



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**UN Global Compact Network Australia joins with GRI Australia to Present**  
**A Conversation with John Elkington**

Sydney, 28 October – The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Network Australia and the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) Focal Point Australia held their first joint event this month in Sydney.

John Elkington explored the very latest thinking in how business approaches sustainability and sustainability reporting with UNGC Signatories and GRI Organisational Stakeholders, at the event "A Conversation with John Elkington".

Elkington, who was once described by *Business Week* as "a dean of the corporate responsibility movement for three decades", focused the conversation on future trends and themes emerging globally in corporate sustainability. During the conversation he reiterated that the world is now in a "critical decade for change" where new economic and business models need to be invented and a process of creative disruption encouraged.

According to Elkington, key trends and themes include notions of a "transparent economy" and a movement towards an "integrated reporting agenda" - the integration of financial and non-financial (environmental and social) strategies, communicated through real-time downloadable reporting.

Professor John Elkington, Founding Partner & Executive Chairman of Volans, and Co-founder of SustainAbility said: "Increasingly, leadership companies will see the focused integration of environmental and social concerns more as a strategic set of issues, and will want to integrate this area deeper into the guts of their business."

The Elkington event was the first collaboration of the UN Global Compact Network Australia and GRI's Focal Point Australia, following an international agreement made earlier this year by the UNGC with GRI to align their work in advancing corporate responsibility and transparency. The Australian collaboration provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate a local response to the international agreement.

"As corporate responsibility has moved into the mainstream of business strategy and operations, the convergence of the two corporate responsibility initiatives with the broadest reach is a crucial development", said Georg Kell, Executive Director of the UN Global Compact.

GRI Chief Executive Ernst Ligteringen stated "The agreed collaboration, combining the expertise and efforts of GRI and the UN Global Compact, will allow us to significantly extend our outreach and support an increasing number of companies and stakeholders around the world which seek to improve their sustainability performance."

The event was hosted by Westpac, a UN Global Compact Network Australia Founding Member and GRI Organizational Stakeholder. The organisers would like to acknowledge the Qantas Foundation in bringing John Elkington to Australia.

**Contact:**

**Victoria Whitaker**

Manager, Focal Point Australia, Global Reporting Initiative  
[whitaker@globalreporting.org](mailto:whitaker@globalreporting.org) Ph: 02 9909 5777

**Rosemary Sainty**

Head, UN Global Compact Network Australia  
[rsain@ethics.org.au](mailto:rsain@ethics.org.au) Ph: 0417 961 036



## **MEDIA NOTES:**

A recording of the event can be downloaded from: <http://thehub.ethics.org.au/news>

### **About the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)**

The [United Nations Global Compact](#) is a call to companies around the world to align their strategies and operations with ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and to take action in support of broader UN goals. The Global Compact is not a regulatory body, but a voluntary leadership platform for dialogue and learning. With more than 8,200 signatories in more than 135 countries, it is the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative.

### **About the Australian Network of the United Nations Global Compact**

Vision: Australia's strongest corporate citizenship movement committed to the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Mission: To engage the UN Global Compact signatories in Australia through local events and the fostering of a strong, supportive network of like-minded businesses. Launched in May 2009 with seed funding from the Australian Government (Treasury) through St James Ethics Centre's National Responsible Business Project.

### **About The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) & its Australian Focal Point**

The [Global Reporting Initiative](#) has pioneered the development of the world's most widely used Sustainability Reporting Framework and is committed to its continuous improvement and application worldwide. This framework sets out the principles and indicators that organizations can use to measure and report their economic, environmental, and social performance.

[GRI Focal Point Australia](#) works to bring Australian organisations more actively into the broader international dialogue on ESG disclosure and sustainability and seeks to improve the uptake, usefulness and quality of reporting.

### **John Elkington**

Founding Partner & Executive Chairman of [Volans](#), also Co-founder of SustainAbility (1987, where he is a non-executive member of the Board) and of Environmental Data Services (ENDS, 1978). John Elkington is a world authority on corporate responsibility and sustainable development. In 2004, BusinessWeek described him as "a dean of the corporate responsibility movement for three decades." In 2008, The Evening Standard named John among the '1000 Most Influential People' in London, describing him as "a true green business guru," and as "an evangelist for corporate social and environmental responsibility long before it was fashionable." In 2009, a CSR International survey of the Top 100 CSR leaders placed John fourth: after Al Gore, Barack Obama and the late Anita Roddick of the Body Shop, and alongside Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank.

### **GRI and UNGC Alliance**

GRI will develop guidance regarding the UNGC's ten principles and issue areas to integrate centrally in a next iteration of its Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, a comprehensive framework developed to facilitate transparency and accountability for businesses and other organizations seeking to disclose their environmental and social performance. At the same time, the UNGC will adopt the GRI Guidelines as the recommended reporting framework for the more than 7000 businesses that have joined the world's largest corporate responsibility platform. Read more here: <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/news/50-06-24-2010>

### **The Transparent Economy**

Go to <http://www.volans.com/lab/projects/the-transparent-economy/>