

Making Global Goals Local Business Australia Summary Document

11–12 May 2021



Global Compact
Network Australia



The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.



HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



LABOUR

- 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



ENVIRONMENT

- 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- 8 undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- 9 encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



MAKING GLOBAL GOALS LOCAL BUSINESS AUSTRALIA SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The Making Global Goals Local Business Australia (MGGLB-Australia) Forum was convened by the Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA) on 11-12 May 2021 at the State Library Victoria in Melbourne. MGGLB-Australia was delivered as part of a United Nations (UN) Global Compact campaign that aims to respond to global challenges by galvanising local solutions through a movement of businesses and stakeholders taking radical, ambitious and decisive actions to build a resilient and sustainable future for all.

MGGLB-Australia explored the powerful set of priorities and an unprecedented set of opportunities offered by the global framework for sustainable development, the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). The Forum explored key barriers, opportunities and actions for Australian businesses across SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities, SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 – Climate Action, and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals. In doing so, it called on all stakeholders to urgently scale ambition and action to put us on a trajectory to meet the SDGs by 2030.

Spanning two days and including 11 sessions, featuring 34 global and local speakers, and bringing together over 300 in person and virtual delegates, MGGLB-Australia was the GCNA's first hybrid event. The Forum aimed to inspire and enable delegates to understand the practical actions that they, and their businesses, can take to support a more equitable and sustainable future that fundamentally aligns purpose and profits.

This document summarises the key themes and areas of discussion from the Forum. The full Agenda is available [here](#).

Note: MGGLB-Australia was not held under the Chatham House Rule. This summary does not necessarily represent the views of the GCNA, or any participating organisation..

WELCOME TO COUNTRY BY MANDY NICHOLSON

Mandy Nicholson from [Djirri Djirri](#) opened MGGLB-Australia with a Welcome to Country. She observed that although everyone had gathered from different areas, the Forum had brought delegates together in Naarm (Melbourne) for an important purpose.

Highlighting the difference between “collaboration” and “consultation”, Mandy urged businesses to build relationships with First Nations peoples through trust-based collaboration. Specifically, she noted the importance of creating a relationship and building trust before a project starts, throughout the duration of a project, and maintaining it after the project concludes. In doing so, businesses will have the opportunity to partner with the original scientists and ecologists of Australia.

“Aboriginal people are the most consulted people in the world. We’re sick of that word. We don’t want to be consulted because that basically is ticking a box.”

– Mandy Nicholson

In her Welcome to Country, Mandy drew attention to the significant disruption to the 38 First Nations languages in Victoria. She drew on personal experiences of teaching herself and her children Wurundjeri language to highlight that it only takes one person to take action on an issue and empower others to do the same.





20 TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR MASTER OF CEREMONIES – ROBIN MELLON

- 1 The value and power of collective action is critical to achieving the SDGs.
- 2 Embrace the humanity in leadership.
- 3 Leave space for new and improved ideas to come through – do not assume that we know everything now.
- 4 Align your organisational culture with purpose.
- 5 Remember to look at people as human beings, not just pieces in a system.
- 6 Leadership is important but we need to work with our suppliers to catalyse and leverage the supplier multiplier effect.
- 7 Do not tell your stakeholders what you are doing – ask them how to achieve shared objectives.
- 8 Have the courage to really change – do not wait for the possibility of future technologies.
- 9 With a deadline of 2030, that countdown clock on the SDGs is ticking faster than we are acting.
- 10 The joint problems of climate change and inequality cannot be dealt with in siloes – they need to be looked at together.
- 11 Acknowledging that you are scared can help invite solutions, suggestions and collaboration.
- 12 There needs to be greater collaboration and connection between businesses that are tackling similar issues, for example those working on Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs).
- 13 In addition to having conversations, it is essential to understand what a specific policy, such as an Indigenous procurement policy, actually means for your business. Ask yourself whether the right people are involved in implementing the policy to ensure its effectiveness.
- 14 Collecting metrics and building an evidence base will help measure change.
- 15 The circular economy is sexy.
- 16 There are considerable opportunities for living infrastructure projects that contribute more to environmental and social wellbeing than before the project was there.
- 17 The pandemic has enabled businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), to use technologies and engage with customers in completely new ways.
- 18 Failure can stimulate change – to drive courageous action it is important to ask yourself both how far might you fall, and how you can de-risk innovation and an opportunity as much as possible.
- 19 The currency of trust and shared value is very relevant in the Decade to Deliver.
- 20 Tying sustainability strategies and actions back to growth and risk provides a key narrative for business leaders.



1. KEYNOTE ADDRESS: DEFINING RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN THE DECADE TO DELIVER



Sanaka Samarasinha

Speaker: Sanaka Samarasinha, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Fiji MCO responsible for 10 countries in the Pacific (Virtual)

In the opening keynote address, Sanaka Samarasinha offered insights on opportunities to drive change for a more sustainable future, and the need for more urgent and ambitious action on the SDGs as economies and communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A changing landscape

“Change is not only possible, it is inevitable.”

– Sanaka Samarasinha

In his keynote Sanaka Samarasinha highlighted that businesses, civil society, academia and government can either seek to understand and embrace change or be divided by it. Drawing on his personal experiences of living in the Pacific and experiencing extreme weather events four to five times a year, Sanaka Samarasinha spoke of the startling evidence demonstrating how rapidly our world is changing. He noted that those who are at the frontline of climate change, including people living on atolls in the Pacific that are expected to become uninhabitable within the decade, are those that have contributed the least to causing the climate crisis.

“The world’s oceans are heating at the same rate as if five Hiroshima bombs were dropping into the water every second.”

– Sanaka Samarasinha

The keynote explored the damaging role played by short term mindsets, selfishness and seeking instant gratification in contributing to the numerous challenges we face in 2021, including climate change, the biodiversity crisis and a global pandemic. Yet even with this knowledge at hand, we are not applying these lessons to our response to, or recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic. Fossil fuel investments continue, and some governments have linked pandemic stimulus packages to the fossil fuel industry. In doing so, Sanaka Samarasinha cautioned that they are setting economies, people and the planet on a dangerous path towards increased emissions, damaging climate change and a future of stranded assets and communities.

“We are borrowing from future generations.”

– Sanaka Samarasinha

Role of the corporate sector

Through the global framework provided by the SDGs, this session highlighted the critical role the private sector can play in embracing radical change. Specifically, the private sector should:

- Reduce emissions.
- Engage in the innovation, delivery and consumption of responsible products (including in agriculture and eco-tourism).
- Invest in the blue-economy to promote more sustainable marine life which can in turn drive economic opportunities.
- Finance climate action and support Pacific countries through investment to meet their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement.
- Prioritise decent work to make tangible differences in everyday lives, including for already disadvantaged people such as those living with a disability, youth, migrants, workers in the informal economy, women, and those experiencing reoccurring natural disasters.

