



# Hive Legal Pty Ltd

## 2023 ESG IMPACT REPORT A YEAR IN REVIEW

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## CREATING A POSITIVE IMPACT

Hive Legal embraces leveraging the influence of business to bring about positive change and contribute to a sustainable future. It is committed to using its business as a force for good, integrating social and environmental considerations into every aspect of its operations. Throughout the 2023 ESG Impact Report, Hive Legal aims to share its initiatives and strategies that highlight this commitment.

### VISION

Since 2014, Hive Legal has remained committed to its vision of establishing a truly contemporary and innovative Australian law firm which improves the experience for its team and clients.

### PURPOSE

Hive Legal's purpose is to empower individuals and organisations to thrive through a culture of courage, creativity, character, collaboration, and contemporary thinking. It delivers quality solutions, embraces innovation, and fosters personal sustainability. By living its values, Hive Legal inspires growth, drives progress, and cultivates meaningful relationships. Together, Hive Legal makes a positive impact on its team, clients, and communities.

## HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

Hive Legal is particularly proud of, and excited, to share the following ESG achievements from 2023:

- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- B Corp Certification

# ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Hive Legal's environmental initiatives are primarily powered by EcoHive, a subcommittee of Hive Legal's ESG Committee which was formed in 2023. EcoHive's primary purposes are promoting environmental sustainability awareness and reducing Hive Legal's impact on the environment, including through the implementation of sustainable practices and driving Hive Legal's net zero commitment.

## IMPROVEMENT OF WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Hive Legal's Melbourne office has a comprehensive waste management system to ensure waste is dealt with sustainably. EcoHive sought to educate staff through its Recycling Guidelines and monthly focus emails. EcoHive's Recycling Guidelines set out recycling practices for co-mingled recycling, general waste, soft plastics, e-waste, ink toner/cartridges, and batteries.

## CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN REMOTE WORKING TECHNOLOGY

Initiated at its inception in 2014, Hive Legal continues to build a corporate culture conducive to working from home by investing in effective remote working technology. This greatly reduces the environmental impact of daily commutes.

## SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT POLICY

Hive Legal's suppliers are expected to align with its commitment to environmental sustainability and uphold its principles.

## PROMOTION OF ENERGY AND RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Energy and resource efficiency were strongly encouraged within the Hive Legal office and Hivesters' homes. The office continues to be powered by a carbon neutral energy provider and promote energy- and resource-saving initiatives.

## INCLUSION IN THE LEGAL 500 GREEN GUIDE

Hive Legal has been included in the Green Guide of the Legal 500, which is the first worldwide guide to recognise and celebrate top law firms advising on issues around climate change, governance, and sustainability. This is a testament to the incredible work Hive Legal's Energy & Climate Change team does to help its clients transition to a renewable, net zero future.

## SUPPORT OF WALK TO WORK DAY

In line with the annual initiative by the Pedestrian Council, Hivesters were encouraged to walk to work on 4 September 2023 to reduce pollution and promote health and wellness.

## THREATENED SPECIES BAKE-OFF

This annual initiative serves to acknowledge National Threatened Species Day (7 September 2023). Hivesters enthusiastically embraced the initiative, producing beehive cakes, chocolate echidnas and more (pictured below).



## MONTHLY FOCUSES

Each month, Hivesters received an email detailing EcoHive's focus for the month, alongside tips and resources to help them embrace it.

Month	Focus	Description
September	Biodiversity Month	Hivesters were encouraged to have an awareness of the importance of protecting, conserving and improving biodiversity.
October	Buy Nothing New Month	To limit consumption of the earth's finite resources, Hivesters were inspired to buy nothing new throughout October.
November	Food waste awareness	Given Australians waste around 7.6 million tonnes of food across the food supply chain each year, Hivesters were encouraged to adopt new food waste management practices.
December	Guide to a sustainable festive season	EcoHive put together a guide to help Hivesters reduce their environmental impact over the festive season.

# **SOCIAL INITIATIVES**

## **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES**

Hive Legal’s diversity and inclusion initiatives are primarily powered by its Diversity & Inclusion Committee, a subcommittee of Hive Legal’s ESG Committee. These initiatives celebrate the fact that Hive Legal’s strength lies in its diversity, as it leverages different perspectives to drive innovation and growth.

## **REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING**

Hive Legal continues to promote true flexible working, allowing staff to choose when and where they work for better work-life integration.

