

# AFS & Associates Sustainability Report 2024







## Report details

### Reporting period

01/07/2023 - 30/06/2024

### Reporting frequency

Annual

### Publication date

31/03/2025

### Contact

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### Legal name

AFS & Associates Pty Ltd

### Trading name

AFS & Associates Chartered Accountants

### Entity type

Australian Private Company

### Headquarters

61 Bull Street, Bendigo, Victoria 3550

### Countries of operation

Australia

## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we work on.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, and acknowledge their continuing connection to the land.

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# Statement from Board Chair



**Bradley Ead**  
Board Chair  
AFS & Associates

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AFS is resolute in implementing responsible practices that go beyond compliance and align with domestic and global sustainability goals. We view sustainability as part of our corporate DNA, shaping our decisions, actions and advice.

Since the publication of our inaugural Report in early 2024, sustainability reporting in Australia has become mandatory for specified entities from 1 July 2025.

Whilst AFS is not mandated to publish a sustainability report, we aim to be seen as a leader within our community, and through publishing this report we can share our experiences and strategy around sustainability.

Our commitment to sustainability spans across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) spectrums. We seek to contribute meaningfully to the well-being of the environment, our stakeholders and our community in areas that are important to them.

AFS is resolute in implementing responsible practices that go beyond compliance and align with domestic and global sustainability goals. We view sustainability as part of our corporate DNA, shaping our decisions, actions and advice.

Even as the business landscape continues to evolve, AFS has integrated sustainability initiatives into our core strategy and are committed to helping our clients understand their reporting obligations and identifying opportunities for improvement in this critical area.

We believe by continuing to understand and address environmental, social, and governance matters, we can create enduring value for our business owners, employees, clients, and the broader community. This commitment extends beyond short-term gains and reflects our belief in the importance of responsible and impactful business practices. Although our overall impact may be limited on a broader scale, we are committed to driving progress and continual improvement at both business and community levels.



# Internal sustainability group

Our internal sustainability group was established in 2020. Reflecting the diverse composition of our organisation, this group includes team members from all departments and levels of AFS, including two Board Directors and our CEO. The group meets regularly to exchange insights, monitor progress, and share knowledge on sustainability in business.

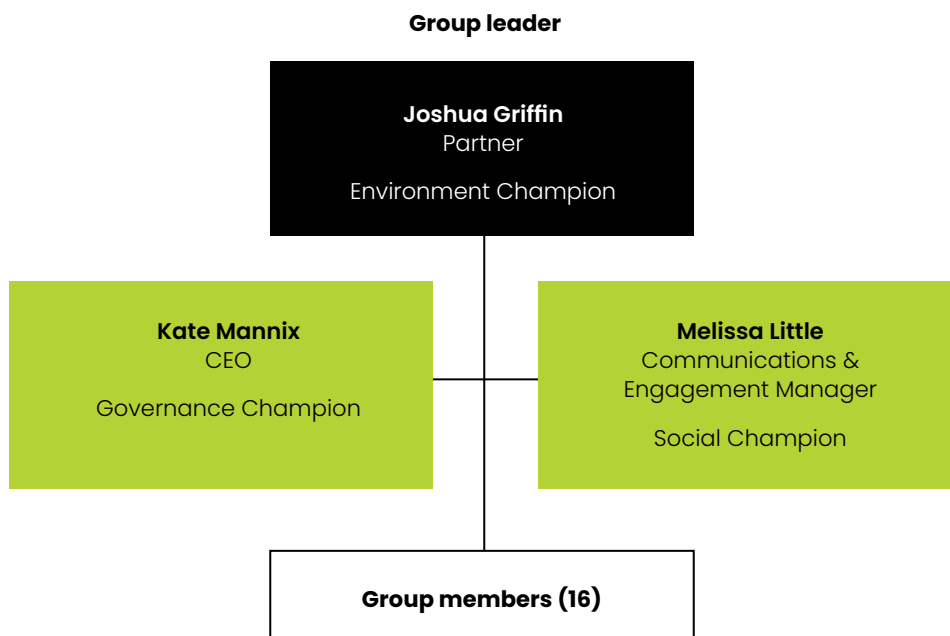
## Board engagement

The AFS Board of Directors, (the Board), is committed to monitoring climate and sustainability risks - this includes nominating two Directors to the internal sustainability group to own outcomes and report measurements, progress and initiatives to the Board each quarter.

