



Global Compact Network Australia



UN GLOBAL COMPACT BRIEFING – UPDATE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN FOCAL POINT:

Dear Signatories and friends of the UN Global Compact, Australia

The past 3 weeks have seen a number of important milestones reached as we build the Australian Global Compact Network. I am mindful of not writing a lengthy email and so will present you herewith the key points as briefly as possible:

1. We are delighted to announce that the Australian Network for the Global Compact was formally launched at the National Business Leaders Forum on Sustainable Development (NBLFSD), Parliament House Canberra on Thursday May 28 by Senator The Hon Nick Sherry, Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, and Mr Georg Kell, Executive Director of the UN Global Compact - see media releases from both the UN Global Compact office in New York ([link](#)) and the office of Minister Sherry ([link](#)). The launch was followed by high level meetings with Georg, Minister Sherry and senior advisers to both the Minister and Prime Minister.

In Georg's keynote speech he spoke of the 'dawn of a new crossroad' in how businesses come to terms with the environment, and accordingly how we consume resources, produce goods and services, and emit in environmental terms. He identified the real lessons from the Global Financial Crisis as being that companies must (i) shift their collective focus from short-term profitability to long-term value creation, (ii) that we must update our perspective on risk in recognition of our global economic interdependence, and (iii) that it is critical for markets to be imbued with a sense of ethical principles in order to be sustainable. Georg spoke of the need to "re-tool" and of the importance of environmental stewardship in the lead up to the inter-governmental Climate Change talks in Copenhagen at the end of the year. The Global Compact provides the most ideal vehicle to advocate the cause of sustainability and in support of this Georg identified the Principles for Responsible Investment, as engaging with investors in order to have them recognise that non-financials have a crucial role to play in long-term performance.

2. Signatory Roundtable Meeting with the Executive Director, UNGC - On Day 2 of the NBLFSD a series of bilateral meetings were organised for Georg including with Treasury, the Responsible Investment Association Academy and afternoon tea with the Governor General. We also held a special roundtable meeting with many of you to discuss issues relating to the Global Compact and the Local Network, in the Ministerial Wing, Parliament House, (rooms kindly provided by the Senator the Hon Nick Sherry). This was an excellent opportunity for those present to speak directly with Georg and I know that he came away impressed by the gathering. Georg spoke about the importance of building a network with adequate resources including an inner circle of business signatories, and the drawing in of multi-stakeholder support base.

3. Last week I attended the UN Global Compact Annual Local Network Conference in Istanbul where I participated in a range of sessions including with the ILO on the labour principles of the Compact, and best practices from Networks around the world. I was joined by 2 other Australians- Matthew Tukaki (Drake International) - one of our most recent signatories who gave an excellent speech on Day 1 of the Forum, and Caroline Bayliss from the UN Global Cities program. The final day of the conference was dedicated to working with the focal points of our region – Asia-Pacific, and it is here that we can as a Network make some excellent linkages. These Focal Points represent most of our country's trading partners.

4. Invitation to participate in the Local Network Working Group

I would like to thank those of you who have indicated your availability as signatories to joining a working group for the planning of the Australian UNGC Network and I will be in touch with each of you very shortly to set our first meeting date.

NOTICES SUMMARY:

1. A breakfast will be held this Friday (June 26) in Melbourne organized by “Australia21” - “The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Corporate Responsibility”, supported by PwC and mecu, chaired by Mike Waller, Director, Australia21 and Chair, Sustainability Victoria with Nick Chipman, PwC, myself and Ursula Wynhoven, Global Compact Office as speakers.

2. Training Survey – our regional Network is being supported by the UN Asia Pacific Office in Bangkok who are looking at developing a training program for the Global Compact Communication on Progress Report. If you have 5 minutes to complete the attached survey it would be great to hear what your training needs are – I can feed this back to the UN and it will be used to develop a training program which we can then run from our own Focal Point.

3. Women's Principles - the UN Global Compact and UNIFEM is launching a consultative international process around opportunities and obstacles for business in working with the potential value of a set of Women's Principles. I have been contacted by The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW-International) – who would like to invite Australian UNGC signatories to participate in a consultation on this joint UNIFEM/UN Global Compact initiative on the Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality means Business. If you would be interested in participating in a roundtable discussion this Thursday (June 25 – apologies for short notice) in Melbourne please let Freda Miriklis know asap at: freda.miriklis@bpw-international.org They are also keen to hear from Australian Signatories who may have case studies on workplace practices related to the needs of women. All information including survey is in the attached email.

Regards

Rosemary Sainty
UN GLOBAL COMPACT FOCAL POINT FOR AUSTRALIA