

CATALYST >>

Catalyst Australia incorporated

Annual Report to members 2008

good lives >>
good work >>
good communities >>

Introduction

As Executive Director of Catalyst Australia I am delighted to introduce our first annual report.

As an open and inclusive organisation, transparency in reporting will be a continuing feature of how we operate. This report for members covers our activities, income and membership in our first year.

Catalyst grew from a shared idea that the progressive community needed to counter the powerful influence of right wing think tanks and ideas.

This idea took shape with the financial backing of our founding trade union sponsors, under the guidance of a committed management committee.

Catalyst has benefited from the hands on involvement of Richard Archer, President of Catalyst and that of our other executive committee members John Sutton, Secretary Treasurer and Susan Hopgood, Vice President.

Many others have helped to get us started. Martin Ford and Suzanne Boccalatte from Boccalatte helped establish the Catalyst brand and web-site and continue to provide us with enthusiastic support and advice.

Catherine Turner and David Alonso Love joined Catalyst as staff mid-year and have become a great source of energy and ideas, and Phil Davey has worked hard on establishing a successful media profile around our public events and campaigns.

In addition, Catalyst has valued the support from members, and the input of many friends and allies over the course of the year – people who have shared our vision for **good lives, good work and good communities**.

More than 40 people have generously presented papers at our events, and hundreds of others have come along to contribute to these public forums.

After a formative year in 2008, we are looking forward to bigger achievements in 2009.

To succeed we need the continued support of our members and sponsors to help shape our future direction and contribute to our ideas and campaigns.



Jo-anne Schofield
Executive Director

Membership

Membership has grown throughout 2008 with over 36 people joining Catalyst in our first year. Four organisations have become institutional members and six donor unions are members.

Membership includes academics, union members, social justice activists, lawyers, think tank and NGO staff, Labor MP's and staff and Greens members.

Most members have joined Catalyst after coming along to one of our events. The forum *Engaging with Labor in Power* attracted 16 new members to Catalyst.

Membership is valid for a financial year. All current membership is valid until 30 June 2009, and then can be renewed.

Networks

Catalyst has established a network of other progressive think tanks throughout 2008 to develop some synergies, improve communication, and to promote the sharing of limited resources across like-minded organisations.

Catalyst has established links with Asian Women at Work, the Anti-Slavery Project at UTS, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Council of Social Services and it's state counterparts, NCOSS in NSW and VCOSS in Victoria, Australian Institute of Employment Rights, Jumbunna House of Indigenous Learning, Monash University, Union Strategy Research Group, the School of Political Economy at Sydney University, Sydney Alliance and WorkingNSW.

Catalyst has advertised events for the NSW Fabians, Greens, and many other organisations.

In 2009 we will continue to build these networks.

Events



Temporary Migration: Economic Opportunity for Whom?

6th May 2008

Sydney Mechanics School of Arts Auditorium, Sydney

Catalyst's first forum was attended by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, leading academics, government and employer organizations, trade unions and community migrant groups.

As a relatively new organisation this event helped Catalyst forge new links with a range of organisations with an interest in improving our migration policy.

100 people attended this forum. Media coverage included ABC and SBS news and interviews with speakers on ABC's Radio National breakfast program.

A summary paper is available from our website. This outlines common themes of the forum and suggests some principles for a fair migration policy.

Speakers at this event: Minister Chris Evans, Jane Corpuz-Brock - Migrante, Bob Kinnaird, Jim Barrett – AiG, Dr Bob Birrell – Monash University, John Sutton - CFMEU, Nic Maclellan, Dr Patricia Ranald – AFTINET, Dr Selvaraj Velayuthum and Dr Amanda Wise – Macquarie University, Dr Michele Ford – Sydney University, Julius Roe AMWU, Wilhelm Harnish – Master Builders Association. Social documentary slideshow was provided by Therese Sweeney of Memory Bank.

Members Equity Bank sponsored of this event.



Engaging with Labor in Power

22nd August 2008 - Victorian Trades Hall, Melbourne

25th August 2008 - Wesley Conference Centre, Sydney

This event was the most far reaching of the Catalyst Events in 2008. It aimed to start a dialogue across progressive organisations about how they could contribute positively to Labor in power.