Sanaka Samarasinha urged delegates to put the rights of the most vulnerable at the centre of their COVID-19 response to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of the SDGs. He noted that reports of increasing disparities can in part be attributed to unprecedented technological change, which can act as a double-edged sword, driving rising inequality and unpredictability whilst also providing great potential to deliver the SDGs.

Critically, SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals, should be a cornerstone of private sector action to deliver the SDGs. The SDGs cannot be achieved alone, and it is through partnerships that business will be able to identify and support those that are most likely to be left behind.



2. PANEL DISCUSSION: DEFINING RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN THE DECADE TO DELIVER



Louise Adams

Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro

Sanaka Samarasinha

Kathryn Sforcina

Speaker: Louise Adams, Group Chief Operating Officer, Aurecon; CEO of the Year 2020, CEO Magazine (In Person)

Speaker: Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Chair, UWC International; Former President and CEO, Global Fund for Women (Virtual)

Speaker: Sanaka Samarasinha, Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Fiji MCO responsible for 10 countries in the Pacific (Virtual)

Facilitator: Kathryn Sforcina, Head of Global Strategy, IV.AI; Non-Executive Director, Farmbot; Author, Digitalizing Sustainability (Nov 21 Launch); Senior Expert, UNEP, UNFCCC, UN IGF and UNDRR (In Person)

The path to 2030 will require bold and ambitious leadership, including the courage to stand up and stand out, even if it means standing alone. In this session, panellists discussed the evolution of leadership and what responsible leadership looks like to them in the Decade to Deliver.

A privilege and an obligation

A crucial component of leadership is recognising the knowledge and expertise of those surrounding you. Responsible leadership goes beyond the idea that the CEO is the most impactful and knowledgeable leader of a business. It acknowledges that leaders can play an important role in empowering and enabling changemakers by facilitating opportunities for people to bring ideas to the table and providing a supportive environment in which those ideas can come to life.

The session also unpacked the role of a leader in brokering knowledge to the people. Doing so effectively can create space for conversations that bring together innovative ideas and drive collaborative outcomes that have the support of the whole organisation, rather than only its leader.

Noting that there is an enormous amount of knowledge in the world today, Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro emphasised that “when people are empowered, they produce more”. Responsible leadership provides an opportunity to harness this power to drive more ambitious, sustainable and resilient business outcomes.

“We have seen through pausing and stopping what we took for granted – we have an obligation to stand up and be bold and visionary.”

– Louise Adams

Responsible leadership in action

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the power of displaying humility and vulnerability as a leader. Louise Adams shared that when confronting challenges such as COVID-19, she kept these traits front of mind. Acknowledging that “I don’t have all the answers, but I do have a plan” supported her to navigate the stress and uncertainty facing corporate Australia throughout the crisis. Leaders who celebrate their own humanity and vulnerability, and recognise this in those around them, are better equipped to empathise with people and understand diverse perspectives.

Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro attributed her success at driving progress on gender equality and tackling gender-based violence to her ability to embed the principle of a common humanity into her work. She urged leaders to see people as human beings first, noting that this will shape the decisions they make and the support they provide as leaders, for the better.

“We can begin to see each other as people, rather than products and statistics.”

– Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro

The session also explored how organisations based on transparent and accountable systems and leaders enable decisions to be made that result in positive outcomes for the most people. Breaking down hierarchies and encouraging information flows within organisations will also support this.

“Leaders must know the lives of people – this takes a great amount of compassion, humility and willingness to learn.”

– Sanaka Samarasinha



Challenges

Speakers discussed some of the challenges they have navigated as leaders. Louise Adams reflected on moments when the services provided by Aurecon or the company’s clients have contradicted the underlying values of the business. In some instances, navigating these situations required difficult decisions, which at times, have included walking away from a client. However, these decisions can also serve to strengthen other relationships by setting a clear tone about what the organisation stands for.

The temptation to return to business as usual was highlighted by Sanaka Samarasinha’s example of Pacific countries developing recovery plans that would see them renew their reliance on a high-carbon tourism industry. He continues to challenge these countries to instead see the COVID-19 recovery as an opportunity to deliver a more sustainable tourism industry that distributes the economic benefits between stakeholders more fairly and evenly.

“We live in a world of exponentials – on the one hand we have this extraordinary growth of technology, of opportunity, of the capitalist economy, and on the other hand, we have an exponential growth in the degradation of our planet. In the middle, there is ‘us’... When we talk about ‘us’, it’s about defining what that means, but also, what we’re prepared to do as leaders to step forward and ensure that we’re addressing this exponential growth in both directions.”

– Kathryn Sforcina





3. BUILDING BACK GREENER: LEADERSHIP IN ACTION



Salvatore
Bernabei



Ming
Long AM

Speaker: Salvatore Bernabei, CEO, Enel Green Power; Head of the Global Power Generation Division and Head of Africa, Asia and Oceania, Enel (Virtual)

Facilitator: Ming Long AM, Chair, AMP Capital Funds Limited; Deputy Chair, Diversity Council Australia; Non-Executive Director (In Person)

Against a backdrop of an accelerating renewable energy transition, this session unpacked pandemic recovery approaches and lessons that can catalyse action towards the shift to net zero before 2050, while also tackling societal issues and building greater resilience to shocks and crises.

This session explored how the world's largest producer of renewable energy – Enel – is enhancing its green leadership position as it enters the Decade of Action. With Enel delivering new records of renewable energy projects and capacity increases in 2020, the transition is accelerating, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

From 'green' to 'sustainable' energy

The session discussed the need to move beyond "green" energy and strive for "sustainable energy", which brings social and economic benefits in addition to the well-recognised environmental advantages. Enel's commitment to net zero by 2030 encompasses this perspective, with over 90 per cent of investment linked to the SDGs. Additionally, Enel's decarbonisation strategy is supported by an independently certified science-based target through the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and brought to life through practical actions including:

- Reducing emissions by 80 per cent from 2017 to 2030.
- Phasing out coal by 2027.
- Repurposing coal fossil fuel power plants for a mix of renewables, storage, warehouses for local communities and shopping centres.
- Using a circular economy approach to revalorise lands, permits and assets (for example, reusing wind turbine blades at the end of their life in the construction of roads).
- Engaging local communities and Indigenous stakeholders to create shared value and build support for a just transition.
- Building hydroponic greenhouses that provide jobs for the local community.
- Developing and using renewable hydrogen.

“Decarbonisation requires disruptive and behavioural changes which will turn into sustainable and long term business opportunities.”

