



ANNUAL REPORT

Activities, Events and Outcomes 2012

Catalyst Australia Incorporated
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Our year in review

Over the past year, Catalyst has continued to build its reputation and profile through high quality research, seminars and events. This included a highly regarded submission to the ACTU's Decent Work Inquiry which, amongst other things, advocated for a universal system for portable long service leave.

Our latest report released in July 2012 – “What Gives? How companies invest in communities” – focused on how, how much and how well major companies are contributing to communities. It challenged companies to improve their community investment outcomes and its recommendations received widespread endorsement from community, academic and national benchmarking organisations alike.

This report was the final research chapter in our foundation project examining corporate social and environmental reporting and disclosure, the “Full Disclosure” series. Since launching in 2010, Full Disclosure has produced or partnered on five reports covering sustainability leadership, community investment, labour standards, governance and board gender equity.

Early next year, we will bring this work together to produce a corporate responsibility “index” to assess the outputs and commitments of 32 leading public listed Australian companies in areas including labour standards and supply chain, environment and governance. This is a ground-breaking tool that promises to establish Catalyst as an organization with excellence in social and environmental analysis.

Behind the scenes, we have continued to work closely with a diverse community organisations and unions to promote social justice issues. Catalyst plays an important role in connecting like-minded organisations with one-another, adding great value to progressive ideas and supporting creative collaborations.

Next year promises to be a big year for us – and we remain grateful for the financial backing that we receive from sponsoring unions, and for the continued enthusiasm from members and other supporters.



Jo-anne Schofield
Executive Director



Campaigns and issues



What Gives? How Companies Invest in Communities was the fifth and final paper in the Full Disclosure Research series.

The report was launched in July 2012 by Dr Simon Longstaff from St James Ethics Centre.

The research found that the 12 companies that were reviewed contributed a staggering half a billion dollars to the community annually.

The biggest donors were BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto and BHP was the only company to contribute 1% of its pre-tax profit – an amount considered to be good practice by international standards.

Surprisingly, most companies undertook their community investment activities without a strong framework, strategy or tools to measure the performance, impact or effectiveness of their investment to communities.

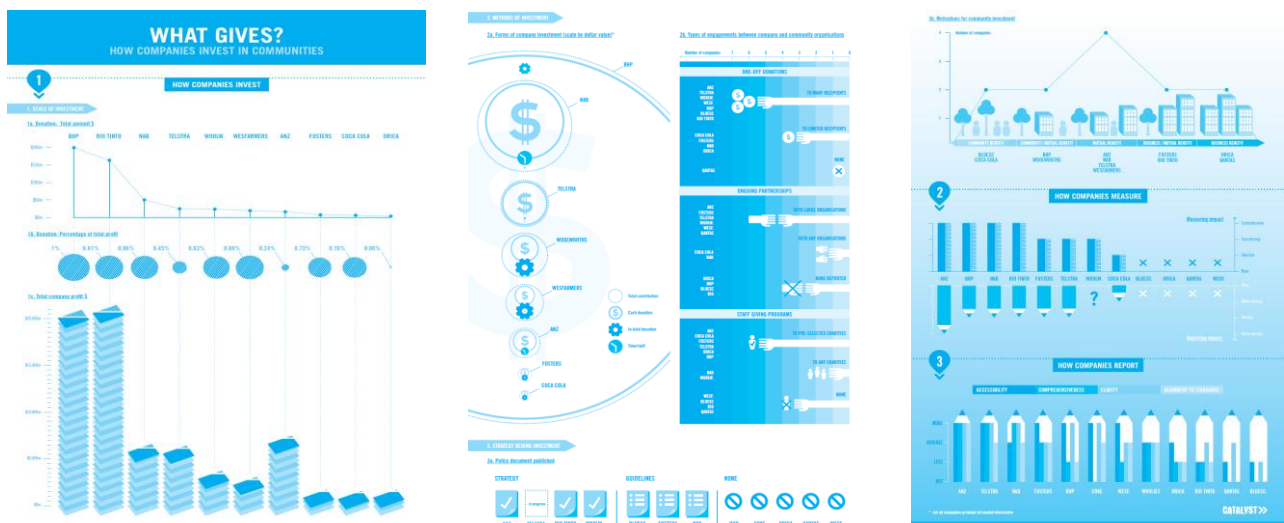
“I want to congratulate the unions and other organisations that have come together for the establishment of Catalyst and for its support of this work.

It is really essential that all parts of society engage with the world of business and make an investment in doing so. It is not always the case that it is done in a way which is entirely constructive by all parties ...

Dr Simon Longstaff, St James Ethics Centre

The report and recommendations have been widely embraced by not-for-profit and philanthropic research organisations, including Charities Aid Foundation, Pro-Bono Australia, Social Ventures and the Centre for Social Impact. Researcher Jenni Downes has presented the findings at several high profile events involving community and corporate leaders. In November, she was asked to address the London Benchmarking Group Annual Conference in November 2012 about the report's findings.

Links to full report, the summary and media are on our website.

