

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT



Our greatest challenge as a society is to find ways to live sustainably.

### **"OUR CLIENT WORK REACHES BILLIONS OF PEOPLE EVERY DAY."**

**Mark Read**  
Chief Executive Officer

All around the world, people are choosing to live in more sustainable ways, and turning to their favourite brands to make that possible. People also expect those brands to reflect their varied backgrounds and cater for their diverse needs.

Pressure is increasing on companies to transform the way they do things rather than simply do less harm. For businesses to succeed tomorrow, they need to rethink what they do today. Challengers are inventing materials, products and processes for an inclusive world and a circular economy. They are using technology or investing in innovative solutions to help our daily lives leave a smaller footprint. These companies are not just disrupting markets, they are leading the way by creating new ones.

Many of our clients have already set ambitious sustainability targets, and WPP can help them achieve these goals. Our challenge is to show that sustainable living is not just possible, but desirable.

We have the ability to use the power of marketing and communications to normalise the attitudes, behaviour, products and services needed for an inclusive and sustainable future. Our client work reaches billions of people every day, and I am so proud of the great work our people are doing and of its wider impact.

This year we established a new, Board-level Sustainability Committee to steer our approach, and increased the sustainability expertise at Board level with two new appointments (read a report from the Sustainability Committee Co-Chairs on page 5).

Although we have work to do to meet our commitment to achieve parity at the most senior executive level, women now make up 50% of our senior managers, compared to 49% in 2018. At the Board level, 40% of Board members are now women (2018: 33%) and we are aiming to get to parity soon. In November, we underscored this commitment by joining the 30% club, a group of chairs and CEOs campaigning for greater female representation in business leadership. **K**

As an inclusive business, we also signed up to the Valuable500, a global initiative that is putting disability on the boardroom agenda. This commitment is reflected in our work, where our new Inclusive Design Practice is helping clients to develop more inclusive products and services.

I am proud of our progress in reducing our carbon footprint. Carbon emissions per employee reduced by 21% compared with the previous year and our use of renewable energy rose to 35%. In the United States, we purchased 100% renewable energy for the first time. You can read our second Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) statement in our Annual Report, page 196 and 197. **K**

But there is much more to do. That is why we are announcing our commitment to use 100% renewable electricity by 2025 and for net zero carbon emissions in our Campuses by 2025.

Another area where we are accelerating action is plastic waste. At the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity in June 2019, we pledged to phase out plastics that cannot be reused, recycled or composted from all WPP offices by the end of 2020 and signed up to the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment. We are helping clients to navigate the complex regulations emerging in this area, to innovate product and

packaging design, to engage consumers, and to partner with not-for-profits on campaigns to change behaviour.

Increasingly, we are working with governments to communicate their climate commitments. Our close partnerships with the players who are changing the agenda, whether governments, the UN, or corporate sustainability leaders, lend us the convening power to bring others together and build the momentum for change.

We remain committed members of the UN Global Compact and support its 10 principles for human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. This report shows the progress we are making in embedding these principles into our business.

Becoming a sustainable business is not just about being on the right side of history. One in five of our top 50 clients has already committed to going carbon neutral, and more will follow. As a business, we need the skills to advise them on this and other issues, and to embed sustainability into their products, marketing and communications. Throughout this report are examples of our work, and how it contributes to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As we strengthen our expertise in this area, we are making our companies fit for the future alongside the clients they serve.



**Mark Read**  
Chief Executive Officer

**“WE ARE ANNOUNCING OUR COMMITMENT TO USE 100% RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY BY 2025 AND FOR NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS IN OUR CAMPUSES BY 2025.”**

## COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has touched all our lives. At WPP our first priority is the wellbeing of our people and doing what we can to limit the impact of the virus on society.

To ensure the safety of employees and to help reduce transmission, we moved to a global policy of managed remote working in mid-March, and at the time of writing approximately 95% of our people worldwide are working from home.

Across the world, our agencies are providing NGOs, governments and clients with communications and other services – often on a pro bono basis – to help fight Covid-19 (for an example, see page 22).

When we come through the current situation, the world will have been changed in ways that we cannot fully anticipate yet. But the demand for the creativity and ingenuity possessed by the people who work at WPP and across our industry will be greater than ever.

What we do plays a vital role in driving and sustaining the wider economic activity that societies need to function, and we will continue to support our people, clients and communities as we all reset and rebuild for the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for the extraordinary effort, resilience and kindness of WPP employees all over the world, whose support for one another and commitment to their clients has been truly inspirational. I am very proud of all of them.