Hive Legal’s successful remote and flexible working practices are built on collaboration and encompass various initiatives such as:

- Weekly firmwide staff meetings
- Weekly team meetings
- Hive-a-versary celebrations marking 3, 5, and 10-year anniversaries for Hivesters
- Diversity Events Calendar
- End-of-Financial-Year social gathering
- End-of-year social party
- Firmwide and Team Strategy Days
- Monthly birthday celebrations
- Monthly in-person and online social events

Additionally, Hive Legal operates with a virtual ‘open door’ policy. If anybody needs assistance or has any questions, they should not hesitate to pick up the phone – Hivesters are there to support each other.

## **EQUITABLE BRIEFING POLICY**

Hive Legal is a signatory of the Equitable Briefing Policy, which aims to drive cultural change, support the progress of women barristers, and address the pay gap and underrepresentation of women in superior courts.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CULTURAL HOLIDAYS**

Hive Legal has developed a Diversity Events Calendar to acknowledge and commemorate significant occasions for all its staff members, encompassing (among others) cultural, religious, and personal landmarks such as weddings, academic achievements, and the birth of children.

## CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE ASRC

Hive Legal continued to support the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre (**ASRC**) through ASRC Cleaning and ASRC Catering, which gives people seeking asylum the opportunity to support themselves, gain Australian work experience, and connect to the broader Australian experience.

## FOOD CHAMPIONS

Hive Legal committed to becoming an ASRC 'Food Champion'. Hivesters purchased and delivered 100 units of 1 kilo dried lentils – a vital staple for the families who rely on the ASRC food bank's supplies – to ASRC Dandenong on 22 June 2023.



## CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

To celebrate International Women's Day, Hive Legal supported the work of UN Women by acquiring its 2023 Virtual Package. Hive Legal also explored a range of resources and information to support learning, start conversations, build engagement, and help with fundraising.

## **CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY DAY**

Hive Legal held its yearly Diversity Day on 30 March 2023. Hivesters gathered in the office during lunchtime to commemorate and embrace each other's diverse cultures and backgrounds. Hive Legal was privileged to have Sheetal Deo conduct unconscious bias training, which was followed by two activities carefully designed to let Hivesters gain a deeper understanding of each other.



## **CELEBRATION OF WEAR IT PURPLE DAY**

On 25 August 2023, Hivesters were encouraged to wear purple to celebrate diversity and empower and support young people from the LGBTIQA+ community.

## **SUPPORT OF THE LAWYERS WEEKLY WOMEN IN LAW FORUM AND AWARDS**

On 23 November 2023, several Hivesters celebrated the remarkable women in the legal industry at the Lawyers Weekly Women in Law events. The day began with an inspiring forum and ended with the exciting Women in Law events.



## **SOCIAL INITIATIVES**

Hive Legal's social initiatives are primarily powered by its Social Committee, a subcommittee of Hive Legal's ESG Committee. These initiatives seek to encourage Hivesters to come together, take breaks, and unwind.

### **MONTHLY BIRTHDAY AND EVENT SOCIAL GATHERING**

On the first Monday of each month, Hivesters were encouraged to attend the office for morning tea in celebration of the month's upcoming birthdays and events.

### **MONTHLY IN-PERSON AND ONLINE SOCIAL EVENTS**

Each month, Hivesters were given the chance to join in-person and online social events at the end of the day. This encouraged the building of relationships and balance between work and non-work life.

### **TEAM STRATEGY DAYS**

Throughout the year, the Energy & Climate Change, Corporate, Commercial & Regulatory, and Financial Services teams held Team Strategy Days. These days allowed the teams to reflect on the past year, plan the year ahead, and celebrate their achievements and teamwork over lunch.

### **HIVE LEGAL BOOK CLUB CATCHUPS**

The Hive Legal Book Club held four catchups over the year in which book-loving Hivesters discussed a previously chosen book over wine and snacks. Books included 'Ninth House' by Leigh Bardugo, 'Anna: The Biography' by Amy Odell, and 'Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow' by Gabrielle Zevin.

## AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

On 25 May 2023, Hive Legal hosted its own Australia's Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser event in support of one of its clients, Cancer Council Victoria. Hivesters celebrated by decorating and enjoying delicious cupcakes.



## PAINT AND SIP ACTIVITY

On 29 June 2023, the Committee held an in-person Paint and Sip afternoon tea event in the office. The activity offered Hivesters a unique opportunity to engage in a creative outlet together.



