

CATALYST >>

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

MONEY POWER CONFERENCE

Attitudes to corporate Australia

restoring rights at work

Crunch time Australia's policy future

Suraya Pakzad Voice of Women Afghanistan Making the boom pay

Temporary Migration: economic opportunity for whom Joseph Stiglitz Sydney Opera House address

Full Disclosure How Corporations Tell Their Story keep Nick Griffin out of Australia

Equality speaks challenges for a fair society Tax reform Who Governs Our Corporations

imagine if Australia was a village Robin Hood Tax Campaign

ENGAGING WITH LABOR IN POWER

Winning with Obama

HUMAN RIGHTS @ WORK Paid parental leave

Our year in review

2011 has been a really big year behind the scenes at Catalyst. With our biggest ever research project kicking off early in the year, it was definitely the year of *Full Disclosure*. This ambitious project has already taken us through many aspects of Australian corporate behaviour and work will continue into 2012.

This series of papers built on our work in 2009, highlighting growing disparity in wealth and income inequality in Australia through our publication *Equality Speaks*. Against a backdrop of growing disquiet about the impact of corporate power on people's lives, we set out to explore the systems and frameworks of corporate social and environmental accountability.

Four papers have been launched this year and a fifth will be released in February. This work has fostered some creative collaborations with non-government and academic organisations, as well as with sustainability experts.

We were very fortunate to have two co-founders of the Green New Deal, from the UK, visit our shores this year. In January we welcomed Colin Hines to Sydney to give a seminar in January, and Ann Pettifor provided the keynote address to the *Making the Boom Pay* conference in September. This was our third, and most successful, conference event.

Our challenge next year is to take our achievements even further – something the Catalyst team is looking forward to.

Most importantly, thank you to our sponsors, members, our Committee of Management and all our supporters for contributing to our work over the past year.



Jo-anne Schofield
Executive Director

Membership and Networks

Catalyst currently has 32 financial members. This includes three institutional members, seven donor unions and 22 individual members, many of whom have supported Catalyst since its inception.

Alongside our small membership, Catalyst has a growing supporter base due to our increased focus on social media and a series of successful events and collaborations with other organisations.

Campaigns and issues



Our 2011 **Full Disclosure** research series:

How corporations tell their story February 2011

Human rights at work March 2011

Who governs our corporations? July 2011

Steering sustainability: How companies manage their corporate responsibility November 2011

Building on our foundation work in *Equality Speaks*, Catalyst set out this year to create a better understanding about the nature of impact of corporate power in our society.

Recognising that our biggest and most profitable public companies draw their wealth from local resources, consumers and workers, we saw that communities are not well organized to articulate what standards and behavior they expect from corporate Australia.

At the same time, there has been a growing reliance on private corporations to provide public and community services, with an expanding suite of taxpayer funded agencies created to regulate and sustain corporate activities.

Working closely with leading academics and practitioners we have stepped inside the systems that corporations used to explain their activities. Focusing on aspects of corporate governance, labour practices and workplace standards, taxation, social investment, and environmental practice, four papers have been released in 2011, with two more under development to be launched early in 2012.

All papers in the series review performance of a group of 12 public listed companies who are relatively mature reporters on sustainability. The sample represents different sectors of our economy and involves companies with white and blue collar workforce.

In compiling this work, we have partnered with a diverse group of organisations:

- Australian School of Taxation, UNSW
- Banarra Consulting
- Centre for Corporate Governance, University of Technology, Sydney
- Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Mining and Energy Division



Robin Hood Tax Campaign

“The global financial crisis is evidence that self-managing markets do not ensure stability or reduce volatility. Governments must intervene to manage risks including the implementation of a financial transaction tax.”

Professor John Quiggin, May 2011



During 2011, Catalyst continued to be active in the Australian coalition supporting a financial transactions tax, working on a campaign steering group with Jubilee Australia, Oxfam, WorldVision and ActionAid.

The campaign took strong shape in 2011 and secured growing support from trade unions, faith and non-government organisations over the course of the year.

Continued financial instability and its impact on the poorest countries and communities has seen the strengthening of the global alliance supporting a financial transactions tax as one measure to restore stability to financial markets whilst raising vital revenue for aid, climate change and public services.

Support for a FTT has firmed in Europe with the European Commission releasing its draft directive for a FTT on the 30th September 2011, seeking its introduction within the EU by 1st January 2014. The governments of France, Germany, South Africa, Brazil, Austria, and possibly Japan, Spain and Korea support an FTT. In December, Italy and Belgium confirmed their support. Although the UK, Czech Republic and Sweden, remain opposed, there is a willingness to push forward on an FTT.

Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan lent his support to an FTT as a way to ensure the \$100bn promised at last year's Climate Summit in Cancun is delivered. He joins institutions like the IMF, European Commission, Gates Foundation, all of whom support an FTT.

Australian organisations involved in the campaign have continued to advocate that our government should play a constructive role and support the global push for an FTT. Sixty-four civil society organisations and four international organisations wrote to the Prime Minister in July to urge the Australian government to enable debate and forward movement on the financial transactions tax concept at the G20 meetings.

Globally, one thousand economists from 53 countries wrote to G20 Finance Ministers prior to their Washington meeting in April this year to urge the adoption of a financial transactions tax. Several Australian economists signed on to this letter.