It was attended by people from a diverse range of organisations including unions, environment groups, law firms, aid organisations, disability services and welfare providers, migration resource centres, social justice advocacy groups, ALP/Greens members and indigenous welfare advocacy groups.

Catalyst hosted Jon Cruddas, British Labour MP for Dagenham, who gave the keynote address. His visit and the forum were given significant attention with major articles appearing in the Australian Financial Review, Sydney Morning Herald, and The Weekend Australian.

The program included a high caliber of over 20 speakers, covering issues such as alliance building, campaigning, and heard about successful case studies of achieving social and political change. Papers are available on our website www.catalyst.org.au

The forum was attended by 65 people in Sydney and 35 people in Melbourne.

The Chifley Research Centre hosted an address by Jon Cruddas to federal Labor caucus. This was attended by around 40 MPs, Senators and staff.

Speakers

Melbourne: Jon Cruddas, Senator Kim Carr, Larissa Behrendt Jumbunna House of Indigenous Learning, John Ryan ACTU, Mark Butler MP Labor member for Port Adelaide, Dr Richard Dennis the Australia Institute, Tony Keenan Hanover Welfare Trust, Dr Sean Scalmer Melbourne University, Michael Cooney Per Capita, Miriam Lyons, CPD, Cath Smith VCOSS, Tony Maher, CFMEU, Brett Smith CPR Communications

Sydney: Jon Cruddas, John Robertson UnionsNSW, Professor Frank Stillwell, Adam Kilgour CPR Communications, Jennifer Burns Anti-Slavery Project, Alison Peters NCOSS, Dr Gabrielle Gwyther University of Western Sydney, Tony Maher CFMEU, Adam Kerslake UnionsNSW, Nick Martin Chifley Research Centre.

Sponsors of this event were Members Equity Bank and CPR Communications.



Restoring Rights at Work: Lessons from the UK
10th November – AEU Conference Centre, Melbourne
11th November – NSW Trades Hall Auditorium, Sydney

On the eve of the Rudd Government's unveiling of their industrial relations legislation this forum looked to practices in the UK and USA to see what lessons might be learnt.

Catalyst hosted labour and constitutional law expert, Professor Keith Ewing from Kings College at London University to speak at these forums.

Professor Ewing also provided an address to the Employment, Education and Industrial Relations caucus committee during his visit and held a roundtable meeting in Brisbane.

Fifty-two people at the Sydney Forum heard from Professor Ewing, as did 34 people in Melbourne.

The events were covered by the Age in Melbourne, and industrial relations on-line journals Workplace Express and Workforce.

Speakers at this event: Sydney – Dr Rae Cooper (Chair), Ron McCallum AO, Jeff Lawrence Secretary ACTU, and Dr John Logan UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research. Melbourne - Mordy Bromberg SC, Cath Bowtell Senior Industrial Officer ACTU, and Jillian Murray, Latrobe University.

Partners and sponsors of this event were: the Australian Institute of Employment Rights, Members Equity Bank, ACTU Member Connect, Monash University, Union Strategy Research Group, the AMWU, AEU, CFMEU, and CPSU-SPSF, Hall Payne Lawyers.

Campaigns and issues

As a new organisation, our campaigning capacity has been slow to build but will be an important focus in 2009.

The following issues are ones where Catalyst has had an impact in 2008.

Paid parental leave

Catalyst prepared a submission to the Productivity Commission in its inquiry into paid parental leave, and appeared at public hearings. We also submitted a response to the Inquiry's draft recommendations.

Executive Director, Jo-anne Schofield, published an opinion piece in the Sydney Morning Herald and the Newcastle Herald, titled *In a man's working world parental leave should be about fathers too*.

Following interest in this issue, Catalyst web-master David Alonso-Love undertook a series of interviews with men who had opted to stay at home to care for their kids *Parents these days*, published on our website.

Catalyst has worked closely with the National Foundation of Women and other organisations on the community campaign around paid parental leave.

Tax reform

In response to the announcement of the federal government's Henry Tax Review Catalyst published an opinion piece *Let Needs Lead Tax Reform* arguing for greater community input into taxation reform.

Catalyst was involved in the establishment of the ACTU/ACOSS Roundtable on Tax Reform and will have an on-going role in supporting community, union and progressive voices on the issue of taxation reform.

We will continue to focus on equality in the taxation system in 2009.