## EARLY CAREER HIVESTERS CATCHUP

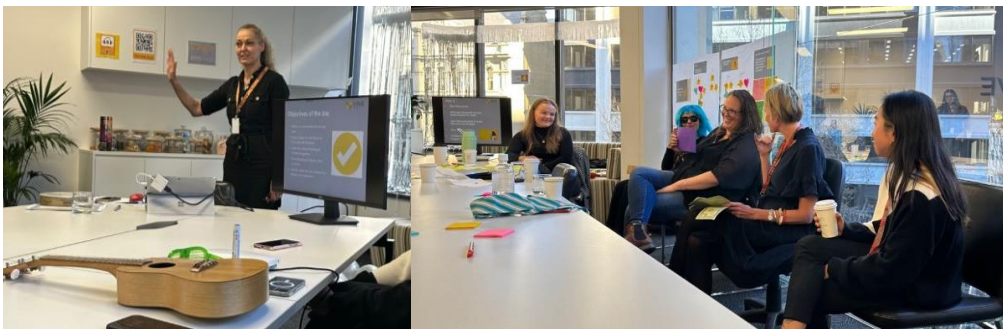
On 13 July 2023, the Early Career Hivesters got together to talk about all things career and life-related. These catchups provide a wonderful opportunity for younger Hivesters to connect and exchange advice about navigating their budding legal and business careers.



## FIRMWIDE STRATEGY DAY AND EOFY SOCIAL GATHERING

On 27 July 2023, Hive Legal held its Firmwide Strategy Day. Through the use of HiveThinkP, Melissa Lyon led a design sprint to help Hivesters brainstorm what a 'Future Hive' could look like. Many creative and impressive ideas were shared.

Afterwards, Hivesters had an End-of-Financial-Year social gathering with lunch and activities.



## MOVEMBER FUNDRAISER AND TRIVIA EVENT

For several years, Hive Legal has worked alongside Movember and seen the amazing work Movember does in supporting men's health. In support of this valued client, the Committee held a Movember Fundraiser and Trivia event on 28 November 2023.



## END-OF-YEAR SOCIAL PARTY

On 1 December 2023, Hivesters from Melbourne and beyond got together at Harlow Bar, Richmond, for their end-of-year social party. It was a delightful day involving delicious food and drinks, a game of Stealing Santa and even singing!



## **WELLBEING INITIATIVES**

Hive Legal's wellbeing initiatives are primarily powered by its Wellbeing Committee, a subcommittee of Hive Legal's ESG Committee, and Hive Legal's Principals. These initiatives are vital to promoting firmwide social, physical, and mental wellness.

### **SUCCESSFUL 2023 THRIVE@HIVE PROGRAM**

2023 saw the second instalment of the Thrive Hive Program. The Program creates an environment which is aligned, empowering, supportive, and trusted. Enabling Hivesters to have choice in how they grow their career encourages them to be happy, fulfilled, and the best they can be.

### **CONTINUATION OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Hivesters were regularly reminded, and encouraged to make use of, Hive Legal's Employee Assistance Program (**EAP**). The EAP provides Hivesters and their immediate families with free, confidential, and immediate counselling and coaching services whenever they need help managing personal or work-related issues.

### **WELLNESS INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR FINALISTS**

Hive Legal was a finalist for Wellness Initiative of the Year as part of the Lawyers Weekly Australian Law Awards 2023. This is a remarkable recognition of the Wellbeing Committee's and Hive Legal's commitment to maximising the health and wellness of Hivesters and encouraging them to build fulfilling careers.

### **WEEKLY WELLBEING TIPS**

A weekly 'wellbeing tip' is a standing agenda item at all of Hive Legal's staff meetings.

## **R U OK? DAY**

On 14 September 2023, the Committee hosted an R U OK? Day event which sought to let Hivesters engage with R U OK? Day in a meaningful, non-tokenistic way. The theme was 'I'm here to hear'. Firstly, Hivesters (in-person and online) shared their 'wins' and 'challenges' for the year. Secondly, Hivesters were shown an inspirational TED Talk. Finally, everybody participated in games centred around listening and communication, while enjoying morning tea.



## **WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY MORNING TEA AND FOODBANK RAFFLE**

In acknowledgement of World Mental Health Day, Hivesters gathered in the office on 17 October 2023 to enjoy a morning tea and participate in a raffle fundraiser. All proceeds of the raffle went to Foodbank, Australia's largest food relief organisation.