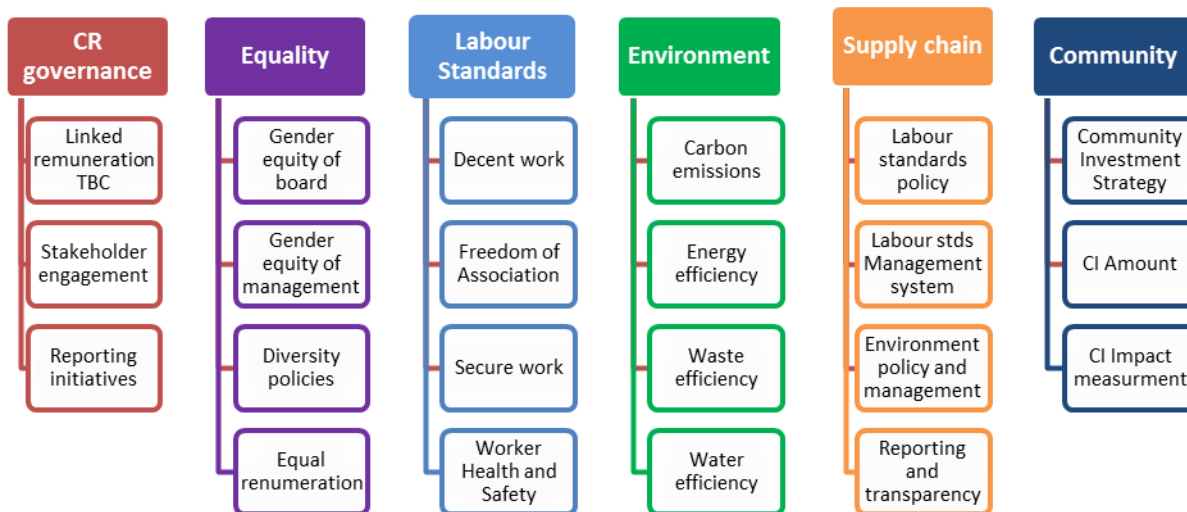


Catalyst Corporate Responsibility Index

Work has begun on building the Catalyst Corporate Responsibility Index. The project is being developed with experts to capture the performance of leading companies in selected areas of corporate social, governance and environment practice.

Over the next few months we will collect, analyse, rate and present this information on a custom-built and user friendly website. The project has begun modestly but includes capacity to expand and to add topics and companies.

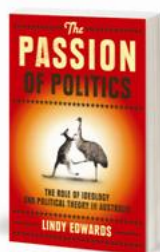
The topics selected for review reflect the work that Catalyst has done in its **Full Disclosure** Research series. One of the limitations of that work was that it looked at topics in isolation. This new tool will enable unions, NGOs, consumers and investors to make decisions based on a fuller understanding of corporate activities across several areas.



Full Guidance Notes have been developed and are available to organisations interested in making a financial or other contribution to this work.

Events and Seminars

The Passion of Politics Book Launch – October 2012



“It has fallen out of public memory that Australians were once considered pioneering democrats, that we were among the first in the world to introduce the 8 hour day, minimum wages, and to have a national Labor government that represented working class people.

We speak the language of egalitarianism but forget how the impact of pioneering unions shaped our national culture. We overlook how our national psyche was shaped by the early belief that we could produce a society that was more, just free and wealthy than had ever existed.”

The Passion of Politics, Lindy Edwards

Catalyst was pleased to host the Sydney launch of former Catalyst Board member and author, Dr Lindy Edward’s new book “The Passion of Politics”. Over 55 people attended this event in Sydney’s Trades Hall Atrium. The book was launched by former Labor Premier, Geoff Gallop who provided an enthusiastic opening address.

Refugees at Work – ACTU Congress Fringe Event, May 2012

“Many asylum seekers and migrant workers remain virtual refugees at work – denied citizenship in the workplace and lacking support and advice about their rights at work.”

Catalyst 2012

In a busy conference week, dozens of people made their way to hear about what unions are doing – and what they can do – to organise asylum seekers, refugees and newly arrived migrant workers in their workplace and their communities.

Bolis Longy, a refugee from Sudan who arrived in Australia in 2005 spoke about his experience as a school cleaner and active United Voice union member working with union to represent the Sudanese community. Before arriving in Australia, Bolis was a Teacher and Principal of a Christian school.

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre’s **Gavin Ackerley** spoke about his work to deliver meaningful and long term employment opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged people in our community. Gavin said there is great potential to work more closely with unions to support asylum seekers in the workplace.

AMWU State Secretary in Western Australia **Steve McCartney** spoke of union’s experience working closely with the Filipino community to represent the interests of workers employed under 457 visas in the manufacturing industry in Kwinana. Steve highlighted how the union built trust among the workers and of the positive experiences gained along the way.

The event was held in partnership with Welcome to Australia www.welcometoaustralia.org.au



Audio is available at www.catalyst.org.au

Fair Work: Why does it matter? – Forum, April 2012

Catalyst was excited to once again host Professor Keith Ewing from Kings College London. Keith delivered an engaging presentation covering industrial relations developments in the UK and contrasting them with the Australian system. Many of the unionists attending the seminar had experience with many of the issues raised and Keith’s address was followed by a lively and thought provoking discussion.