## AFS strategy

We acknowledge ESG as both a climate and business risk. Consequently, we have identified a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing our ESG approach.

In addition to our commitment to ESG, our broader focus extends to our clients and the community. We prioritise the longevity and sustainability of our business, while also considering the broader impact we can make on our community and client networks. This involves meeting our internal targets, providing education, and delivering services to enable other organisations to identify, manage, and report on sustainability-related risks and requirements.





# Why sustainability is important to AFS

AFS acknowledges the growing significance of sustainability in the business landscape, driven by the evolving expectations of our stakeholders. Our commitment is to take a leadership role and support our team, clients, and community in navigating the future of sustainable business practices.

We aim to guide and educate our community on the importance of sustainability as a key focus area and assist them in transitioning toward a more sustainable future.

Given our position as an accounting firm, we are well-equipped to advise our clients on the everchanging business environment, with sustainability occupying a prominent place in reporting and governance. The emerging focus on ESG and the establishment and reporting of mandatory environmental targets has in turn become a focus area for our business, along with our clients, to understand reporting options and needs.

We recognise the ambition and need to achieve net zero as a common goal with our clients and community and are dedicated to working collaboratively to address this aspiration.

## Approach to sustainability

Our sustainability report has been developed using our ESG Pathway to Sustainability Reporting. Our pathway has been designed to assist organisations (including AFS) work through the key steps of ESG sustainability reporting and follows six phases that each have their own objectives and activities.

- **Identify** and **Consult** with stakeholders
- **Assess** the current ESG activities of the organisation
- **Design** an ESG framework and strategy defining key policies and deliverables
- **Calculate** metrics and identify gaps and strategies to meet or maintain goals
- **Prepare** and deliver your first ESG Sustainability report
- **Monitor** and assess.

Our pathway is designed to be dynamic, serving as a tool for ongoing improvement and the continual development of our sustainability reporting. In our sustainability report, we established a baseline by reporting key metrics and documenting our current state. Our intention is not to view this as a static endpoint but rather as the beginning of a journey.

Our goal is to revisit the various phases outlined in our pathway, allowing us to enhance both our reporting capabilities and sustainability objectives. By doing so, we aim to set and achieve more meaningful targets, demonstrating our commitment to continual progress and excellence in sustainability practices.



## External stakeholder consultation

In this reporting period, we surveyed a total of 309 external stakeholders to assess the scope of environmental, social and governance themes in business.

### 44.3% agree

that it's important for businesses to have positive **environmental** impact

Important	44.3%
Somewhat important	33.0%
Neutral	10.4%
Not very important	6.8%
Not important at all	5.5%



### 35.9% agree

that ESG will be part of **their organisation's future** at some point

Agree	35.9%
Somewhat agree	27.2%
Neutral	23.3%
Somewhat disagree	4.9%
Disagree	8.7%



### 57.0% agree

that it's important for businesses to have positive **social** impact

Important	57.0%
Somewhat important	24.8%
Neutral	7.5%
Not very important	5.8%
Not important at all	4.9%



### 33.0% somewhat agree

that their **future purchasing decisions will be influenced** by who has an ESG policy/framework in place

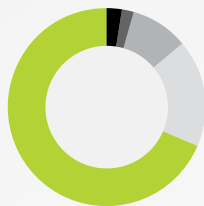
Agree	21.4%
Somewhat agree	33.0%
Neutral	23.0%
Somewhat disagree	9.4%
Disagree	13.2%



### 68.4% agree

that it's important for businesses to have **good governance**

Important	68.4%
Somewhat important	17.6%
Neutral	9.5%
Not very important	1.9%
Not important at all	2.6%



### 58.6% agree

that having a positive social and environmental impact and good governance, **adds value to an organisation's reputation**

Agree	58.6%
Somewhat agree	21.0%
Neutral	9.7%
Somewhat disagree	4.2%
Disagree	6.5%





## Framework guidance

We have utilised the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards as a base of reporting in our Sustainability Report. This framework provides a comprehensive set of sustainability reporting guidelines that cover a wide range of environmental, social, and governance issues. The GRI is widely recognised as a leading standard for sustainability reporting.

By incorporating GRI disclosures, organisations can consistently and credibly report information about their impacts. This standardised approach improves global comparability and the overall quality of reported information, aiding users in making informed assessments and decisions related to an organisation's impacts and its contribution to sustainable development.