– Salvatore Bernabei

Supply chain opportunities

Using sustainability as a lever for additional value creation with suppliers, clients, investors and communities can provide a key narrative and strategy for businesses seeking to drive shared value creation as well as strong business outcomes. The session unpacked the potential for businesses to leverage their influence through procurement and the wider supply chain, creating a multiplier effect to their actions by bringing their suppliers with them on their transition to net zero. Support from senior leadership coupled with a consultative and collaborative approach was noted as being key to Enel's success in making these changes.

“There is immense power in that supplier piece where you can actually weave that SDG thinking into that strategy.”

– Ming Long

Delivering a just transition

The session discussed the growth of renewables as a reflection of “financially sensible decisions”, but that for an interconnected, smooth, socially just and resilient transition to occur, planning and leadership at a national level will be critical. Notably, the pace and uptake of renewables is occurring faster than all our predictions. To avoid a “bottleneck” where energy transmission and distribution becomes substantially slower than energy generation, coordinated planning and investment in battery storage and the energy grid will be critical.

“If you are not investing in renewables plus storage in Australia, you are losing money.”

– Salvatore Bernabei



Salvatore Bernabei observed that in many instances, the real enabler of the renewable energy transition was the electricity network. He reminded delegates that the network is a very powerful means of integration, as it connects regions and communities through the two-way transmission of electricity. This type of integration can help to drive steady and evenly distributed growth and resilience throughout the electrical network.

Delivering a green recovery

For the dramatic changes necessary to build back greener and tackle climate change, we need to have the courage to really change, rather than prioritising “shortcuts” such as carbon offsets. The support of politicians such as President Biden is promising for greater climate action, however Salvatore Bernabei underscored the importance of businesses and individuals embracing “dramatic change” to deliver a green recovery. Encouragingly, the session noted that this is a transition that “cannot be stopped by one government”. For the businesses in the room, an important takeaway emphasised by Salvatore Bernabei was that investments that are adaptable and long term – those that are financially sustainable beyond the next decade (e.g. investment in renewable energy), should be prioritised.

“Take up an experimental and entrepreneurial mindset.”

– Salvatore Bernabei





4. MOVING BEYOND INCREMENTALISM: CONFRONTING COMPLEXITIES, UNLOCKING COLLABORATIONS AND SPEAKING OUT



Dr. David Cooke



Paul Polman



Robin Mellon

Introduction: Dr. David Cooke, Chair, Global Compact Network Australia (In Person)

Speaker: Paul Polman, Co-Founder and Chair, IMAGINE (Virtual)

Facilitator: Robin Mellon, CEO, Better Sydney (In Person)

From the devastating impacts of climate change, heightened human rights risks, widening inequalities and an unprecedented global health crisis, business leaders are being called upon to lend their voices and influence to solve the world's greatest challenges. In this session, sustainability titan Paul Polman called for the private sector to design the core of their businesses around the SDGs, and in doing so, reap the financial rewards of a business fit for purpose in a net zero future.

A broken system

Our global systems are broken and no longer fit for purpose. Built on enormous overconsumption, high levels of debt, entrenched inequalities and the infinite consumption of inherently finite resources, our current economic model is neither sustainable nor inclusive.

“Anything you can do infinitely, by definition, is unsustainable.”

– Paul Polman

In a critical examination of the challenges facing the world and Australia currently, Paul Polman underscored the complex interactions between the climate and biodiversity crises, human health, social inequality, economic development and weak social institutions. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic alone has driven 20 million people back into poverty. We are also facing a planet on track for 1.5 degrees warming by 2027 and 3 degrees by the end of the century. For Paul Polman, these are some of the alarming statistics that demonstrate that the cost of inaction far surpasses the cost of action on every SDG.

“You cannot have healthy people on an unhealthy planet.”

– Paul Polman

A broader and faster system change is needed to address these interconnected issues, which includes shifting financial markets to address long term gains incorporating financial, environmental and social capital returns, as opposed to short term financial profits. This shift will be supported by investor pressure as a result of growing responsible investment trends, coupled with strong government policy, legislation and investment in activities that drive progress on the SDGs.

The business case

To meet the SDGs, we will require a global incremental investment of approximately two to three trillion dollars a year, compared to current expenditure. Government investment and overseas development aid cannot meet this demand alone – the private sector also needs to play an active role in this transformation. Noting that business globally accounts for 60 per cent of global GDP, 80 per cent of capital flows and 90 per cent of job creation, Paul Polman highlighted both the responsibility and the opportunity for business to take a leading role in delivering the SDGs.

Drawing on examples of Unilever brands such as Dove that have embedded strategic SDGs into their purpose, Paul Polman demonstrated that any business can and should design the core of their business strategy around the SDGs. The UN Global Compact provides one avenue to do this, with approximately 50 per cent of participating businesses already embedding the SDGs into the core of their business. Given that companies with strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) values and purpose at their core outperformed those without by approximately 30 per cent in total returns during the pandemic, the business case for the SDGs is indisputably clear.



“95 per cent of the CEOs we talk to around the world say that they don’t want to go back to where we came from. They want to build back better and construct something more productive.”

– Paul Polman

Businesses can also expect increasing pressure from employees to align strategies and operations with sustainable and responsible business principles. Those who do not, may face instances such as that experienced by Amazon, where 8000 employees threatened to walk out in the absence of sustainability commitments. Paul Polman instead advised businesses to create meaningful purpose through the framework of the SDGs to attract talent with true passion.

With unprecedented government stimulus spending and a clear window of opportunity to act, Paul Polman's message to business is to unlock their leadership and willpower to take ambitious action. Go beyond “promises of net zero by 2050”, stop simply aiming for “less bad” and strive for “net positive”. There is no need for further debate on what needs to be done, but rather concerted, collaborative action by all businesses and governments to seize the current momentum and invest in a future that makes good business sense by being sustainable, inclusive and resilient.



5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT A CROSSROADS: AMBITIOUS BUSINESS ACTION FOR THE SDGs



Sanda Ojiambo

Robin Mellon

Speaker: Sanda Ojiambo, CEO and Executive Director, United Nations Global Compact (Virtual)

Facilitator: Robin Mellon, CEO, Better Sydney (In Person)

This session reflected on the unique moment of history we are experiencing in 2021. The focus of the entire world has coalesced on a single challenge – the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether it be the political, health, economic or social aspects of our current situation, we are collectively engaged in finding short and long term solutions for a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Business ambition and the SDGs provide a path for our COVID-19 response and our recovery. Reflecting on the underlying themes of urgency and ambition, the session explored the need to scale up business ambition on the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. Critically, this ambition needs to be reinforced by “meaningful, measurable and urgent action”.