## **LAUNCH OF HIVE LEGAL'S BEE THERE PROGRAM**

Hive Legal's Bee There Program was launched in November 2023. Once in action, the Program will include a range of focus groups, led by volunteer Hivesters who have their own story to share about life events or struggles. The focus groups include loss and grief, medical, and stress and burnout. The Program will work like a support line with one-on-one or group discussions as the need arises, based on Hivesters' life experiences.



## MONTHLY FOCUSES

Each month, Hivesters received an email detailing the Committee's focus for the month, alongside tips and resources to help them embrace it. These monthly communications aimed to assist Hivesters in maintaining their wellbeing and staying healthy.

Month	Focus	Description
February	A change of scenery	Hivesters were encouraged to change up their normal working environments.
March	Take annual leave	Hivesters were encouraged to make use of their annual leave, given the many physical and mental benefits this can reap.
April	Have some 'me time'	Hivesters were encouraged to take conscious time-out to do the things that 'recharge their batteries'.
May	Hurrah for hobbies	Given the positive impacts of hobbies on physical and mental wellbeing, Hivesters were encouraged to do one hobby five times over the month.
June	Creativity and the 'right brain'	Creative thinking has many proven benefits in the legal profession. Hivesters were encouraged to harness their creative thinking abilities through activities such as knitting and cooking.
July	Nutrition and hydration	The Committee stressed the importance of maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle amid the gloomy winter weather.
August	5 minutes of movement	Hivesters were encouraged to take 2-5 minutes per hour to prioritise movement
October	Our minds, our rights	The Committee adopted the World Health Organisation's World Mental Health Day theme whereby 'mental health is a universal human right'.
December	Dealing with stress in a healthy way	The Committee imparted several healthy stress coping mechanisms, encouraging Hivesters to adopt them as they entered the busiest time of the year.

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN INITIATIVES

Hive Legal recognises and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calls for sovereignty, self-determination, and treaty, and its Reconciliation Action Plan (**RAP**) represents its commitment to truth-telling and reconciliation. Dedicated action items are assigned to its RAP Committee, a subcommittee of Hive Legal's ESG Committee.

### INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP) ENDORSEMENT

Hive Legal received endorsement from Reconciliation Australia on its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (Innovate RAP), following implementation of its Reflect RAP. Hive Legal is proud to commence the second stage of its reconciliation journey with the Innovate RAP from January 2024 to January 2026. Hive Legal recognises that reconciliation requires an ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Indigenous peoples. It is also important to Hive Legal that it engages with stakeholders who hold the same values as it does. This includes Hive Legal's staff, clients, and broader network.

### QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION OF RECONCILIATION EVENTS

On a quarterly basis, the Committee circulated a detailed list of upcoming state- and nation-wide reconciliation events to staff, who were encouraged to participate in them and learn about their significance.

### SUPPORT OF THE HAPPY BOX PROJECT

Hive Legal continued to support the Happy Box Project, which provides toiletries and beauty products to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in remote communities. Hive Legal made monthly donations to the Happy Box Project and sent out four Happy Boxes of its own.





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NATIONAL SORRY DAY**

On National Sorry Day (26 May 2023), Hivesters remembered and acknowledged the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were forcibly removed from their families and communities.

## **PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK**

From 27 May to 3 June 2023, Hive Legal acknowledged National Reconciliation Week, with the Committee circulating a list of events for Hivesters and their friends and families to participate in.

## **PARTICIPATION IN NAIDOC WEEK**

From 2 to 9 July 2023, Hive Legal celebrated NAIDOC Week. On 12 July 2023, Hivesters participated in the Birrarung Wilam (River Camp) Walk, which allowed them to learn about the history of the Birrarung Marr ('river of mists'), Birrarung Wilam (River Camp) Aboriginal art installations, and the significance of the Birrarung Wilam to the local Kulin peoples.



## **SUPPORT OF THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT**

Hive Legal internally and publicly supported an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. Hivesters were provided with educational resources about the Voice and, on 27 September 2023, were invited to attend an informative training session.

## GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

Hive Management is responsible for ensuring that Hive Legal is governed by internal policies and procedures created to make effective decisions for the wider good of the company. Hive Management includes Hive Legal's Principals and Operations Manager.

### B CORP CERTIFICATION

In December 2023, Hive Legal was granted B Corp Certification!

