23 December 2022 | Insight

Podcasts – By **Timothy Stutt and Melanie Debenham**

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We explore the topical Environment, Social and Governance issues of the day in Australia.

Each episode, Partners Timothy Stutt and Melanie Debenham are joined by an expert third wheel guest to explore the issues from their unique perspectives.

Mel is an expert on business-critical environment, planning, heritage and native title regulation in Australia. Tim specialises in ESG from a corporate governance perspective, including market disclosure, risk management and shareholder engagement/activism.

*We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands Mel and Tim are recording from, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation in Perth and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation in Sydney. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this country.*

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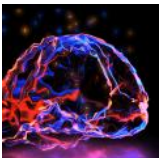


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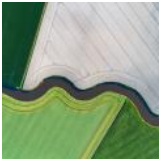
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### LATEST EPISODE

#### Episode 24 - Start at the source

In this episode, Tim Stutt and Mel Debenham are joined by Kathryn Pacey, environment and planning partner to discuss HSF’s report on Unlocking ESG Investment in Australia, and the long road for businesses assessing their supply chain and how to balance immediate pressures with long term ambition. 60% of our report’s survey respondents, comprising more than 100 business leaders, say their company has a net zero commitment ranging between now and 2050, but 40% say the commitments don’t reflect Scope 3 emissions in the value chain. Given regulatory uncertainty and inconsistency was cited as the only barrier unique to Australia, Kathryn discusses the swathe of regulatory changes facing businesses and their goals for emissions reduction and environmental protection.

[Read our report here](#)

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#### Episode 23 - Keeping the focus on “S”

In this episode, Tim Stutt and Mel Debenham are joined by Jacqui Wootton, disputes partner and co-head of HSF’s Australian corporate crime and investigations practice. In our second episode unpacking HSF’s report on Unlocking ESG Investment in Australia, we are firmly focussed on the “S”, a key issue emerging from our survey of more than 100 business leaders on accelerating investment in ESG outcomes. 80% of respondents say they have reviewed or plan to review their ESG policies and operations, with modern slavery in particular one of the issues most identified. Jacqui shares her thoughts on the challenges ahead for companies in not only meeting rising reporting and regulatory expectations, but how they are measuring whether their approaches are effective and driving positive change.

[Read our report here](#)

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## Episode 22 - Unlocking ESG Investment in Australia

In this episode, Mel Debenham and Tim Stutt are back at the wheel to launch HSF's report on Unlocking ESG Investment in Australia. The report unpacks the findings from our survey of more than 100 business leaders on the size and shape of the ESG investment challenges and opportunities. With the help of expert interviews across industry, the report explored the uncertainty about risk, returns and regulation to be addressed for businesses to adapt at the scale and speed to meet shifting investor and community expectations. This is the first episode in a series that will deep dive on the key report findings.

[Read our report here](#)

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## Episode 21 - The role of challenge, discomfort and humility in positive workplace cultures with Professor Brock Bastian

In this episode, our Employment, Industrial Relations and Safety team take the wheel, with [Nerida Jessup](#) and [Drew Pearson](#) hosting special guest, Professor Brock Bastian, School of Psychological Sciences, University of Melbourne. They build upon an [earlier episode](#) and the concept that good work is good for people, by delving into some of the strategies that give people the capacity to respond to difficult experiences and navigate conflict, maintain positive relationships and build effective workplace cultures.

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## Episode 20 - Board accountability and reporting on workplace misconduct with Nerida Jessup, Anna Creegan and Lucy Boyd

In this episode, our Employment, Industrial Relations and Safety team take the wheel again, with [Nerida Jessup](#) hosting special guests [Anna Creegan](#) and [Lucy Boyd](#). Nerida, Anna and Lucy have a conversation around how organisations are responding to the increased community and shareholder expectations on transparency around sexual harassment and other workplace conduct issues. Together they look at the key drivers of this change including how the increased focus of safety regulators on sexual harassment has changed approaches to reporting, as well as the scrutiny around the use of non-disclosure agreements.

