

ESG Reporting: The Challenge of Getting It Right

The past year has been a pivotal one for ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting in Australia. With the introduction of mandatory climate disclosures from January 2025, businesses across the country are being called upon to enhance transparency and accountability in their sustainability efforts.

At Moore Australia, although not captured by the mandatory reporting requirements, we believe in the purpose of these disclosures and have been investing time and resources to ensure that our reporting aligns with evolving expectations.

When we commenced our Sustainability reporting journey in 2023, like many organisations we started with high aspirations. We set out our first sustainability report, with numerous objectives, and plans of what we would report on in the coming years. However, as we embarked on the process of compiling our second ESG Transparency report for 2024, although significant progress had been made, it became apparent that our data processing systems were still in their infancy and we encountered a challenge that many businesses—large and small—are also facing: the complexity of collecting robust, reliable data.

As we have no mandatory reporting obligations, we have had the luxury of reflecting on the lack of maturity in our data collection and made a considered decision. Rather than publishing an incomplete and inaccurate report, we believe it is more valuable to invest our efforts in ensuring our data collection systems are adequately embedded across the network so the next report we create is of sufficient quality. In arriving at this decision we also undertook to share our insights with others who are navigating similar ESG reporting requirements—whether by obligation or as part of their broader commitment to sustainability.

KEY LESSONS FROM OUR ESG REPORTING JOURNEY

Start early—data collection is challenging

Collecting our own ESG data, has proven, the practical task of gathering accurate, verifiable data is challenging, and obtaining data of a sufficient quality is likely to be an iterative process. Much of this information sits across different systems,

functions, and even external partners, and extracting the data may not be as straightforward as initially anticipated. It may therefore take a couple of reporting cycles to refine and embed your data collection processes. Accordingly, if your organisation has mandatory reporting obligations ensure you start early enough on the data collection journey, to allow those multiple iterations to occur prior to you having to prepare your first sustainability report.

Involve the right people

Having the finance department or even a team of sustainability leaders in charge of sustainability reporting is a great start, but it will not be sufficient to ensure that the appropriate data is collected. Engagement is required throughout your organisation - business unit leaders and your administrative team that are going to be responsible for collecting data on an ongoing basis, will need sufficient education and instruction so they understand the importance of the task that has been assigned to them. Additional education may also be needed across your organisation, especially where staff are responsible for their own expenditure on items such as flights etc, so that they can assist in the data collection process as well. It is crucial to establish clear workflows and accountability from the outset to smooth the data collection process.

Embed sustainable values across your organisation

Sustainability Reporting can't just be a tick the box exercise, it needs to be the outcome of a genuine commitment across the organisation to doing the right thing. Ethical businesses, rooted in the principles of sustainability, helps build organisations that are trusted by stakeholders. In the long run, businesses that embrace this mindset will outperform those that do not. However, this sustainability ethos needs to be embedded into your organisational culture. Attempting sustainability reporting without this cultural shift creates challenges, as colleagues not invested in the process and don't understand the value it creates will hamper not only data collection efforts but also efforts to show improvement in your sustainability performance.

Balancing the 'E', 'S', and 'G' is critical

While climate disclosures are a major focus due to the legislative mandate, organisations who truly want to engage in sustainability reporting, might look to provide additional reporting on the social and governance aspects of ESG. In determining which areas to report on, focus on those areas material to your organisation and industry. Whilst it is aspirational to report on all aspects of sustainability, it is better to focus your efforts on those areas of interest to the users of your reports, and ensure the information reported on those areas is insightful and of a high quality, rather than trying to spread your efforts too thinly across a broad range of topics. It is important to note those topics that are material to your organisation may change over time as well, and you need to reflect and adjust what is included in your sustainability report.

A CALL TO ACTION FOR BUSINESSES

For any organisation yet to formalise an ESG reporting strategy, our message is simple: don't wait. The reporting landscape is shifting rapidly, and those who take a proactive approach now will be in a far stronger position—both in terms of compliance and business resilience. At Moore Australia, our commitment to ESG remains firm. Our efforts to enhance sustainability reporting continue. We will keep refining our approach, learning from our own experiences, and supporting our clients in doing the same. Transparency and accountability are the cornerstones of meaningful ESG progress. As reporting frameworks develop, we will continue to share insights that help businesses navigate this evolving landscape with confidence.

CONTACT US

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