As austerity measures continue to impact on workers and communities around the world, this international campaign has become a rallying point for a more equal distribution of wealth in our society. To keep in touch with this campaign, visit www.robinhoodtax.org.au.



“The debate about the tax has shifted from a ‘really neat idea’ to a formal proposal with economic impacts. Opposition to the tax from the finance sector has hardened as they realise it must be taken seriously...”

Owen Tudor, European Union and International Relations Department at the UK Trade Union Congress, 4th December 2011

Events

In the tradition of *Crunch Time* (2009) and *Money and Power* (2010) Catalyst once again partnered with The Australia Institute to present a topical and robust policy conference.

Making the Boom Pay was held on 8th September at the WatersEdge conference centre in Sydney. A packed audience of academics, policy experts, unionists, political staffers, environmentalists and international students were treated to a solid line up of leading Australian thinkers.



Our keynote speaker, Ann Pettifor set the scene for the day. Although we are far away from Europe, she stressed that we can learn some lessons from the scale of the intellectual and financial collapse. She pointed out that the global financial crisis was above all a crisis of private, not government finances.

We are extremely grateful to Ann's for her contribution, and to our other speakers: Paul Cleary author of *Too Much Luck*; Tony Maher, President CFMEU Mining and Energy Division; Jessica Irvine, Senior Economics Writer at the Sydney Morning Herald; Professor Julian Disney; Ged Kearney, President ACTU; federal MP Ed Husic, Member for Chifley in Western Sydney; and Professor Ciaran O'Fairchealleah from Griffith University. Audio from all the presentations is available on our website www.catalyst.org.au.

The event was a forum for the launch of the Australia Institute's report *Mining Australia's Productivity* by Richard Denniss. The report provided a detailed examination of the national productivity figures to show *that the productivity of Australian workers is actually rising quite rapidly. In fact, the apparent decline in labour productivity vanishes once the data is adjusted for the very large reductions in productivity in the small, but rapidly growing, mining sector.* A copy of the report is available www.tai.org.au.

Robin Hood Tax Seminar – Melbourne, October 2011

In November, Catalyst and the ACTU invited Owen Tudor, head of the European Union and International Relations Department at the UK Trade Union Congress to speak to Australian unions and civil society groups about the European campaign for a financial transactions tax. You can listen to Owen's interview on Radio National <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/robin-hood-tax/3614148>

Green New Deal – Seminar, January 2011

Catalyst hosted a small roundtable in January 2011, introducing Colin Hines who was the co-convenor of the UK Green New Deal. This event was attended by 30 people from the NGO, environment, trade union sector, and several academics.



Contribution to other events and forums

Politics in the Pub, *The NSW election*, February 2011

Progressive Australia Conference, March 2011, Panel discussions

Organising for good policy, UnionsNSW Organising Conference Panel Discussion, June 2011,
Risk and governance priorities in an uncertain environment, ACTU Investors Forum, June 2011
Is politics getting in the way of policy? Dinner speech, AMWU NSW Branch, July 2011
Inequality is bad for our health, Address to ANF National Conference, October 2011

Media and communications

Thanks to Phil Davey and Nick Lucchinelli from Mountain Media for their hard work over the past year. Media achievements included:

Opinion pieces

Out of the deep freeze, HR Nicholls gets back to work on workers' rights, ABC The Drum, 27th June 2011

Taking the pulse on corporate tax, ABC The Drum, 8th April 2011

Robbo's no yobbo, he's all guts and brains, The Punch, 6th April 2011

Desperation is driving the asylum seeker debate, The Punch, 18th February 2011

Website

In November 2011 we launched our new Catalyst website. The new site is built around making our research and campaign resources more accessible and showcasing our completed research work.

The structure conceived by our design company, Boccalatte was centred on breaking projects or topics up into clear chapters which users could easily navigate between. The result is a bold, user friendly website with strong Catalyst branding.

In addition to the new website Catalyst has boosted its social media presence with a new twitter account. Twitter users can now follow @CatalystAus for all the latest updates.

Sponsorship and Income

Catalyst greatly appreciates the financial support of all our sponsors, members and supporters in 2011. A copy of the audited financial accounts for the 2010-11 year is available to 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

In 2011 sponsorship was also provided by Members Equity Bank. The Australian Nursing Federation also contributed to our work. We appreciate the support we receive from UnionsNSW and from the Evatt Foundation.

Management committee

Catalyst's Management and Executive Committee provided ongoing advice and direction during 2011. Members are:

- Dr Richard Archer (President)
- Susan Hopgood (Vice President)
- John Sutton (Secretary-Treasurer)
- David Carey
- Alison Peters
- Dr Rae Cooper (to September)
- Paul Bastian
- Chris Gambian
- Louise Tarrant
- Peter Murphy

Staff

Catalyst has been staffed during the year by Executive Director Jo-anne Schofield and Catherine Turner also continues as the Executive and Policy Assistant.

In August 2011 Catalyst welcomed Jenni Downes to the team. Jenni has an impressive background in corporate and community research projects and has been working on our next Full Disclosure paper.

2012

Moving in to our fifth year, Catalyst has established itself as a credible and viable policy organisation. We will be working with members, sponsors and our supporters to continue our work on the Full Disclosure project and shape a dynamic agenda in 2012.

www.catalyst.org.au