

Chair's statement



Patrick Cescau
Chair

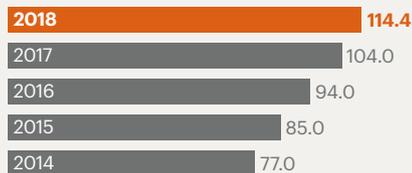
Final dividend

78.1¢

to be paid on 14 May 2019
(2017: 71.0¢)

Full-year dividend

Five-year progress (¢)



Return of funds

Since March 2003, the Group has returned over \$11 billion of funds to shareholders by way of special dividends, capital returns and share repurchase programmes.

Since 2014:

- \$500 million special dividend paid 29 January 2019
- \$400 million special dividend paid 22 May 2017
- \$1.5 billion special dividend paid 23 May 2016
- \$500 million share buyback completed in 2014
- \$750 million special dividend paid 14 July 2014

Central to IHG's long-term success has been our commitment to evolve, adapt and innovate in order to keep improving, and in 2018 we took significant steps to strengthen the execution of our strategy and lay the foundations for faster growth.

Whilst the world's changing economic, political and societal landscape means we will always operate amid challenges – from competing tensions of globalisation and nationalism, to climate change – the prospects for our industry remain strong. A growing global economy, expanding middle class, increasing disposable incomes and cheaper air travel all underpin exciting growth prospects. Ready to meet that demand is a heavily competitive marketplace vying to serve increasingly high consumer expectations around service, experience and technology.

At IHG, we are well placed to capitalise. Our successful asset-light strategy and focus on distinctive hotel brands that meet guest needs and deliver strong owner returns is a proven one. This is illustrated by our global scale, the millions of guests choosing our brands, the many long-standing owner relationships we have, and our respect within the investment community for delivering strong, consistent shareholder returns. However, as we operate in a landscape of increasing choice for consumers and investors, we continue to seek opportunities to execute our strategy in quicker, more targeted and effective ways.

This was the focus of 2018: introducing clear strategic initiatives that strengthen our brand portfolio and loyalty programme; our work with owners; how we use our scale, resources and technology to drive industry-leading net rooms growth over the medium term; and deliver our purpose of providing True Hospitality for everyone.

To enable these initiatives, we have made necessary large-scale functional, cultural and personnel changes that will transform our organisation and provide a stronger platform for future success. Encouragingly, whilst an acceleration in our growth rate is a long-term commitment, our best openings and signings performance in a decade, alongside strong financial results, shows we are already having an impact.

Focus on growth

As a Board, we want to ensure that a focus on accelerated growth adheres to the high-quality principles we uphold as a business. This means maintaining our discipline, committing resources in keeping with our strategic direction, and working with owners who share our values. Operating in this responsible way is central to IHG's long-term track record of delivering high-quality, sustainable growth for all our stakeholders.

A key role of the Board is to challenge and support the business in its corporate decision making, and we have a breadth of diversity, skills and experience to draw upon in order to add value to the decisions we make as a company. We strongly believe that different perspectives enrich a business and we recognise the importance of gender balance too, with more than a third of our Board being female and half of our committees chaired by women.

“Our focus in 2018 has been strengthening the execution of our strategy, and laying the foundation for faster growth”.

In addition to collaborating as a Board with senior leadership on the implementation of organisational changes in 2018, significant moves to strengthen our brand portfolio were also on the agenda, with the \$39 million acquisition of a 51% stake in Regent Hotels & Resorts in July, and an agreement to rebrand and operate a collection of high-quality properties in the UK. Both deals, and our recent acquisition of Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, illustrate IHG's commitment to strengthening our luxury presence.

In what was his first full year as Chief Executive Officer, Keith Barr has shown a great ability to lead the business and engage external stakeholders during a significant period of change. On behalf of the Board, I would like to congratulate Keith and his leadership team on injecting a fresh energy into IHG, and a renewed focus on working collectively at speed to drive growth through attractive brands and strong owner support. Illustrative of IHG's inclusive approach is a commitment to launch a share plan for corporate colleagues outside of IHG's senior leadership. The plan, which is subject to shareholder and regulatory approval, recognises the role that all corporate colleagues play in IHG's success and our promise to ensure they have the opportunity to benefit as our Company grows.

Managing risk

Operating a business in more than 100 countries requires a considered and agile approach to managing risks associated with our industry and evolving business model, actively taking opportunities to pursue growth and managing risks carefully where we have less tolerance for uncertainty. Reflecting this and the Board's responsibility to uphold the highest ethical standards and corporate governance, we regularly review areas for improvement, training and development.

In 2018, the Board attended presentations on key corporate governance, consumer, technology and cybersecurity themes, and spent time reviewing opportunities to further increase transparency and enhance IHG's trusted reputation through changes related to the 2018 UK Corporate Governance Code.

On cybersecurity in particular, an external risk assessment was undertaken, which focused on industry specific issues, our current capabilities, recent progress and a forward-looking plan that will remain in focus in 2019.

It's important to remember that our scale also brings many opportunities. Not only does it allow us to manage volatility and continue to grow our business, but it also provides a valuable platform to care for the environment and give back to local communities within which we operate. This is extremely important to IHG. Contributing to a broader social purpose is something our colleagues are passionate about, and we know the actions we take are increasingly followed by a wider range of stakeholders, from guests and corporate clients to investors.

We're proud of our commitments in this area, and whether it's by helping hotels better manage their carbon footprint, creating a chance to build a career in hospitality, or offering support in times of disaster, it's important to everyone at IHG that we help.

Shareholder returns

I am pleased to announce that the Board is recommending a final dividend of 78.1 cents per ordinary share, an increase of 10% on the final dividend for 2017. This results in a full-year dividend of 114.4 cents per share, up 10% on 2017. During the year, the Board also approved a \$500 million special dividend with share consolidation, which was paid to shareholders in January 2019. This takes the total funds returned to shareholders since 2003 to \$13.6 billion, representing value through both our programme of asset sales (which concluded in 2015), and the strength of our cash generative business model and ability to drive organic growth.

We continue to grow our business in a way that ensures shareholder returns do not come at the expense of other stakeholders. Guided by our successful strategy, we're able to invest in initiatives that drive growth, create a rewarding culture for our colleagues, and deliver strong returns for owners, all whilst delivering on our commitments to shareholders. As a Board, we will continue in 2019 to promote and instill the culture, values, systems and controls that make this possible.

I would like to sincerely thank all colleagues for their hard work and commitment to IHG and our brands in 2018, and our owners and investors for their continued confidence in our business.



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