Keep Nick Griffin out of Australia



In October 2008, Catalyst set up an email petition to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship asking him to prevent the proposed visit to Australia by British National Party leader Nick Griffin.

This campaign is supported by unions, anti-race and faith organisations.

Catalyst has also promoted other campaigns and events, including the Australian Education Union's campaign on public education and the Rights on Site campaign.

Media

Catalyst has appreciated the advice and hard work of our media consultant, Phil Davey from Mountain Media Limited. Phil was engaged in April 2008 and his work has helped to establish our public media profile and achieve the following coverage:

'Feeling left right out, left plans to fight right', The Age, 27th May 2008

Temporary Migration: Economic Opportunity for Whom?

ABC Radio National and ABC news and SBS news provided detailed coverage of our public forum Temporary Migration: Economic Opportunity for Whom? and interviewed key speakers.

Parental leave

'Leave accounts: win-win solution to child care', ABC opinion online 23 April, 2008

'Parental leave accounts mooted', Australian Financial Review, 22nd May 2008

Women would be the losers forced out of job market, Clare Masters, Daily Telegraph, 22nd May 2008

'In a man's working world parental leave should be about fathers too', Opinion piece by Jo-anne Schofield Sydney Morning Herald, 1 October 2008

'Men must be visible in parental leave debate', Opinion piece by Jo-anne Schofield, Newcastle Herald, 1 October 2008

Radio interviews on 2UE and several regional radio networks.

Tax reform

'Let Needs Lead Tax Reform', Opinion piece by Jo-anne Schofield, Illawarra Mercury 13 August, 2008

Jon Cruddas for the Engaging with Labour in Power forums

'Third Way becomes the Empty Way', Andrew West, Sydney Morning Herald, 21st August 2008

'How Blair lost his way in the middle', Mike Steketee, Weekend Australian 23-24 August, 2008

'Rudd Labor gets lesson from London', Steven Scott, Australian Financial Review 28 August 2008

Nick Griffin campaign

'Fascist backers fear racial riots but opponents call for visa ban', Connie Levett, published in the Sunday Age, Sun Herald and syndicated in 200 Fairfax papers, 16 November 2008.

Radio interviews Perth drive time and ABC news radio to discuss the Nick Griffin campaign.

Restoring rights at work forums

'The Government's IR plan must deliver balance, peace', Paul Gollan The Age, 14 November, 2008.

Features reports in Workplace Express and Workforce

Sponsorship

Catalyst is extremely grateful for the financial support of the following organisations in 2008, and for their continued support in 2009.



Australian Education Union



Amalgamated Metal Workers Union



Community and Public Sector Union



Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union



Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union



Maritime Union of Australia



Members Equity Bank

Operating income in the 2008 calendar year was \$220,000. A copy of the audited financial accounts for the 2007-08 year is available to members.

Management committee

Catalyst has benefitted greatly from the guidance of our management committee in 2008, whose members were:

Dr Richard Archer (President), Susan Hopgood (Vice President), John Sutton (Secretary-Treasurer), David Carey, Dr Rae Cooper, Dr Lindy Edwards, Julius Roe, Dr Christopher Sheil, Louise Tarrant, Dr Shann Turnbull.

Staff

Catalyst has the following staff:

Jo-anne Schofield, Executive Director, appointed November 2007 (full time)

Catherine Turner, Executive and Policy Assistance, appointed July 2008 (16 hours week)

David Alonso Love, Web Content Officer, appointed July 2008 (8 hours week)

Catalyst President, Richard Archer has made an invaluable contribution to all our day to day work and all activities.

In early 2009 we hope to provide opportunities for interns and others to work on projects, research and events.

Our plans for 2009

After a formative year in 2008, next year is shaping up to be even bigger.

An important part of our work will be to strengthen our alliances with progressive organisations and communities.

In 2009 we will

- Commit to three or four key projects in the areas of taxation reform, equality, a 'new' productive economy and green jobs.
- Continue to run a number of seminar events on topical issues, starting in February 2009.
- Remain open to new ways of doing things, new ideas and to the inclusion of diverse people in our activities.

Achieving our ambitious agenda is reliant on continued financial support and fundraising and we will look for ways to build our capacity through increased membership, sponsorship and partnership arrangements.

To keep up to date with our activities, log on to www.catalyst.org.au