

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Responsible Business Practice in Australia Report Launched**

**Canberra 16 June 2011** – St James Ethics Centre’s “Responsible Business Practice in Australia” report to the Australian Government was formally launched today at the 12<sup>th</sup> National Business Leaders Forum on Sustainable Development at Parliament House in Canberra. The report was presented by St James Ethics Centre’s Executive Director, Dr. Simon Longstaff, and welcomed by the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation.

The report reviews the key lessons learnt from St James Ethics Centre’s four year national Responsible Business Practice Project, funded by the Australian Government through Treasury, to increase the numbers of Australian companies and small to medium enterprises actively engaged in responsible business practice and to improve and refine the tools available to promote responsible business practice across all levels of management.

*“Australian business has a great capacity to do good while sustaining profitable enterprises. We believe that the foundations for future prosperity lie not just on a structure of enlightened self-interest - but on a set of relationships of mutual interest and advantage. That is why, in the end, we encourage responsible business through the recommendations of this report.”* Dr. Simon Longstaff, Executive Director, St James Ethics Centre.

The report identifies several responsible business and sustainability policy, leadership and practice priorities for consideration by the Australian Government. St James Ethics Centre prepared the report following consultation and workshops with over 50 representatives from its key project stakeholder groups drawn from government, business, the investment community, the not for profit sector, professional service firms, civil society and academia.

*“It is hoped that this report will provide a useful platform for further dialogue and action by government, business and civic leaders in support of responsible business practice in Australia - to mitigate the risks of any future global financial crisis, to address our significant emerging sustainable development challenges and to capitalise on our national and regional opportunities for innovation and economic development.”* Sarah Davidson, Report Author and Project Manager Responsible Business Practice, St James Ethics Centre.

The initial Responsible Business Practice Project funding of two million dollars was announced on 19 May 2008 by the former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd at the 9<sup>th</sup> National Business Leaders Forum on Sustainable Development at Parliament House in Canberra. The Government’s May 2010 budget later announced one further final year of Treasury funding for the project.

*“The Government strongly supports the participation of Australian companies and small to medium enterprises in responsible business practices that will contribute to the long term profitability of Australian business and deliver wider benefits to the community. We welcome the opportunity to review St James Ethics Centre’s report and look forward to continuing cooperation with business and civil society leaders to help further responsible business leadership, policy and practice in Australia.”* The Hon Bill Shorten, MP, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation.

The full report is available at St James Ethics Centre’s Hub of Responsible Business Practice in Australia [thehub.ethics.org.au](http://thehub.ethics.org.au). For further information or media enquiries please contact Sarah Davidson [sarah.davidson@ethics.org.au](mailto:sarah.davidson@ethics.org.au) 0447 110 777.

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