“We mustn’t forget that before the pandemic, the world was facing twin crises of climate change and inequality.”

– Sanda Ojiambo

The UN Global Compact

The session highlighted the role of the UN Global Compact alongside the Local Networks, including the GCNA, in encouraging and enabling businesses to respond to the call for greater ambition and urgency on the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. While the founding mission of the UN Global Compact still rings true, the session unpacked the key shifts in the UN Global Compact’s *2020–2023 Strategy* that will enable the initiative to work in partnership with stakeholders to set new standards of sustainability and corporate norms.

Specifically, moving forwards the UN Global Compact and Local Networks will:

- Amplify the human face of the global market.
- Accelerate business action.
- Provide a framework for the global business community to meet the requirements of this historic moment.

The UN Global Compact’s new strategy is “an unshakeable commitment to the values of business responsibility, sustainability and cooperation, now more than ever.”

– Sanda Ojiambo

The UN Global Compact’s *Business Ambition for 1.5°C* campaign, which has over 500 businesses committed globally, demonstrates how the initiative is building a critical mass of sustainable businesses taking ambitious action on key issues, such as climate change. Given that there are only 29 Australian companies participating in the Science Based Targets initiative, the potential for greater leadership and action from the Australian private sector is enormous.

Those businesses that leverage the platform and frameworks provided by the UN Global Compact will be well placed to take greater action, supported by a principles based approach to sustainable development and a growing community of ambitious and sustainable companies.



Experiences from the private sector

Drawing on her personal experiences in the private sector, Sanda Ojiambo discussed the need for every business to “constantly evaluate and adjust its operations to deliver results”. Visionary businesses must inevitably take risks as they move to mainstream sustainability practices. This includes working collaboratively throughout supply chains to maximise impact and recognising that supply chains are a “conduit for both positive and negative impact” on the world.

“Businesses must recognise that you are only as strong or as weak as your supply chain.”

– Sanda Ojiambo

Partnerships

The session also underscored the importance of building and maintaining partnerships both within the private sector and across public and private institutions. These partnerships should exist not just to address emergency issues, but to tackle the underlying complex and multidimensional sustainable development issues that remain unresolved. As the European Union (EU) and another 110 countries make commitments to net zero by 2050 that signal a new “modus operandi” for the future, the time is ripe to build on the current momentum and action. For all actors, the test now will be translating these promises into “financial commitments, firm action, and actual impact”.

“For climate and all other critical areas, we must mobilise businesses at every level, in every sector, to innovate new solutions that will benefit people, the planet, and ultimately, the bottom line.”

– Sanda Ojiambo



6. OVERCOMING THE INEQUALITY VIRUS: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND



Shelley Reys AO



Murray Saylor



Sasha Titchkosky



Linda Brown

Speaker: Shelley Reys AO, Djirribul woman; Arrilla Indigenous Consulting; Partner, KPMG (In Person)

Speaker: Murray Saylor, Managing Director, Tagai Management Consultants (In Person)

Speaker: Sasha Titchkosky, CEO, Koskela; AFR Woman of Influence (In Person)

Facilitator: Linda Brown, President and CEO, Torrens University Australia; CEO, Strategic Education Australia and New Zealand (In Person)

The SDGs are a roadmap to leaving no one behind as we work together to tackle intractable global challenges. In Australia, the promise of an inclusive and equitable future is one that rests on meaningful engagement and collaboration with Australian First Nations people. This session explored how Australian businesses can play an important role in advancing equality and the tools available to support them to do so.

Shifting the dial

This session explored the critical need in Australia “to have those difficult, uncomfortable and brave conversations in order to shift the dial” on reconciliation and equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. To do this, businesses and other organisations need leaders who feel capable and confident to drive these conversations. Panellists highlighted the importance of diverse perspectives, background, and specialities within this leadership to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to driving change. For Linda Brown, it’s about being honest enough to recognise the fear of getting it wrong, and being courageous enough to move beyond that fear and take action regardless.

“I’m worried I’ll get it wrong. I’m worried I’ll say the wrong thing... Sometimes that fear of getting it wrong can actually paralyse you into doing nothing.”

– Linda Brown

Organisations can create shared ownership of action and progress by engaging with suppliers, shareholders and other stakeholders in conversations and actions. Meaningful change also requires a significant mindset shift. This includes recognising and calling out racism and inequality when it is present and taking responsibility for educating ourselves and those around us on these issues.

“We talk about unconscious bias a lot – it is a fabricated word to mask the real word – ‘racism’.”

– Shelley Reys

Working in partnership

The session examined the example of Koskela, a furniture design company that has successfully partnered with First Nations artists to generate \$1.3 million that has gone directly to artists and collaborators. The company acts as a conduit to highlight the skills, knowledge and culture of Indigenous Australians. CEO Sasha Titchkosky reflected on the following:

- Although the idea was initially purpose driven, over time and having worked with more corporates, the business case has become more prominent as well.
- The success of the idea is strongly linked to the fact that it was built on “genuine collaboration”, as opposed to “consultation”.
- It is important to invest in the necessary time and conversations with Indigenous Australians and their communities to form successful business relationships – for Koskela, this took three years.

“Even when you make mistakes, if you have built the right relationships and a level of trust, people will forgive those mistakes. You still need to approach things in a considered way, and you have an obligation to educate yourself and learn. But, that fear of doing something wrong may be holding Australia back.”

– Sasha Titchkosky

Murray Saylor observed that incorporating Indigenous Australian culture and knowledge into strategies and operations boosts business value not only in a domestic setting but also internationally. There is an increasing global appetite to work with and invest in businesses that can clearly articulate the financial and social purpose and impact of their engagement with Indigenous Australians for their business and supply chains.



Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs)

Businesses can use the RAP framework to have meaningful conversations and build respectful relationships with Indigenous Australians. For Murray Saylor, frameworks such as RAPs can help “guide the journey and demystify the risk” by enabling real conversations, including with people inside the supply chain. They can also help to keep businesses accountable to commitments and move beyond the “plans” and “discussion” phases.

“It is great to have the conversations, but ultimately it is about the actions.”

– Murray Saylor

Covering approximately 35 per cent of Australia’s workforce, there are now over 12,000 RAPs approved by [Reconciliation Australia](#). Shelley Reys highlighted that high-performing RAPs (e.g. Elevate RAPs) are propelled by purpose but use the business case to harness the enthusiasm of those who might not be purpose driven.