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## Episode 19 - Recycle, Recovery and Reduce with Neometals

Melanie Debenham is joined by Anél Joubert, ESG Manager and Jeremy McManus, GM Commercial and Investor Relations from Neometals, an emerging and sustainable producer of battery minerals. Anél and Jeremy discuss the prominence of ESG in their own roles and across Neometals' markets and operations in Australia and Europe. They discuss the global and local transition to clean energy and energy storage spanning the battery and electric vehicle value chains.

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## **Episode 18 - The need for speed (and pragmatic pathways) with Dr Chris Greig, Princeton University**

Tim Stutt and Kathryn Pacey are joined by Dr Chris Greig, Princeton University to discuss the energy transition, industry decarbonisation, technology and investment. Dr Greig shares the origin story and highlights of [Net-Zero America](#), the research project that not only quantifies but visually displays five distinct technological pathways, using known technologies, by which the United States could decarbonize its entire economy by 2050. He breaks down the four make-or-break critical issues for energy transition: (1) the unprecedented speed and scale of infrastructure to be built; (2) a flow of risk capital never seen before; (3) maintaining the social contract with communities; and (4) major workforce mobilisation and a just transition for workers. Dr Greig underlines the importance of Australia's strong ambition and domestic emissions targets to achieve speed and scale. As for achieving net zero and becoming a major exporter of low emission energy - you won't have to wait long for the [Net-Zero Australia](#) study findings to be released in August 2022. To participate in HSF's survey on unlocking ESG investment in Australia and gain access to exclusive insights email [ESG.tracker@hsf.com](mailto:ESG.tracker@hsf.com).

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### **ABOUT DR CHRIS GREIG**

*Dr Greig is the Theodora and William Walton III, Senior Research Scientist at the Andlinger Centre for Energy & the Environment at Princeton University. He is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Chemical Engineering at the University of Queensland, from where he has a degree and PhD in Chemical Engineering. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering. Dr Greig spent more than 25 years in industry, initially as Founder and CEO of a successful process technology company and later, in senior executive roles in resources and energy. He has also held a number of non-executive roles including Deputy Chairman of Gladstone Ports Corporation (one of Australia's largest energy export hubs), Chairman of the Energy Policy Institute of Australia, and director of several engineering & mining firms.*

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## **Episode 17 - Australian federal election results with Kathryn Pacey**

Mel and Tim are joined by Kathryn Pacey to break down an historic election where climate change featured prominently. The first six weeks of a new government have provided much to discuss including the Climate Change Bill to be introduced in the first week of parliament, a review to ensure the integrity of the carbon credit system (and similarly the Safeguard Mechanism), a \$20 billion investment in transmission infrastructure and a raft of commitments in relation to green energy technologies. Along with the review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, a new environmental regulator and likely greater focus on action to benefit biodiversity.

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## **Episode 16 - Uluru Statement from the Heart (Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!) - NAIDOC Week 2022 with Gemma McKinnon and Kishaya Delaney**

In recognition of NAIDOC Week 2022, Mel is joined by First Nations colleagues Gemma McKinnon and Kishaya Delaney for a timely discussion, given Australia's evolving political landscape and new government following the federal election, about the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the important progress we might expect. They explain its origin, how a First Nations Voice to Parliament could be enshrined in the constitution and the proposed Makarrata Commission to oversee the process of treaty-making and truth-telling.

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## **Episode 15 - Climate change and ESG litigation trends in the consumer sector with Jojo Fan and Mark Smyth**

In this episode, Tim invites our disputes team to share climate change and ESG litigation insights. Jojo Fan from our Hong Kong office and Mark Smyth from the Sydney office discuss the rapidly increasing developments globally including greenwashing, inadequate disclosure and challenges for manufacturing and governments. They share their insights on what the future of climate litigation may hold for the consumer sector.