➤ **The GRI content index can be located towards the end of our sustainability report.**





# Environment

## Managing carbon and climate change

The reporting period we have chosen to adopt is our financial year, July 2023 to June 2024.

We engaged an experienced independent carbon advisor to measure our current carbon Scope 1 and 2 emissions. This has highlighted the biggest emissions contributors from our business operations are purchasing of energy to run our office.

## Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting is the process of purchasing carbon credits to compensate for emissions made, thereby decreasing net emissions.

AFS purchased 64 Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU's) to offset our Scope 1 and 2 emissions. These credits have been applied to the Native Forest Regeneration project (Project ID ERF101721).

The measuring of emissions guided us to purchase off-set carbon credits and become **carbon neutral for Scope 1 and 2 emissions for the year**



## Native Forest Regeneration

Located in New South Wales and Queensland, these carbon farming projects work with landholders to regenerate and protect native vegetation. The projects help improve marginal land, reduce salinity and erosion and provide income to farmers. Widespread land clearing has significantly impacted local ecosystems. This degradation and loss of plant species threatens the food and habitat on which other native species rely. Clearing allows weeds and invasive animals to spread and affects greenhouse gas emissions.

The project areas can harbour a number of indigenous plant species which provide important habitat and nutrients for native wildlife. By erecting fencing and actively managing invasive species, these projects avoid emissions caused by clearing and achieve key environmental and biodiversity benefits.



## Carbon offsets retired

Type of offset unit	Registry	Date retired	Serial numbers	Vintage	Quantity
Voluntary ACCU	Australian Carbon Credit Unit Project Register	29 Jan 2025	3794415825 – 3794415888	2020	64
Total offsets retired for this report					64



### Energy intensity

702.17 kWh per employee

### Energy consumption and efficiency

#### Emissions

Total Scope 1 Emissions	3.02	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total Scope 2 Emissions	60.46	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total Emissions	63.48	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total Purchased Offsets	63.48	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total Net Emissions	-	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e



#### Electricity consumption

- **Activity Data:** Monthly electricity invoices
- **Measured Quantity:** 76,536.9 kWh
- **Emissions Factor:** 0.79 kg CO<sub>2</sub>-e/kWh (VIC)
- **Source:** National Greenhouse Accounts Factors 2022

#### Relevant sources of GHG emissions

Source	Description	Types relevant to AFS	GHG Emissions tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Process emissions	The use of synthetic greenhouse gases in equipment including HFCs and SF6	Air Conditioning units with HFCs	3.02
Electricity consumption	Electricity purchased from the grid or other network, and electricity produced and consumed or exported at the site from fuels or renewable energy sources	Grid electricity, electricity produced by solar panels	60.46





## Green energy

In 2024, we upgraded our electricity plan to the 100% GreenPower option. This was an environmental goal of ours for the 2024-2025 period.

GreenPower is a government accredited program where the power company buys renewable energy on behalf of the purchaser. That money goes towards Australian renewable projects, which in turn means more renewable energy into the grid.

## Paper-light office environment

AFS made a strategic decision in 2019 to transition to a paper-light office by using a holistic approach that includes digital document management, efficient communication tools, and a corporate culture that promotes sustainable practices.

To support our commitment to reducing paper use, in this reporting period we introduced a digital signing platform, providing clients a secure and efficient way to sign documents electronically.

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### Printing and paper statistics

1,213

Total pages printed  
per employee

804

Total sheets used  
per employee

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## Waste management and recycling

We engage with the City of Greater Bendigo to help educate all team members on local waste management, including:

- How to properly sort waste, recycling, and organics
- Practical recycling tips for better sustainability
- Where Greater Bendigo's waste, recycling, and organics go
- Updates on waste, recycling, and organics management
- Ways everyone can contribute to waste reduction.

This education supports our wider practice of responsible waste management within the AFS office where we have:

- Dedicated paper recycling
- General recycling
- Green (organic) waste
- Can and bottle collection
- General waste bins.



All cans collected in the cans bins are recycled through the Container Deposit Scheme. Money raised through this initiative is then **donated to local charity.**

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## Bendigo Sustainability Group

### Bendigo Sustainability Festival

As proud members of the Bendigo Sustainability Group, we also sponsor and participate in the Bendigo Sustainability Festival.

A hallmark of the Bendigo annual events calendar, the Bendigo Sustainability Festival aims to educate and showcase sustainable living products, programs, goods, and services available in Central Victoria.