Shelley advised delegates to develop and implement RAPs with the following in mind:

- Understand and incorporate stakeholder expectations (e.g. customers and clients) into their RAP.
- Consider and measure how the actions undertaken through the RAP make them more profitable.
- Integrate key performance indicators (KPIs) and assign responsibility to multiple people to engage a holistic organisation approach.
- Measure and disclose the tangible social and economic impacts of their activities.
- Take action through partnerships and have a long term focus.

RAPs should be about “doing things with people, not for and to people.”

– Shelley Reys AO



7. PATHWAYS TO DECARBONISATION: INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITIES



Chris Reed

Amanda Sturgeon

Sophia Hamblin Wang

Katherine Teh

Speaker: Chris Reed, Managing Director, Neometals (Virtual)
Speaker: Amanda Sturgeon, Head of Regenerative Design, Mott MacDonald (In Person)
Speaker: Sophia Hamblin Wang, Chief Operating Officer, Mineral Carbonation International (MCI) (In Person)
Facilitator: Katherine Teh, Managing Director, Futureye (In Person)

Through an exploration of the mindsets required to deliver innovative and ambitious decarbonisation strategies, this session unpacked key risks and opportunities for Australian businesses on the path to net zero.

Race to net zero

The race to net zero is irrefutably underway. Recalling her time at the World Economic Forum in 2020, Sophia Hamblin Wang noted that businesses at the forefront of sustainable and responsible business practices are increasingly viewing net zero as a competitive advantage.

As the international landscape rapidly shifts towards commitments to net zero and we see emerging trends around regulating greenhouse gas emissions, Australian businesses risk being disadvantaged or isolated from international markets such as the EU by regulation such as carbon import tariffs. With 70 per cent of Australia's trading partners committed to net zero by 2050, it is critical for Australian businesses to start taking this into account now.

“Everyone’s got a choice. You either do it, or you don’t do it. If you don’t do it now, it’s going to get much more painful.”

– Chris Reed

The opportunity versus risk continuum was highlighted by Chris Reed with an example of recycled content in batteries. By 2027, batteries in the EU will need to meet minimum recycled content requirements. Representing an enormous opportunity to develop a competitive advantage now, failing to recognise and respond to this trend will quickly create financial and operating risks for those impacted by this regulatory change.

Beyond decarbonisation

Against the backdrop of intensifying biodiversity and climate crises in Australia, Amanda Sturgeon echoed earlier discussions around the need to move past aspirations of “less bad”, such as emissions reductions, and instead incorporate regenerative thinking. Regenerative design looks beyond the “carbon question” to consider how we can harmonise our relationship with all the living systems in mind to restore and renew these systems in the process.

The session discussed how prioritising short term rewards can limit regenerative design, but that ultimately, businesses will face serious consequences if they fail to adapt to growing expectations to make net positive financial, social and environmental contributions. Amanda Sturgeon explained that investors are already shifting to longer-term thinking by recognising the value of projects and companies that have zero carbon policies embedded into their design or infrastructure.

“We need to find out how to finance the regeneration of nature rather than the destruction of nature.”

– Amanda Sturgeon

The session explored the enormous opportunities available through decarbonisation and regenerative practices. Mineral Carbonation International (MCI) is a business demonstrating that prioritising sustainable choices results in strong financial outcomes. MCI turns carbon dioxide (CO₂) into valuable products such as cement and carbon boards. Technology like this is critical to decarbonising economies, while also generating profits and jobs.

“It’s demonstrating that we can turn CO₂ into value, into profit, and create jobs.”

– Sophia Hamblin Wang



Chris Reed highlighted examples where Neometals had opted to reduce their profit margin to ensure a carbon negative product. He noted that these kinds of decisions can be rationalised by recognising the value delivered for the cost, which in this instance was the decreased risk of the product and its increased longevity in a world transitioning to net zero. Chris Reed also explained that Neometals encourages innovative thinking within its workplace by minimising hierarchy and giving employees the freedom and time to explore alternative solutions via trial and error.

With recent budget announcements for new infrastructure investments across Australia, an opportunity exists to build “living infrastructure” that contributes more to biodiversity and social cohesion, as well as meeting economic infrastructure development goals. A current example of a housing development project in Castlemaine was highlighted by Amanda Sturgeon. The project is profit motivated but also incorporates goals around regenerating five key species within the area. The project has been successful at making a profit and enabling a native owl, moth and frog to return to the area.

“Do we always need to make as much profit as we’re currently making, or can you balance that profit with also good ecological, social and decarbonisation outcomes?”

– Amanda Sturgeon

Shareholders or stakeholders?

The session unpacked how businesses are increasingly expected to think about the whole stakeholder reward, rather than only considering shareholders and the bottom line. This is a trend reflected in the [US Business Roundtable's statement](#) that profit should not be the only priority. Companies can leverage this expectation to build support for net zero throughout the business, including at the board and senior leadership level. Companies with workplace cultures that are prepared for this new mindset are those that have board and senior leadership support, strong commitments, clear timelines and take tangible action. An example of this mindset in practice was provided by Amanda MacDonald, who highlighted that Mott Macdonald made a commitment five years ago to disengage from coal mining.

Working with suppliers, clients and business partners to bring decarbonisation strategies and actions into every relationship is also essential to bringing about rapid and system-wide change. Chris Reed advised businesses to assess their business inputs and outputs to understand where processes can be changed to be more sustainable. Measuring and reporting the value of this will also be important to build support in internal and external stakeholders.



8. TIPPING POINTS: PRIORITISING THE SDGS FOR A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY



Kate Carnell AO
Colleen Harris
James Thornton
Zoe Daniel

Speaker: Kate Carnell AO, Director, Beyond Blue; Board Member, Australian Made Campaign; Former Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman; Former Acting Member, Climate Change Authority (In Person)

Speaker: Colleen Harris, Group Chief People Officer, Ramsay Health Care (Virtual)

Speaker: James Thornton, CEO, Intrepid Group (In Person)

Facilitator: Zoe Daniel, Journalist (In Person)

In 2020 Australia recorded its deepest economic slump in modern history. From leading corporates to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), many businesses were forced to pause, take stock and radically evolve their strategy and operations to simply survive. Drawing on diverse perspectives from the health, travel and SME sectors, this session unpacked how a sustainable recovery depends on our attitudes and willingness to make better choices.

The current landscape

Despite the SDGs reflecting what Zoe Daniel considers to be "simple and expected benchmarks for existence", the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed these shared goals further beyond reach, particularly for those already vulnerable to poverty, inequality, and poor health and wellbeing. Without swift, substantive and transformative action, the unique window of opportunity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to take stock and renew more ambitious action on the SDGs will be missed.

"There is nothing else in our generation that has had such a universal impact."