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## **Episode 14 - Fix the workplace, not the worker with David Burroughs, Westpac**

In this episode, our Employment, Industrial Relations and Safety team take the wheel, with [Olga Klimczak](#) and [Nerida Jessup](#) hosting special guest, David Burroughs, Chief Mental Health Officer at Westpac. It's an important, and lively, discussion on how organisations are shaping work and workplace culture so that our jobs are 'good' for our mental health. David speaks candidly about the issues corporates are grappling with and cautions against feel good programs with high visibility, low impact. For companies getting it right - giving people the opportunity to genuinely thrive - the business case is profound for a strategy that encapsulates performance, productivity and mental health. And in a podcast first, David fact checks our closing remarks - you'll want to note down 'psychological agility'!

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## **Episode 13 - Australian Federal Election with Graham Phelan, Frontier Economics**

Mel and Tim discuss a key battleground ahead of the election, climate change action, with Graham Phelan, ESG Lead for Frontier Economics. Graham takes a look back at previous election results to predict whether climate change action and the recent natural disasters will influence the 2022 election outcome - and considers if it's time to put carbon pricing back on the agenda. Graham discusses the importance of ESG for Australia's international competitiveness and the proactive measures being taken by businesses and financial regulators to protect the economy and environment. Lastly, we touch on the issues impacting voters' hip pockets - inflation, interest rates, petrol and (of course) beer prices.

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## **Episode 12 - Authenticity with James Palmer**

Tim and Mel discuss corporate purpose with HSF's previous Chair and Senior Partner, James Palmer, one of the UK's leading M&A, capital markets and corporate lawyers, with deep experience in corporate governance and regulation. James explores the overall framing of ESG, and the importance of approaching company strategy with purpose and authenticity. James speaks with passion on navigating the ethical dimension of ESG issues, from "just transition" in the energy sector through to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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## **Episode 11 - #BreakTheBias with Rebecca Maslen-Stannage and Andrew Pike**

In this episode, Mel celebrates International Women's Day 2022 with HSF's Chair and Senior Partner, Rebecca Maslen-Stannage and Andrew Pike, Executive Partner for Asia and Australia. Rebecca and Andrew share some personal reflections on progress made, and remaining challenges, in achieving lasting change in the legal profession. They discuss the importance of a diverse and inclusive culture to #BreakTheBias (this year's theme) - including the importance of acknowledging bias still exists and "calling it when you see it".

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## **Episode 10 - All eyes on COP27 with Silke Goldberg**

In the first episode for 2022, Tim and Mel are joined by Silke Goldberg, HSF's Global Head of ESG and Climate Change practice lead. Silke embarks on some time travel to tackle the big ESG questions. After a 'COP of two speeds' last year, Silke asserts there is everything to play for at COP27 in Egypt this November, including investment opportunities and the final building blocks for a long-awaited global carbon market.



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## PREVIOUS EPISODES

Listen to our 2021 episodes below.

**Episode 1 - Inaugural episode with ESG insights from Herbert Smith Freehills CEO Justin D'Agostino**

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**Episode 2 - Mandatory ESG due diligence developments in the EU with Herbert Smith Freehills Head of Global Business and Human Rights practice Antony Crockett**

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**Episode 3 - Innovation in Modern Slavery with Human Rights Resources and Energy Collaborative's Shaeron Yapp and Gemma Wilford**

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**Episode 5 - The future is now! Renewable energy in Australia with Dr Cameron Kelly, Australian Renewable Energy Agency**

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**Episode 6 - Asking the right questions with Brooke Massender, Global Head of Pro Bono for Herbert Smith Freehills**

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**Episode 7 - It's not about the money, money, money with Lewis McDonald, Global Head of Energy for Herbert Smith Freehills**

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**Episode 8 - Enough is enough with Olga Klimczak, Executive Counsel, Employment, IR and Safety for Herbert Smith Freehills**

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**Episode 9 - Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) with Charlee-Sue Frail, Former advisor of Wiyi Yani U Thangani and Dusseldorp Forum board member**

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**Episode 10 - All eyes on COP27 with Silke Goldberg, HSF's Global Head of ESG and lead for the firm's Climate Change practice**

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## KEY CONTACTS

If you have any questions, or would like to know how this might affect your business, phone, or email these key contacts.



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