## Environmental goals

### Short-term targets 2024-2025

- ✓ Maintain carbon neutrality with Scope 1 and 2 emissions
- Measure Scope 3 emissions.
- ✓ Source renewable energy power supplier
- Develop strategy to reduce total sheets of paper used per employee
- ✓ Develop strategy for waste management and recycling.

### Medium-term targets 2026-2028

- 25% reduction of total emissions per team member

### Long-term targets 2030

- 50% reduction of total emissions per team member.



**Net Zero  
2040**



# Social

## Employee engagement policies and initiatives

A focus on fostering a positive work environment that promotes employee satisfaction through collaboration, strategy and implementation, has helped us develop a motivated and committed team.

### You speak, we listen

Every 12 months employees complete a culture survey so the organisation can gain insights on employee experience.

### Flexibility at AFS

Our flexible working policy balances flexibility and collaboration. This setup encourages individual productivity and well-being, while emphasising face-to-face interactions and teamwork through a minimum of two office days per week.

We seek work-life balance by offering flexible hours from 7 am to 7 pm. Team members can align work with personal commitments, enhancing well-being and performance in our supportive work environment whilst still delivering our key client standards and Client First Focus.

### Dress for your day

The AFS dress code allows team members to choose their outfit to suit their day, from neat casual to corporate wear, whatever aligns with their daily client interactions or working activities.

### Active social club

The AFS social club hosts four main events per year, in addition to monthly catch-ups. These events and activities offer valuable team bonding and opportunity for interdepartmental relationships to form.

### Recognition Framework

AFS' recognition framework brings recognition front of mind for team members, to foster and encourage peer-to-peer recognition.

## Everperform

In 2024, we implemented the software platform Everperform to provide oversight of employee wellbeing and productivity, enabling our leaders and team members to gain a clearer understanding of expectations and foster meaningful discussions about performance and wellbeing.

Everperform's weekly pulse checks allow team members to share candid updates on their wellbeing, workload, and state of mind.

The platform provides valuable insights into:

- Mindset
- Growth
- Energy
- Fulfilment
- Connection
- Flow
- Productivity; and
- Capacity.

## Employee Net Promoter Score

We utilise the Net Promoter Score (NPS) metric to gauge our employees' engagement and experience at work. The NPS survey asks employees to rate the likelihood of them recommending AFS as an employer.



72 NPS score

## Diversity and equal opportunity

### Employee demographics total

#### Employee demographics

Employment	Male	Female	Total
Permanent - full time	44	40	84
Permanent - part time	1	15	16
Casual	6	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>108</b>

#### Board of Directors demographics

	Male	Female
Number of individuals <30years	-	-
Number of individuals 30-50 years	77.8%	22.2%
Number of individuals 50+ years	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>77.8%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>

### Accountant employee demographics

#### Management

Age	Male	Female
Number of employees <30years	5.9%	5.9%
Number of employees 30-50 years	52.9%	29.4%
Number of employees 50+ years	0.0%	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.8%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>

#### Non-management

Age	Male	Female
Number of employees <30 years	40.7%	32.2%
Number of employees 30-50 years	15.2%	6.8%
Number of employees 50+ years	0.0%	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55.9%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>

### Operations/administration employee demographics

#### Management

Age	Male	Female
Number of employees <30years	0.0%	0.0%
Number of employees 30-50 years	12.5%	75.0%
Number of employees 50+ years	0.0%	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>

#### Non-management

Age	Male	Female
Number of employees <30years	0.0%	33.3%
Number of employees 30-50 years	0.0%	53.3%
Number of employees 50+ years	0.0%	13.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





### Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Having reached over 100 team members, we officially lodged our first annual Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) report in 2024, for compliance of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Act) for the reporting period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

## Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men

The ratio is calculated based on the average full time equivalent base salary for male and female staff in each employee category as at 30/06/2024.

