



ashurst

Financial Inclusion Action Plan

2018-2019





Financial Inclusion Action Plan (FIAP)

Statement of Commitment



MESSAGE FROM PAUL JENKINS

At Ashurst we believe that all individuals should have access to the legal system, irrespective of their financial situation.

This is a fundamental reason why we are pleased to join the Financial Inclusion Action Plan (“FIAP”) program and community.

As an international law firm that has been helping clients achieve their goals for nearly 200 years, we recognise that the legal services we provide can offer security and social justice to individuals and communities, particularly for those that are the most vulnerable.

In joining the FIAP community, we commit to serving as a link between the legal profession and financially vulnerable individuals and communities throughout Australia. By partnering with fellow FIAP organisations to share information and resources, we will work together to ensure that individuals and communities can gain access to the legal system regardless of their financial position, and we will continue to advocate for their rights in consultation with them.

We already support individuals and organisations, including those who are financially vulnerable, through our pro bono practice and our corporate responsibility program. The focus areas in our pro bono practice include: working with Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities and their carers, and people in rural, regional and remote areas.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is also critical to ensuring we build an inclusive workplace culture that supports and encourages equality. Our diversity and inclusion initiatives, such as our Wellbeing Officer Program, Women’s Network and family and domestic violence paid leave policy, are designed to support our people (and the communities in which we operate) and create an inclusive workplace environment. Through formally developing and implementing our FIAP, we commit to continuing to devote resources, share knowledge and embed best practice processes further into our business to assist those at risk.

The FIAP initiative goes to the foundation of our profession. We acknowledge Ashurst has the expertise, capabilities and resources to reduce inequalities by assisting vulnerable Australians in developing financial inclusion and resilience. In developing our own FIAP, we are proud and excited to collaborate with the FIAP Partnership Group and other FIAP organisations to better support this national effort to help Australians reach their financial goals and achieve financial inclusion and resilience.

Paul Jenkins
Global Managing Partner,
Ashurst

ashurst



About Ashurst

Ashurst is a leading global law firm with a rich history spanning almost 200 years. Our in-depth understanding of our clients and commitment to providing exceptional standards of service have seen us become a trusted adviser to local and global corporates, financial institutions and governments on all areas of commercial law.

Our people are our greatest asset. We bring together lawyers of the highest calibre with the technical knowledge, industry experience and regional know-how.

We currently have 25 offices in 15 countries and a number of referral relationships that enable us to offer the reach and insight of a global network, combined with the knowledge and understanding of local markets. With 400+ partners and a further 1,450 lawyers working across 10 different time zones, we are able to respond to our clients wherever and whenever they need us.

Our clients value us for being approachable, astute and commercially minded. As a global team we have a reputation for successfully managing large and complex multi-jurisdictional transactions, disputes and projects, and delivering outstanding outcomes for clients.

We are committed to being a sustainable global law firm, having positive impacts for our clients, employees, profession, the environment and the communities in which we are based.



- ◊ OENTOENG SURIA & PARTNERS (ASSOCIATED OFFICE)
- ◊ FAISAL ADNAN BAASSIRI LAW FIRM IN ASSOCIATION WITH ASHURST LLP
- ◊ ADTLAW LLC (SINGAPORE FORMAL LAW ALLIANCE)
- ◊ INDIAN LAW PARTNERS (BEST FRIEND FIRM)



Ashurst's Financial Inclusion Action Plan

Ashurst is committed to harnessing our diverse commercial skill set and collective expertise to assist financially excluded and vulnerable Australians. To recognise this, we are proud to be launching our foundation FIAP.

Our aim through the FIAP is to support financially vulnerable Australians and communities by equipping them with the skills and frameworks to help them become financially independent and confident.

To achieve this aim, we have identified the following key actions which reflect and support our commitment to bringing greater and more sustainable financial inclusion and resilience to individuals and communities around Australia.

FIAP ACTION AREA 1

Products and services

COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 1 Partner with existing Ashurst clients who are FIAP trailblazers to work together in delivering various FIAP actions				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Clients	Identify opportunities to support other FIAP trailblazer organisations, for example by providing targeted legal advice on particular FIAP initiatives on a pro bono basis Maintain existing, and identify new opportunities to collaborate on financial inclusion focussed initiatives	Contribution to the success of the FIAP program, and ensure resources are being efficiently and effectively applied by the trailblazer group to achieve robust and high impact outcomes	Business Development Legal Staff Pro Bono	March 2019
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 2 Review and improve Ashurst's referral pathways for pro bono clients who are experiencing financial hardship or exclusion issues or risks				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Community / partners	Identify existing referral services offered by organisations in not-for-profit and for-profit sectors Create database of key contacts at organisations for referrals	Increased ease of access for pro bono clients to services to assist them with all aspects of financial hardship or exclusion	Pro Bono	Review by December 2018 Database by March 2019
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 3 Provide holistic support for Ashurst's pro bono clients suffering from financial hardship to ensure they have access to a range of services				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Pro bono clients Community / partners Staff	Review referral, acceptance and matter management processes for pro bono clients to identify opportunities to incorporate an assessment of financial health Develop and conduct training for Ashurst lawyers to assist them in identifying where pro bono clients are facing financial hardship/exclusion and providing additional assistance (including access to referrals database) where required	Improved service for pro bono clients that addresses a wider range of issues including financial exclusion and hardship	Pro Bono Learning & Development	March 2019
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 4 Continue to develop relationships with organisations that support individuals facing financial exclusion or hardship				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Community / partners	Meet, network and build relationships with community organisations who support individuals facing financial exclusion or hardship	Opportunities developed and strengthened for individuals facing financial exclusion or hardship to have access to support from community organisations	Pro Bono Corporate Responsibility	Ongoing and monitored annually