– James Thornton

Speakers observed the positive trends that had emerged in pandemic responses in Australia to date. The digitisation of the SME sector saw ten years' worth of transformation in a mere eight months. Similarly, in the health sector, the rapid transition to nationwide telehealth services puts Australia on a path to reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing and providing accessible and flexible healthcare for all.



Noting that interest in the 'Australian Made' logo increased 600 per cent during the pandemic, Kate Carnell applauded Australians for their commitment and loyalty to local businesses. The opportunities to invest in local communities, build cohesion and provide innovative jobs that drive progress on the SDGs was demonstrated with the example of Buy from the Bush. Buy from the Bush is an online marketplace for regional and remote Australian businesses, 96 per cent of which are owned by women, that generated \$5 million in the first four months of its existence.

The session explored key pressure points for Australian businesses in the recovery ahead. Although Australians are increasingly expecting greater and more ambitious climate action from all stakeholders, Australia's green pandemic spending is behind that of other countries. Lessons from overseas included the example of economic support provided to Air France, on the condition of climate-based action supported by clear objectives and timelines. Growing nationalism exacerbated by COVID-19 also threatens to polarise the international community and undermine progress on the SDGs. Those businesses working collaboratively across international borders to drive progress on issues such as climate change have a vested interest in ensuring partnerships for the goals are not weakened by inward-facing government policies.



Looking ahead

Speakers explored the challenge of maintaining an ethical and sustainable business during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when for many businesses it comes down to simple survival. James Thornton highlighted that although Intrepid Group continues to face the harsh financial realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, their core value proposition is and continues to be delivering ethical and sustainable travel experiences. In this context, Intrepid Group will continue to be a "purpose-led" company because doing so provides it with a degree of competitive advantage that will only be maintained through customer and employee demand in the "new COVID world".

"There is a growing movement of people being more aware around where their dollars are being spent, and they are more and more looking into if a company is just greenwashing, or is a company actually independently certified, is it measuring and taking action against what it says it does?"

– James Thornton

Speakers discussed the value of transparent and regular communications with staff and consumers, including the positive trend towards one-on-one check-ins. These communications were supported and enabled by empathetic and values-based leadership. Maintaining these practices in a post-pandemic world is a key opportunity for businesses to deliver inclusive workplaces that support good health and wellbeing.

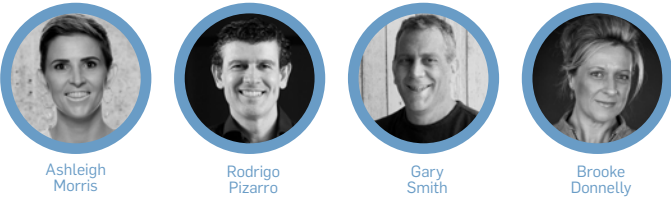
"Crises happen. Business planning therefore must embrace resilience."

– Kate Carnell

As businesses look ahead to a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the current crisis, speakers advised them to embed agility and flexibility by continuously assessing and improving their sustainability strategies. Actively considering the important lessons learned and maintaining new and improved practices will support the private sector to move towards a new and more sustainable 'business as usual'. Instead of tackling all SDGs in a general sense, aligning strategies and operations to specific SDGs where businesses can have the most strategic impact will enable deeper and more meaningful progress.



9. A PLANET UNDER PRESSURE: REIMAGINING RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION



Speaker: Ashleigh Morris, Co-Founder and CEO, Coreo (In Person)
Speaker: Rodrigo Pizarro, Managing Director, L'Oréal Australia (In Person)
Speaker: Gary Smith, CEO, BioPak (In Person)
Facilitator: Brooke Donnelly, CEO, Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) (In Person)

In an intimate and interactive breakout session on responsible consumption, speakers and delegates explored the current technologies and operational practices available to transition to a circular economy. Alongside these strategic and operational changes, significant shifts in consumer mindset and behaviour will be required to truly reinvent a system that no longer exists in opposition to our planetary boundaries.

Defining responsible consumption

The current “take, make, waste” economy is not fit for purpose. Instead, we need to redesign our economy around principles of circularity by recognising that no material ever leaves the planet or is entirely consumed – they simply change form. Ashleigh Morris highlighted that instead of allowing this to continue in a linear cycle to the detriment of people and planet, we can harness this cycle to capture the full value of products.

“A bin is just a vessel in time for a product to be transported from one place to another.”

– Ashley Morris

The session highlighted that all stakeholders, from businesses to governments and individuals, have a responsibility to recognise this opportunity and drive progress towards a circular system. Doing so will not only put us on a path to a more sustainable future but will also deliver further opportunities for job creation and economic development.

Responsible businesses

Brooke Donnelly discussed the challenge of reconciling the difference between circular environmental outcomes and the consumption objectives of many retail businesses. Businesses looking to deliver ongoing growth and financial returns while also driving progress on SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production will continue to face this challenge. Rodrigo Pizarro does not see these two desired outcomes as incompatible. He observed the reality of increasing consumption globally and in Australia and noted that the primary strategy of L'Oréal is to ensure that consumption is sustainable. For example, although it has, at times, meant longer product delivery times, L'Oréal decided to prioritise sea freight over air freight to manage their environmental footprint. It is also important to not let a lack of consumer pressure become a licence to continue unsustainably.

Alternative materials such as biodegradable packaging will play an important role in enabling businesses to decrease their use of single-use plastics and become more sustainable. The effectiveness of alternative materials is reliant on businesses considering the full picture of such a solution, including the carbon used to make the material and the disposal requirements that enable this carbon to be recaptured. Additionally, businesses should consider the education for consumers that they need to provide alongside the alternative packaging to ensure consumers dispose of it appropriately.

“Educate consumers and empower them to make [responsible] decisions.”

– Brooke Donnelly



Practical tips for business

Through a dynamic discussion between delegates and speakers, the session highlighted practical tips for businesses looking to embed responsible consumption into their supply chain and operations. These included:

- Engage with your internal risk management and finance personnel to deliver sustainability frameworks that clearly incorporate the risks and the opportunities.
- Leverage the momentum provided by the investment community's focus on ESG to engage with the board and senior leadership on their obligations and the expectations facing businesses.
- Be transparent about the challenges you face and the actions you are taking to address them.
- Form strategic partnerships to avoid waste leakage throughout your operations and supply chains. For example, this could be done through relations with companies that are selling the service of their product rather than the product itself.
- Question how your business can impact consumption both upstream and downstream. Build relationships and education campaigns with suppliers and consumers to influence them to change their habits and patterns of consumption.
- Use certification to embed accountability and to investigate supply chains and ensure that throughout your business relationships, waste is being treated correctly and responsibly.

“You need to be systematic and strategic in your partnerships so that you can close loops on products in the globalised economy.”