Certified B Corporations are leaders in the global movement for an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative economy. Unlike other certifications for businesses, B Lab is unique in its ability to measure a company's entire social and environmental impact. Being B Corp Certified means that Hive Legal doesn't just talk the talk, but also walks the walk, and genuinely cares and has formal practices in place to ensure it is committed to delivering great services when it comes to its staff, clients, environment, community, and governance practices. Becoming B Corp certified doesn't stop Hive Legal's journey here; Hive Legal will continue to work through its assessment and make further improvements in the areas where it was not able to receive points.



**We've joined  
the global movement!**

## **COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Compliance and Risk Management Committee strengthened Hive Legal's risk management plans by implementing additional processes and systems. These measures are designed to monitor and further refine Hive Legal's risk management strategies.

## **FIRMWIDE REVIEW OF POLICIES**

Hive Legal is dedicated to engaging all staff in the review process of its policies to shape the organisation and foster diversity of thought and inclusivity. Each month, Hive Management distributed one policy firmwide, urging staff to read and offer feedback or recommendations.

## **HIVE LEGAL MENTORING PROGRAM**

The Hive Legal Mentoring Program is an initiative born from Hive Legal's vision to see its staff grow to reach their greatest potential. The Program ran over the course of six months, with roughly one meeting every two months.

## **HIVEWAY**

The HiveWay working group met regularly to discuss the continuous improvement of the Hive Legal client experience, covering the approach, content, and format of Hive Legal deliverables. The working group also launched a long form advice template.

## **GENERATIVE AI WORKING GROUP**

Hive Legal's Generative AI working group met regularly to scan the horizon of, evaluate, and implement all things AI-related. The working group also shared information to staff via relevant webinars and articles.

## **HIVE AWARE**

Hive Legal's Energy & Climate Change and Corporate, Commercial & Regulatory teams kept up to date on sector information (including regulatory change and case law) with the help of regular bulletins known as 'Hive Aware'.

## **CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

Each month, Hivesters received a cyber security awareness update email which shared case studies and awareness articles to specifically highlight real-life cyber security-related customer experiences.

## CPD SESSIONS

Hive Legal has a formal internal CPD program in place. Hive Legal empowered staff to identify, develop, coordinate, and present the training. The training sessions covered many topics, from technical subjects to wellbeing, and could be targeted to specific groups or all staff. All staff could access training by attending training sessions (in-person or online) or access Hive Legal's continuing professional development resource centre at any time.

## PRO BONO WORK

Hive Legal supported organisations such as Refugee Legal and Justice Connect, where Hivesters volunteered on a regular basis.

Hivesters contributed 345 hours of pro bono work in 2023. The pro bono national target, as set by the Australian Pro Bono Centre, is 35 hours per full time lawyer. Hive Legal is striving to meet this target.

## DONATIONS

Donations are an important way for Hive Legal to provide basic needs, education, and research to the broader community. Hive Legal has a dedicated Donation Policy, pledging support to Cancer Council Australia, Movember, Refugee Legal, and the ASRC.

## VLSB+C WORKLOGIC

Hive Legal participated in the workplace review of the Victorian legal sector conducted by Worklogic on behalf of the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (**VLSB+C**). This review assisted the VLSB+C to have a better understanding of current sexual harassment policies, procedures, and practices within the legal sector. Following the review, Hive Legal strengthened its policies and procedures around providing a safe and respectful workplace.

## COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION AND SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES

Hive Legal continued its commitment to thinking innovatively and sharing its experiences with the broader legal ecosystem to inspire positive change. This included Hivesters connecting with, and playing roles in, organisations such as the Centre for Legal Innovation, Legal Iconoclasts and ALTA. Hivesters also presented at conferences and webinars and contributed to publications on topics including value-based pricing, creativity, legal design thinking, innovative business models, and flexible work practices.

## **VALUE-BASED PRICING**

Hive Legal continued its commitment to value-based pricing, which focuses on the benefits and value that clients receive from its services. This approach benefits both Hive Legal's clients and staff. It enhances wellbeing by promoting and sustaining efficiency, innovation, and collaboration more effectively than time-based billing and individual budgets.

## **GENEROUS LEAVE POLICY**

Hive Legal has generous leave policies in place. In 2023, Hive Legal further introduced Menstrual and Menopause Leave, Assisted Reproductive Treatment Leave, and Gender Transition Leave.