

Last month the Fund announced its first shareholder resolutions. Woodside Petroleum, Aquila Resources, Paladin Energy and Oil Search were the lucky first companies to receive the first resolutions, which requested disclosure of their carbon emissions, strategies to reduce emissions, and capital investment assumptions around future carbon prices and their use in making long-term investment decisions.

The Fund is an ideal opportunity for all super funds and other investors who are signatories to the Carbon Disclosure Project and the UN PRI to exercise their influence and support the resolutions, said Julian Poulter, business director of The Climate Institute, which co-founded the Fund.

Impact investors and other players in the sector agree the future for impact funds looks bright. The range of specialist products that could be launched is huge, with many issues only at the beginning of their potential for new financial products.

Ms Drew agrees that many other areas are possible in impact investment, including environmental funds, and that new products will emerge. But at this stage we are not seeing the level of demand to build scale, she said.

However, Mr Saunders says that in Europe one in five people want these type of products as long as they are reasonably convenient, credible, and enough other people are using them.

It's not hard to look down the track and see what could happen if the idea of impact investing takes off, if we get an army of impact investors.

It's probably already bigger than we think it is, if only because no one seems to have tallied all the products so far; but no one doubts there is room for more specialized managed funds, property trusts, debt prod-

ucts such as green loans, and other financial and investment products. Many players are interested to see what emerges over the next few years.

The RIAA is doing its bit. Its latest project, the RI Academy, aims to improve the awareness, skills and qualifications of professionals in the ethical sector by offering education in responsible investment.

Based on the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment, the Academy is an online resource utilizing multimedia, international experts, and interactive lessons and tests to deliver elearning modules, an ESG toolkit and analytical tools.

The basic modules cover responsible investment and the environment, societal issues, corporate governance, financial analysis, and principles.

A wide range of Professional modules include several climate change issues such as the science and economics of climate change, greenhouse gas accounting, carbon risk, environmental opportunities, transitioning to a green economy, renewable energy technologies and sustainable forestry.

The director of the Academy, Neb Jovicic, said there are many companies with great ESG metrics that do not perform well in the marketplace and vice versa. Correct interpretation of ESG data can augment the analysis of securities. "To the extent that ESG information helps in refining decisions related to valuation, securities selection and portfolio construction, there is an opportunity for long-term outperformance based on those factors."

With Mr Jovicic saying that the pricing of the courses is affordable, no doubt the RIAA hopes it has struck a mid point between social return and financial return, and the Academy will make a big impact.

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