FIAP ACTION AREA 2

Capabilities, attitudes and behaviours

COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 5				
Communication of FIAP to Ashurst staff including establishing a dedicated hub for FIAP (including all training and education sessions) to be uploaded onto our global intranet page				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Staff	Design team to create hub Development of communication regarding FIAP hub to staff Ensure all training / education sessions are captured	Increased staff awareness and engagement with the FIAP program Improved access for all staff to training sessions focussing on financial inclusion	Communications Learning & Development AV Services Diversity & Inclusion	March 2018 and ongoing
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 6				
Make training opportunities for staff a key consideration in the selection process for the firm's superannuation provider				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Staff	Make superannuation training and information sessions available to staff nationally	Improved understanding for staff of superannuation generally, and specifically, what happens to their super contributions	Human Resources	March 2018 and ongoing
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 7				
Raise awareness about Ashurst's financial hardship associated policies using different forms of media				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Staff	Communication of various hardship policies through nationwide internal update emails and intranet information pages	Greater awareness of staff about the services they can access in times of financial hardship	Human Resources Diversity & Inclusion Communications	March 2018 and ongoing
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 8				
Launch a Financial Hardship Checklist for staff to assist them in times of financial hardship, including the ways in which Ashurst can support				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Staff	Produce Financial Hardship Checklist for staff and make available through Ashurst's intranet	Greater awareness of staff of the services that can be accessed in times of financial hardship	Human Resources	March 2019

FIAP ACTION AREA 3

Awareness and understanding of culture and diversity

COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 9 Promote financial inclusion and raise awareness of the FIAP program within the legal sector				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Community / partners	Attend and host events focussed on financial inclusion Develop a communication strategy to raise awareness of financial exclusion issues and the FIAP program among law firms and not-for-profit legal organisations	Increased awareness in the legal sector of the issues of financial exclusion in Australia Greater participation by law organisations in FIAP-led and other financial inclusion initiatives	Pro Bono Corporate Responsibility Communications Events	March 2019 and ongoing
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 10 Educate managers and partners on ways in which the firm can assist staff facing hardship				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Staff	Develop training materials / sessions for partners and managers	Partners and managers are better equipped to identify signs of, and to assist staff members facing, financial hardship	Human Resources	March 2019 and ongoing
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 11 Raise awareness of the FIAP program in the business community and with clients interested in learning more about the program				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Clients Staff	Draft and approve statement for inclusion in pitches and client-facing material to communicate about the FIAP program and Ashurst's involvement to clients Develop a communications strategy to educate Ashurst staff about involvement in the FIAP program to enable them to engage with clients	Improved understanding and awareness of financial inclusion across the business community	Business Development Communications	March 2018 and ongoing
COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 12 Continue to implement existing initiatives supporting the promotion of financial inclusion (for example the initiatives identified in the Reconciliation Action Plan which support financial inclusion)				
Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Community / partners Staff Clients	Continue to support, implement and report on the identified initiatives	Ongoing support for initiatives that aim to increase financial inclusion	Corporate Responsibility (as coordinator of relevant business functions)	2018-2020

FIAP ACTION AREA 4

Economic participation and status

COMMITTED ACTION STATEMENT 13

Review procurement process in all Australian offices to identify existing or new supplier relationships promoting financial inclusion

Stakeholder	Output	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
Suppliers	Conduct a local and national review of procurement processes and relationships	Increased opportunity for service providers who support financial inclusion to participate in Ashurst's procurement opportunities	Business Services	September 2018 and ongoing on annual basis



Statement by the FIAP Partnership Group

On behalf of the FIAP Partnership Group, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Ashurst for your ongoing public commitment to financial inclusion and financial resilience.

Together we are embarking on a journey to explore, learn and grow – both as a program through this Foundation FIAP and as Trailblazers undertaking the important process of reducing inequalities and promoting inclusive growth in our communities.

Financial hardship can impact us all, at any stage in our lives – through the FIAP, our hope is that every organisation will be able to respond in time and every time to ensure financial hardship can be identified early, managed and overcome. By building capacity, awareness and greater access to appropriate products and services, organisations will see the social and economic benefits in their engagement, outcomes and prosperity of customers and employees.

Sincerely,



Vinita Godinho
General Manager, Advisory
Good Shepherd Microfinance
On behalf of the FIAP Partnership Group



The FIAP Partnership Group exists to support the growing community of practice to identify opportunities to better respond to financial risks, develop meaningful actions across key stakeholders and measure the social and economic impact. Drawing on our individual expertise the FIAP Partnership Group will provide implementation, evaluation and quality assurance support to ensure key actions you have identified are (i) on track to achieve the intended impact and (ii) engaging those stakeholders in most need of support. We are proud to be on this important journey with Ashurst.

At the heart of the FIAP program is the belief that together we can achieve more. Ashurst joins the growing community of organisations that understand they play a critical role in Australia's financial future – together we can reduce inequalities and realise inclusive growth for all Australians.

Supported by:





ashurst



BRISBANE

Level 38 Riverside Centre
123 Eagle Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Tel +61 7 3259 7000
Fax +61 7 3259 7111

MELBOURNE

Level 26
181 William Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Tel +61 3 9679 3000
Fax +61 3 9679 3111

SYDNEY

Level 11
5 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Tel +61 2 9258 6000
Fax +61 2 9258 6999

CANBERRA

Level 11
12 Moore Street
Canberra ACT 2601

Tel +61 2 6234 4000
Fax +61 2 6234 4111

PERTH

Level 10 Brookfield Place
123 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

Tel +61 8 9366 8000
Fax +61 8 9366 8111

www.ashurst.com