



Award-winning lawyer becomes first Director of climate legal initiative

An international initiative examining the legal basis for company directors to take account of climate risk has appointed an award-winning Australian lawyer as its first Director.

Ellie Mulholland, who moves from top tier law firm Allens, was recognised among the best young Australian legal talent, winning the *Lawyers' Weekly* '30 Under 30' award in the Projects, Energy and Resources category in 2017.

She joins the Commonwealth Climate and Law Initiative (CCLI) having just undertaken a Masters in Law and Finance at the University of Oxford.



Mulholland will be responsible for expanding the initiative into new jurisdictions, and coordinating further research on directors' and trustees' liability for climate risk.

She aims to drive a broad discussion with business, law, accounting and investment communities and develop alliances with professional bodies and international organisations.

Dr Ben Caldecott, Director of the Oxford Sustainable Finance Program, said: "We're delighted to welcome Ellie as the first director of the Commonwealth Climate and Law Initiative (CCLI). Climate liability is a major issue for company directors and fiduciaries. Ellie will deepen our existing work in Australia, Canada, South Africa and the UK and expand our legal research and networks into other common law jurisdictions."

Alice Garton, Head of Climate at [ClientEarth](#), a founding member of the CCLI, said: "The CCLI is a vital initiative in the effort to alert financial players of their legal duties when it comes to climate change and helping produce a practical common response from business. Ellie is an extremely talented lawyer and she will help drive understanding and action in the sector. We are looking forward to working closely with her."

Cynthia Williams, Osler Chair in Business Law at CCLI partner Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, said: "Having someone of Ellie's calibre and experience in oil, gas, and infrastructure development will be a huge asset in combining theory and practice as the CCLI develops action frameworks for directors and pension trustees to use to implement their fiduciary obligations with respect to climate change."

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COMMONWEALTH Climate and Law Initiative

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Philippe Joubert, Trustee of ClientEarth, Founder of Earth on Board and member of the CCLI Advisory Board, said: "Boards have a fiduciary duty to address climate change risks and opportunities. Under Ellie's direction and enthusiasm, the CCLI will continue to drive change across boardrooms through its research and outreach."

Ends

Alice Garton is an Australian qualified lawyer.

The Commonwealth Climate and Law Initiative (CCLI) is a research, education, and outreach project focused on four Commonwealth countries: Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. CCLI is examining the legal basis for directors and trustees to take account of physical climate change risk and societal responses to climate change, under prevailing statutory and common (judge-made) laws. In addition to the legal theory, it also aims to undertake a practical assessment of the materiality of these considerations, in terms of liability, and the scale, timing, probability of this and the potential implications for company and investor decision-making.

ClientEarth is an environmental law organisation which uses the power of law to protect people and the planet. Its climate programme employs a dedicated team of lawyers with expertise across environmental, public, finance and company law in multiple jurisdictions. They engage with governments and the financial sector to make sure climate policies and investment strategies line up with the landmark Paris Agreement.

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