<b>&gt; Governance</b>	<b>Directors</b> Pay ratio M/F: 100:100 Gender pay gap: 0%	
<b>&gt; Accountants</b>	<b>Management</b> Pay ratio M/F: 100:99 Gender pay gap: 1%	<b>Non-management</b> Pay ratio M/F: 100:99 Gender pay gap: 1%
<b>&gt; Operations/administration</b>	<b>Management</b> Pay ratio M/F: 100:99 Gender pay gap: 1%	<b>Non-management</b> Pay ratio M/F: N/A – all female. Gender pay gap: N/A – all female.
<b>&gt; Overall</b>	Pay ratio M/F: 100:90 Gender pay gap: 10%	





## Community involvement

AFS and team members **donated, supported and sponsored** a total of

**\$21,698**



There was **834.7 hours of pro bono work** provided to our community at a value of



**\$163,609**







## New employee hires and employee turnover

### New employee hires

Age	Male	Female
Number of employees 18-29 years	6	7
Number of employees 30-49 years	3	4
Number of employees 50+ years	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>

### Employee turnover

Age	Male	Female
Number of employees 18-29 years	9%	24%
Number of employees 30-49 years	0%	29%
Number of employees 50+ years	0%	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>24%</b>

## Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken

We have had no reported incidents of discrimination in the reporting period. To prevent issues arising, we provide diversity and inclusion training through our online training platform, upon employee induction and regularly educate and celebrate diversity as a team.



# Employee safety and wellbeing

## Hazard identification, risk assessment, and incident investigation

Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing committee conduct office risk inspections quarterly and annually, to identify work related hazards and assess risk.

Any findings identified follow this procedure:

1. Risk identified
2. Risk assessed using hierarchy of controls
3. Effectiveness of existing controls are assessed and additional controls put in place
4. Control review dates are set > action register updated with OH&S committee
5. Residual risk is assessed.

Incidents, hazards, near misses and injuries are reported via our online employee portal and assessed and actioned by our People & Culture Manager.

Our Workplace Health & Safety training helps employees identify hazards and risks, and act safely in the workplace.

Our employees are protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act wherein it prohibits discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct in relation to raising safety concerns in the workplace.

## Worker participation, consultation, and communication on occupational health and safety

Our online learning management portal allows us as an organisation to review, allocate and report on the completion and acknowledgement of the training and information allocated to our employees.

## Worker training on occupational health and safety

AFS provides training to employees during induction and regular refresher training for all team members including:

- Emergency Management Procedures
- Hazard and Risk Identification / reporting
- Ergonomics and manual handling
- Injury management
- Hygiene at work
- Mental health first aid.

### Work-related ill health or injuries

Work-related ill health	0
Work-related injury	0

## Employee Assistance Program

Our employee assistance program (EAP) offers up to three free confidential counselling sessions per team member, with available extension requests.

6% EAP utilisation rate



## Mental health first-aiders

33% of people leaders are trained in mental health first aid.





## Promotion of worker health

AFS joined 1,000 other Victorian workplaces to ignite a happy, productive and healthy workforce in the Healthy Workplaces Achievement Program.

The program is a free, evidence-based health and wellbeing program designed to help workplaces create an environment that promotes health and healthy behaviours.

The program is aligned to the World Health Organisation's healthy workplaces model and Occupational health and safety management systems. It is supported by the Victorian Government and delivered by Cancer Council Victoria.



**HEALTHY WORKPLACES** Achievement Program





# Client satisfaction

## Our “Client First Focus” for sustainable partnerships

At AFS, our commitment to putting clients first is not only a core value but a guiding principle that shapes every aspect of our business operations.

We understand that the success of our clients is intertwined with our own success, and we continuously strive to exceed their expectations.

In line with our Client First Focus, we prioritise client satisfaction as a key driver in our sustainability efforts.

We believe that by fostering strong, sustainable relationships with our clients, we contribute to a mutually beneficial and enduring partnership.



## Measuring loyalty and experience

### Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Satisfaction Score

To quantitatively assess the loyalty and experience of our clients, we employ the Net Promoter Score (NPS) metric. The NPS is a powerful tool that gauges client sentiment by asking them to rate the likelihood of recommending AFS services to friends or colleagues.

By categorising respondents as Promoters, Passives, or Detractors, we gain a clear understanding of our overall client sentiment and loyalty. This valuable metric, alongside the Satisfaction Score, serves as a benchmark to track our progress over time and compare our performance against industry standards.

Category	Score
NPS	73.6
Client retention	94.0%
Client satisfaction	93.9%

### Survey schedule

Business services and taxation clients	Quarterly
Audit clients	Quarterly
Community Banks	Annually



## Feedback as a catalyst for improvement

We take client feedback seriously, valuing it as a crucial source of insights to enhance our services and operations. The responsibility of monitoring feedback lies with our Communications and Engagement Manager and our CEO. This joint oversight ensures that feedback is evaluated from both operational and strategic perspectives. Every quarter, these insights are shared with the Board, enabling us to collaboratively assess any potential areas for improvement or development. We extend this commitment to the client Partner by promptly informing them of feedback that pertains to their engagements, encouraging a proactive approach to addressing concerns and improving collaboration.