– Ashley Morris

Empowered consumers

The session also discussed the responsibility of consumers to drive market and product change. Rodrigo Pizarro observed this purchasing power in action, highlighting that growth in the circularity of products at L'Oréal has been driven by pressure from consumers demanding more reusable solutions in L'Oréal products. Speakers explored practical avenues through which consumers can do this, including:

- Using their purchasing power and social media to discuss and influence product design.
- Encouraging government and business to provide more comprehensive, accessible and understandable end of life solutions to enable greater waste recovery and recycling.



The discussion assessed whether the onus is on business to take sole responsibility for delivering sustainable products or if consumers also have a responsibility to drive change. Delegate participation in the discussion suggested that some consumers may feel that the former is the case, and that consumer focus should be on advocating to local councils and governments to enable a more circular economy. Speakers suggested that although the business responsibility is undoubtedly critical, the realities of the current system mean that without consumer pressure, many businesses will take advantage of this complacency and continue with 'business as usual'. For Brooke Donnelly, empowered consumers are a key component in a system that inherently requires checks and balances to operate sustainably. An absence of engaged and responsible consumers concentrates power into one group – the private sector – and contributes to an unbalanced system.

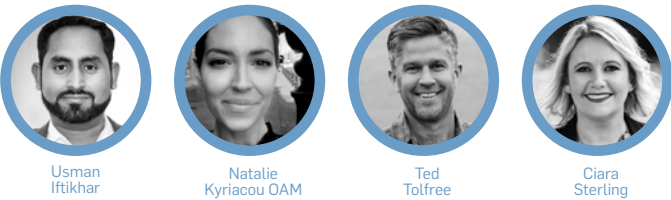
Businesses and governments need to play a key role in creating communities of empowered consumers. This includes through developing educational campaigns and end-of-life product services (e.g. container deposit schemes) that are widely available, accessible and understood by consumers. Gary Smith emphasised that education provides the link between a product and its intrinsic value in a circular system. However, these mechanisms can only be effective if consumers empower themselves with the appropriate knowledge of a product to ensure that they dispose of it in a way that enables it to be recovered and reused or recycled.

“Consumers need to change their mindset to know that what they are throwing out is not waste, it's a resource.”

– Gary Smith



10. INNOVATOR SPOTLIGHT



Speaker: Usman Iftikhar, CEO, Catalysr (In Person)
Speaker: Natalie Kyriacou OAM, Founder and CEO, My Green World; Board Advisor, Women Leaders Institute; Management Consultant, PwC (In Person)
Speaker: Ted Tolfree, CEO, Crisp and Macedon Ranges Produce (In Person)
Facilitator: Ciara Sterling, CEO, Thriving Communities Partnership (In Person)

We need to change the way we support humans experiencing any type of vulnerability. Doing so through the global framework provided by the SDGs requires transforming the systems in which we live, rather than just the humans. This session explored the critical role played by innovation in delivering radical change through the SDGs, and the characteristics required to do so in an inclusive and resilient manner.

Conditions for innovation

Innovation requires courage and resilience. Speakers reflected on how these key characteristics enabled them to be vulnerable to risk, explore new opportunities and deliver change with passion. The value of transparent communication with stakeholders, clients and other small businesses was underscored by the recognition that it is important to be open about challenges and failures. In the absence of such an enabling environment, new ideas can be stifled, and the "bravado" of other businesses can repress learnings, collaboration and partnerships.

For many innovators, fear of failing, actually failing, and feeling like a failure are common emotions that can dominate. For Ted Tolfree, asking "how far will I fall if this doesn't work?" helped him to understand the real risks of building a start-up and assess whether these were worth taking. Speakers reflected on their shared experiences of failure and learning on the go, recognising that these are intrinsic to innovation.

"Failures hurt, quite a lot. I think over time you learn a little bit of resilience and that healthy disconnect from the business that helps you not crumble every time there is a hiccup."

– Natalie Kyriacou



With innovation often comes privilege. Although many people may have innovative ideas to tackle challenges, the financial risks and outputs required to bring these to life can often prove too burdensome. To overcome these barriers, speakers suggested recognising this privilege and empowering and elevating people in the workplace and community, to ensure that as many ideas as possible can come to the table and that we leave no one behind on the path to 2030.

"Be innovative, collaborate, leave competition at the door, and actually just put humanity first."

– Ciara Sterling



The SDGs and small businesses

There is often strong natural alignment between the SDGs and small businesses or start-ups, for example SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth. However, the capacity for small businesses to clearly articulate this alignment and take strong action on the SDGs is often very limited.

"Small businesses on a day to day basis just don't get the opportunity to think about the SDGs."

– Usman Iftikhar

Drawing on examples of start-ups supported by Catalysr, Usman Iftikhar remarked on the enormous opportunities for corporates and governments to partner with small businesses and start-ups to build their capacity and amplify their impact on the SDGs. For example, Spiral Blue is a start-up which has developed a processing computer that increases the capability of a satellite by approximately 20 per cent. This technology has the potential to improve environmental risk management, for example through better predictions of natural disasters such as droughts, fires and floods.

"Profit and purpose go hand in hand. Purpose is what creates the motivation and inspiration, and therefore, the innovation."

– Ted Tolfree

Partnerships between large and small businesses based on a mutual accountability model offer a future avenue for businesses of all sizes to scale ambition and action on the SDGs. For these partnerships to be effective and productive, it is important to recognise the power imbalances between large and small businesses. Businesses can also capitalise on the current growth in trust between stakeholders by being more transparent and ensuring that they are using empathetic communications throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (and other crises), to further embed trust into their partnerships with small businesses.

"The key solution lies in SDG17 – Partnerships."

– Ciara Sterling



11. FIRESIDE CHAT –TRUST AND PURPOSE: LICENCE TO COMPETE



Speaker: Michelle Hutton, CEO, Edelman Australia; Vice Chair, Edelman Asia Pacific (In Person)
Speaker: Terence Jeyaretnam, Partner, Climate Change and Sustainability Services, EY (In Person)
Facilitator: Daniel Ziffer, Reporter, The Business and ABC News (In Person)

The corporate landscape is shifting. Conversations with private sector leaders have fundamentally changed. The final session of the Forum explored whether ‘trust’ can provide business with a powerful lens for building greater understanding and action on intractable global issues.

The pace of change

A rise in shareholder resolutions, annual general meeting (AGM) upsets, international litigation, media attention and customer pressure are indicative of the change of tone across corporate Australia and around the world. Stakeholders are expecting more responsible and sustainable business practices that reflect authentic and purpose-led companies, and they are increasingly holding business to account in various forums when these expectations are not met.