Marriage Equality, the International Experience – Forum with the Whitlam Institute, April 2012

Catalyst co-hosted this international panel to talk about how marriage equality contributed to social and economic outcomes in several jurisdictions in the world.

The panel of speakers included Prof Lee Badgett from the University of Massachusetts, former Dutch MP and human rights campaigner Boris Dittrich and Campaign Director of Australia Marriage Equality, Rodney Croome.

The forum attracted around 60 highly engaged individuals, many of whom stayed for drinks in the atrium at the conclusion of the forum. Video from the event is available on Catalyst’s website.

Investing in education, research and ideas – Seminar

Catalyst hosted a small roundtable in February 2012, Featuring David Robinson the Associate Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. David was in Australia on the invitation of the National Tertiary Education Union.

David spoke about the challenges facing academics in continuing to contribute to policy debates in politically constrained environments. As well David drew on his past experience as senior economist with Canada's leading progressive think-tank, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to suggest some valuable models for collaboration between unions and civil society groups.

Networking

Membership

Catalyst continues to be supported from an enthusiastic and diverse membership base, which includes four community organisations, six donor unions and dozens of individual members.

We work informally with many of our members and greatly value their feedback and ideas. As well as attending events and having opportunities to participate in the organization, members have the right to nominate for positions on the Committee of Management and vote on decisions affecting the organisation at Annual General Meetings.

In the news and on-line

Catalyst is grateful to Mountain Media for their continued support over the year. Our major impact this year was in the lead up to the launch of our report, "What Gives? How Companies Invest in Communities". Links to the following media are available from our website.

Does business really care? New Matilda, 8th August 2012

Miners Lead the Way in Corporate Philanthropy, PM, ABC Radio National, 24th July 2012 and news online 25th July 2012

Open Forum Blog on Community Investment report

Shared Understanding is what's missing in the productivity debate, Crikey, 24th May 2012

Beyond the Bottom Line: how to reward executives for sustainable practice, by Alice Klettner, partner in Catalyst research project, Steering Sustainability, The Conversation, 14th May 2012

During the year Catalyst shifted its resources towards our research and project work, and adopted an alternative media strategy which saw a reduced focus on publishing opinion pieces in the mainstream and on-line press. As an alternative a blog was set up to publish small pieces, and social media was used to promote to Catalyst followers. This approach adopts a model used by several other policy commentators. The blog is found at www.astateofadjustment.wordpress.com.
Published pieces

A nation in the grip of performance anxiety, August 2012

Time to say no to computer driven financial speculation, September 2012

Should we ignore, 'out' or simply outlaw the trolls? October 2012

Website

Catalyst launched its new website in late 2011 to great acclaim. The site is very focused on providing clear links to resources and papers, and focusing users on our Full Disclosure campaign.

Our social media presence has continued to grow, with hundreds of supporters on both Facebook and Twitter. These platforms played a strong role in promoting the release of our reports and publicising our events.

Catalyst is now boasting a re-designed newsletter template allowing us extra flexibility in how we communicate with our 500+ subscribers. The new template was used in 2012 when promoting our numerous seminars and forums.

Committee and Sponsors

Catalyst greatly appreciates the financial support of all our sponsors, members and supporters in 2012. A copy of the audited financial accounts for the 2011-12 year is distributed at our AGM and is available to all members on request.

Our core funding is provided by the following donor unions:

Australian Education Union www.aeufederal.org.au

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union www.amwu.org.au

Community and Public Sector Union, SPSF Division www.cpsu-spsf.asn.au

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union www.cfmeu.net.au

National Tertiary Education Union www.nteu.org.au

United Voice www.unitedvoice.org.au

Management committee

Catalyst's Constitution provides that five of Management Committee be elected by the membership at the AGM. These positions are held by independent members, including the President of Catalyst. Five additional positions are held by donor unions, including the Secretary/Treasurer position. The organisation was served extremely well by our 2012 Committee:

Dr Richard Archer (President)
Susan Hopgood (Vice President)
John Sutton (Secretary-Treasurer)
Paul Bastian
David Carey/Lesley Gruit
Melissa Coad
Chris Gambian
David McKnight
Maree O'Halloran
Alison Peters



Staff

Our small staff continued to work tirelessly throughout the year to produce some high value reports and events. This included: Executive Director Jo-anne Schofield, Executive and Policy Assistant, Catherine Turner and Researcher Jenni Downes.

In September 2012 Martijn Boersma joined the Catalyst team taking the lead research role in our Corporate Responsibility Index project. Jenni Downes is continuing to contribute to that work after taking up a position with the Institute for Sustainable Futures.

2013 and beyond

Next year will be bigger and better for Catalyst. Our Corporate Responsibility Index is set for release in the first quarter of the year. In tandem with that work we are giving shape to our new series of research pieces which will be framed around the simple question “What is Wealth For?” The series will take us through 2013, offering different and valuable perspectives on how wealth is made, invested and distributed.

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