



Global Compact Network Australia

United Nations Global Compact Network Launched in Australia!



The Australian Network of the UN Global Compact was formally launched at the 10th National Business Leaders Forum on Sustainable Development at Parliament House Canberra, on 28 May 2009 by Mr Georg Kell, Executive Director of the UN Global Compact, supported by Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law.

The UN Global Compact revolves around 10 principles for business on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. The principles are derived from international instruments that enjoy widespread government support namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; the UN Convention against Corruption.



Georg Kell suggests that each country network provides something unique back to the UN Global Compact and contributes to the strengthening of the initiative:

“Country networks are absolutely key for the UN Global Compact and increasingly are actually defining what the Compact is. The amount of activity that is now generated by the 5300 corporate participants and 1000 non-corporate participants around the world is increasingly driven from the bottom up – where innovation is generated by collective action that is organised and taking shape and where the interface with public policy making occurs.” says Kell.

Recent Australian signatories include Woolworths and Drake International. They join long-standing Australian participants such as Westpac, BHP Billiton, Foster's and Allens Arthur Robinson. Companies sign on for their entire corporate group – thus there are hundreds of other Australian companies that are subsidiaries of international companies that are already participants. These businesses are now becoming activated through the Australian Network e.g. BP Australia, Nestle, Unilever, Cadbury Schweppes, Microsoft and UBS. Australia is the most recent country to establish a Network.

“I congratulate new and long-standing Australian business participants in the UN Global Compact for their commitment to responsible and sustainable business practices.”

Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law

With the launch of the UN Global Compact Network in Australia (housed by St James Ethics Centre and made possible through funding from the Federal Government - Treasury) the number of companies becoming signatories to the UN Global Compact is expected to grow.

"St James Ethics Centre will work with Australian business signatories to establish a vibrant inclusive Australian Network of the UN Global Compact, and offer practical help for organisations to integrate and operationalise the principles into their business practices, drawing from the Global Reporting Initiative, also housed at the Centre. In addition we are provided with an excellent opportunity to 'connect-the-dots' between those businesses reporting on the 'CSR' of their operations and the investment community's ability to analyse their 'ESG' portfolios more deeply."

Rosemary Sainty, Head, Responsible Business Practice, St James Ethics Centre

To this end the Network will be working closely with the Responsible Investment Association and its recently funded Academy as well as aiming to build strong linkages with the **UN Principles for Responsible Investment** and UNEP FI secretariats in Australia.

The UNGC is closely connected to the UN PRI. According to Donald MacDonald, Chair of the PRI initiative and Trustee of the BT Pension Scheme:

"The UN Global Compact is an extremely important tool for helping companies to achieve long-term business success while also fulfilling society's expectation that they should operate responsibly. It provides companies with a framework of widely accepted standards to use in their management of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Participation in the UN Global Compact sends a strong signal to investors that companies are both alert to the business implications of ESG issues, and taking active steps to incorporate them in their strategy and risk management."

The UN PRI has called on chief executive officers of approximately 9000 companies to commit to the [UN Global Compact](#) and its ten principles.

Georg Kell believes that in order to progress the corporate citizenship agenda we must connect the investment community with the principles of corporate citizenship and create awareness that non financial issues matter. The role, and influence, of the investment community becomes instantly apparent when Kell explains that the 400 institutional investors that support the UNPRI represent over US\$18 trillion, accounting for roughly 10% of global liquidity. Looking at that statistic alone it is clear that integrating responsible investment into mainstream thinking and the decision-making processes of investors, asset owners and asset managers will have, and does already have, a truly significant impact on the community.



For more information contact the

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