“We have seen in the past year big shifts where employees, clients and stakeholders have revolted at decisions made at a leadership level...where the leadership has misjudged the situation and not anticipated the blowback.”

– Daniel Ziffer

Although business leaders are increasingly recognising this changing landscape and listening more carefully to stakeholders, the pace of change is not adequate to tackle global challenges such as climate change and deliver the SDGs by 2030. According to Terence Jeyaretnam, macro indicators suggest that another recession similar to that caused by COVID-19 in Australia is impending if we don't take action on climate change. Australia's key coal trading partners have set net zero emissions targets and the [International Energy Agency](#) (IEA) has announced that coal will be in decline by 2040. In November 2020 Australia ranked third on the [Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index](#) and yet ambitious climate policy and action continues to be hindered by a piecemeal approach to emissions reductions and limited federal policy.

The ‘tragedy of the commons’ continues to play out on the world stage and in Australia, whereby individuals, businesses and governments neglect the shared well-being of society and the planet in pursuit of personal gain. In this context, the absence of adequate regulatory frameworks and the slow pace of change in Australian politics are limiting factors in addressing this issue.

Although financial markets are moving and regulation has come a long way, including through increasing climate risk disclosure and the escalation of director responsibility, the breadth of the 17 SDGs continues to challenge directors and senior leadership. Building director capacity on climate science, sustainability and the SDGs is critical in the context of limited directors with strong expertise on these issues in the Australian director community. Doing so will support these issues to be better incorporated into executive KPIs and scale the ambition and pace of action, particularly in the absence of more prominent government leadership.

“Is business going to save the world? Only if there is systemic and regulatory change.”

– Terence Jeyaretnam

A framework of trust

Fostering stakeholder trust in a business can be enormously powerful, but many business leaders are not considering potential actions, or inaction, with this in mind. Drawing on her experience advising large companies and business leaders, Michelle Hutton suggested that using the framework of trust can be a valuable lens through which to take action on key ESG issues and the SDGs. In particular, this is a framework that can resonate with executives and boards by helping to unite what can seem like an overwhelming number of challenges in the 17 individual SDGs. Trust can also provide a unifying metric through which to measure progress, with Michelle Hutton noting that “there is now a lot of data to show that trust drives commercial growth.”



“By building trust capital, you can navigate risk better.”

– Michelle Hutton

The session also discussed the opportunity for businesses to capitalise on a unique moment in time where they are the most trusted institution in Australia. With this trust comes greater expectations, including that 66 per cent of Australians expect CEOs and big businesses to step up and solve societal challenges such as climate change. However, businesses will also need to continue to navigate a landscape in which the trust inequality gap between informed and uninformed public is at an all-time high. Coupled with a polarisation of media, ongoing scepticism of media outlets and a lack of fact-checking or “information hygiene” among the general population, the Australian private sector will continue to face challenges in communicating the good news stories.

Prioritising authentic communication and collaborative problem solving will be critical if business is to effectively navigate these challenges and maintain high levels of trust. Additionally, business leaders that are able to recognise and prioritise local community trust, demonstrate empathy, and get off the “growth treadmill” narrative will be well positioned to navigate the ongoing shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and thrive in a future where trust and purpose are critical to business success.

“Those that are taking risks and being a little bit more creative and bolder to help solve some of the big societal challenges and issues are the ones that are commercially more successful today than those that aren't.”

– Michelle Hutton

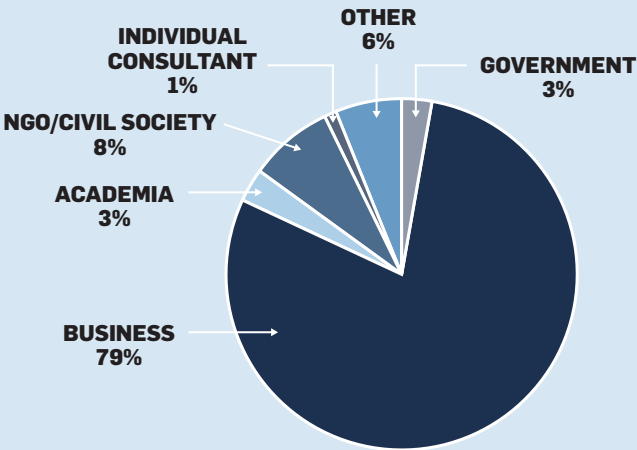


12. FORUM IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

FORUM ACHIEVEMENTS

- Reached an audience of over 300 participants in person and virtually.
- Social media conversations: #MGGLB was used over 58 times on Twitter and 140 times on LinkedIn.
- Delivered relevant content: 93% of people surveyed thought the quality of the content was good or excellent.
- Brought together high quality and knowledgeable Australian and international speakers: 91% of participants surveyed thought that the quality of the speakers was good or excellent.
 - 100% of people surveyed thought the Master of Ceremonies was excellent.
- Presented a high quality hybrid event that enabled delegates to join the Forum from anywhere in the world: 83% of participants surveyed thought the quality of the virtual platform Chime Live was good or excellent.
- 83% of people surveyed thought the format of the Forum was good or excellent.
- Overall, 67% of people surveyed thought the Forum was extremely valuable or considerably valuable.

FORUM DELEGATES BY SECTOR



MOST APPRECIATED SESSIONS

- Building Back Greener: Leadership in Action | Keynote and Facilitated Discussion with Salvatore Bernabei and Ming Long AM
- Moving Beyond Incrementalism: Confronting Complexities, Unlocking Collaborations and Speaking Out | Keynote by Paul Polman
- Overcoming the Inequality Virus: Leaving No One Behind | Panel discussion

Results based on survey responses.



IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED

- Practical examples of businesses taking action are very useful. Including more short presentations about members' sustainability strategies would make other academic and technical discussions more relatable for sustainability practitioners.
- Varied session formats, including interactive or workshop-style sessions, would enhance the event by helping to increase participant engagement and collaborative learning.
- Longer sessions (e.g. 1.5 hours) can make it hard to maintain focus.
- Having playback facilities and session recordings available would support virtual delegates to watch content that they are unable to view live, due to time differences and other commitments.
- An online networking function would improve the virtual experience by allowing online delegates to network with each other.
- Overall the Chime Live platform was well received, and the Q&A, polling and resources sections were appreciated.
- The hybrid nature of the event enabled attendees to maximise their participation by attending in person and virtually based on individual preferences.
- Gathering in person for an event was powerful and many appreciated the ability to network and meet with new and old connections.

Lessons learned based on survey responses.





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Global Compact Network of Australia

E | secretariat@unglobalcompact.org.au

T | +61 (0) 491 234 061

A | 15 Lygon Street, Carlton 3053

unglobalcompact.org.au



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