## Integration into company strategy

Client feedback is not just an isolated data point; it's a driving force behind our company strategy. By incorporating the valuable insights we gather from our clients, we ensure that our decisions align with their needs and expectations.

Building on this commitment, in 2024 we executed phase 1 of the AFS digital transformation to improve how we serve our clients. By updating our systems and refining our processes, we aim to provide a smoother and more effective experience to meet our clients' expectations.

## Annual Client Party

Every year AFS hosts a client party to celebrate the mutual successes of our clients and strengthen relationships. This celebration has been hosted since 1998.



### Social goals

**Clients:** Maintain an NPS score of above

70

**Team members:** Maintain an NPS score of above

75





# Governance

## Governance structure

AFS & Associates Pty Ltd highest governance body is the Board of Directors, the 'Board'. The CEO reports to the Board which is led by Bradley Ead as Chair.

### Our nine Board members are from:

- > 45% External audit
- > 33% Business services
- > 22% Internal audit

The Board comprises of all equity Partners at AFS, the Chair is elected by the members of the Board and rotated every two years. The decision making and expenditure approval parameters mean the Chair cannot make material decisions without consensus, reducing any independence risks. The nomination process to the Board is tied to equity ownership and equity recommendations and allotment are approved by Board members.

Annually all Board members are required to complete an independence declaration, and update these throughout the year if any new conflicts arise.



### Our focus areas are shaped by:

- Employee feedback
- Client feedback
- Stakeholder engagement
- Organisational data
- Economic, environmental and social impacts.

The Board and CEO annually assess AFS' purpose, values, and set short and long-term strategic goals for sustainable business and industry development. The Board approves the finalised strategy, and the CEO is responsible for its delivery, providing quarterly progress and impact reports to the Board.

The AFS team is annually surveyed for engagement levels and organisational development opportunities. Clients are cyclically surveyed to understand engagement levels and experiences, utilising various methods such as online surveys, in-person meetings, and structured advisory sessions. Quarterly reports on these results are presented to the Board, with a yearly summary for the annual strategy day.

Members of the Risk, Governance and Ethics subcommittee of the Board are responsible for driving the collation and preparation of the sustainability report, with review conducted by the CEO. Upon draft completion, the sustainability report is presented to the Board for final review, approval and adoption.



**Board members as at 30 June 2024**

**CEO**



**Adrian Downing**  
External Audit



**Bradley Ead**  
Internal Audit



**Damien Palmer**  
Business Services



**Dennis Barnett**  
Business Services



**Jacob Lea**  
Business Services



**Kate Mannix**



**Jessica Ritchie**  
External Audit



**Joshua Griffin**  
External Audit



**Katie Dempster**  
Internal Audit



**Lachlan Tatt**  
External Audit



## Cyber security

### Cyber security training

The importance of cyber security is prevalent in the everyday operations of AFS. We take a proactive approach, centred around education, testing and training of employees to build human resistance to risk of a cyber security breach.

We utilise the world's largest integrated platform for security awareness training, combined with simulated phishing attacks to train and test our team.

Training subject	Employee completion
Social Engineering Red Flags I	100%
Annual Phishing Baseline	100%
Remedial Training: Red Flags	96%
Security Awareness Training	100%
Social Engineering Red Flags II	100%

## Information security review

We engaged with a third party to conduct an information security review of our organisation, with key initiatives and focus areas being:

- **Access control:**  
Least privilege access model
- **Identity management:**  
Centralised identity management
- **Asset handling:**  
Information classification and handling
- **Risk management:**  
Operational level risk assessments
- **Planning and preparation:**  
Business continuity planning.

Based on outcomes from our information security review and in combination with client feedback, we designed and began implementing phase one of our digital transformation.

## Single Sign On (SSO)

In 2024 we introduced Single Sign-On (SSO) technology, which enhances data security by centralising authentication and reducing password-related risks. It allows employees to access multiple applications with one set of credentials, minimising the need for weak or reused passwords. SSO integrates with our multi-factor authentication (MFA) for added security. Centralised access control enables quick revocation of permissions when employees leave, reducing unauthorised access risks.

## Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

Our use of MFA enhances our overall cybersecurity posture, safeguarding both our organisation and the individuals associated with it from potential security vulnerabilities and unauthorised access attempts.

## Business ethics

### Approach to tax

As registered tax practitioners, we play a significant role in influencing and supporting the tax system. All personal tax obligations need to be up to date in line with community expectations and taxation laws.

The Tax Practitioners Board's (TPB) Code of Professional Conduct requires our registered agents to comply with the taxation laws in the conduct of client's personal affairs.

We ensure that personal tax affairs, including those of related entities have:

- lodgement of tax returns on time
- lodgement of BAS on time
- tax bills or amounts owed to the ATO are paid on time or an arrangement of repayment is agreed to by the ATO.

Any concerns regarding the integrity of our organisation's business conduct can be raised at Board meetings, along with the presentation of financials.

## Risk, governance and ethics subcommittee of the Board

The formation of our Risk, Governance and Ethics subcommittee was a goal in our 2023 sustainability report and was officially formed in 2024. The committee consists of our CEO, three Board members and our Finance, Risk and Governance Manager.

The subcommittee's objective is to focus on matters related to risk, governance and ethical considerations. It supports the Board in fulfilling its corporate governance responsibilities by exercising due care, diligence, and skill in overseeing the organisation's governance, risk management strategies, and risk management and compliance frameworks.

The subcommittee addresses and makes recommendations to the Board as appropriate, with responsibilities to:

- Risks, policies and controls
- Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations
- Governance, integrity and ethics
- Board reporting.

## Equity and remuneration subcommittee of the Board

Enhanced governance was embedded in 2024 with formation of our Equity and Remuneration subcommittee of the Board. This subcommittee is responsible for reviewing, managing and recommending to the Board matters relating to shareholder equity, partner and CEO remuneration and succession along with overall governance of the remuneration review process across the organisation.

## Local spending

27% of invoices paid and commitments made by AFS for the period was with local suppliers, with local defined as being within 50km of Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.

## Local labour

**100%** of our labour is in Victoria, Australia.



## Governance goals

Incorporate increased governance through:

- ✓ Development of a risk and governance Board subcommittee
- Embed sustainability risk assessment into decision making across AFS
- Continue to educate and assess sustainability risks.

# GRI content index

**Statement of use:** AFS & Associates has reported the information cited in this GRI content index for the period 01/07/2023 - 30/06/2024 with reference to the GRI Standards.

**GRI 1 used:** GRI 1: Foundation 2021.

GRI standard	Disclosure	Page
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-1 Organizational details	IFC
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	IFC
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-7 Employees	12
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-9 Governance structure and composition	20
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-10 Nomination and selection of the highest governance body	20
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-11 Chair of the highest governance body	20
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-12 Role of the highest governance body in overseeing the management of impacts	20
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-13 Delegation of responsibility for managing impacts	20
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-14 Role of the highest governance body in sustainability reporting	20
GRI 2 General Disclosures 2021	Disclosure 2-15 Conflicts of interest	20
GRI 204 Procurement Practices 2016	Disclosure 204-1 Proportion of spending on local suppliers	23
GRI 302 Energy 2016	Disclosure 302-1 Energy consumption and efficiency	8
GRI 302 Energy 2016	Disclosure 302-3 Energy intensity	8
GRI 305 Emissions 2016	Disclosure 305-1 Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	8
GRI 305 Emissions 2016	Disclosure 305-2 Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	8
GRI 401 Employment 2016	Disclosure 401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	15
GRI 403 Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Disclosure 403-2 Hazard identification, risk assessment, and incident investigation	16
GRI 403 Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Disclosure 403-4 Worker participation, consultation, and communication on occupational health and safety	16
GRI 403 Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Disclosure 403-5 Worker training on occupational health and safety	16
GRI 403 Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Disclosure 403-6 Promotion of worker health	17
GRI 403 Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Disclosure 403-7 Prevention and mitigation of occupational health and safety impacts directly linked by business relationships	16
GRI 403 Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Disclosure 403-9 Work-related ill health or injuries	16
GRI 405 Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	Disclosure 405-1a Diversity of governance bodies and employees	12
GRI 405 Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	Disclosure 405-1b Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men	13
GRI 406 Non-discrimination 2016	Disclosure 406-1 Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken	15









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