Module 7: Catalysts & The Catalyst Calendar

Why this matters

Mining stocks don't move on time. They move on **events**. Between events, they drift, decay, and bleed sentiment. Map the events ahead of time and you know when to be in, when to be out, and what to expect.

The retail mistake is owning a stock through the dead time between catalysts. The professional approach is to enter ahead of high-conviction catalysts and exit after them — or to enter the orphan period and wait for the next catalyst cycle to lift the SP.

What is a catalyst?

A **catalyst** is a discrete event that changes the market's information set about a company's value or risk. It must be:

1. **Identifiable** — you know it's coming
2. **Time-bound** — there's a window when it'll arrive
3. **Material** — capable of moving the SP meaningfully

Vague things like "exploration upside" or "macro tailwinds" are not catalysts. They are themes.

The catalyst hierarchy by stage

Stage 1–2 (Concept → Drilling)

- Tenement grants

- Geophysical survey results
- Drilling commencement
- First-hole results
- "Visual indicators" announcements (often fluff but can move SP)

Catalyst potency: low to moderate. Drill commencement runs are predictable; visual results are unreliable as a fundamental signal but can drive 20–50% SP moves.

ASX framing: BSR post-IPO 2025 is a classic Stage 2 catalyst pattern — drill commencement, first hole, assay results in sequence over 3–6 months. **TOR** runs the same playbook with the additional drill-for-equity contractor structure as a green flag.

Stage 3 (Discovery)

- **Discovery hole assays** — the most asymmetric catalyst in mining
- Step-out hole assays confirming continuity
- Geophysics extending the prospective footprint

Catalyst potency: very high. A genuine discovery hole can 5–10x a junior in days.

ASX framing: PC2 through 2025 — successive high-grade Au intercepts, each batch market-moving, step-out drilling extending the footprint. The Stage 3 catalyst flow is the most concentrated information rate in mining.

Stage 4 (Resource Definition)

- **Maiden JORC resource** — major re-rate event
- Resource upgrades (Inferred → Indicated)
- Metallurgical testwork results

Catalyst potency: high for maiden, declining for subsequent upgrades.

ASX framing: PC2's maiden JORC resource (planned mid-2026) is the next major catalyst. **MI6** has been delivering resource upgrades and metallurgical results across its portfolio.

Stage 5–6 (Scoping → PFS)

- Scoping study results
- PFS results
- Permitting application lodgement
- Strategic investor announcement
- Offtake MOUs

Catalyst potency: mixed. Study results often disappoint vs hyped expectations (capex sticker shock). Offtake MOUs are usually overhyped relative to their actual binding force — see Module 4 on reading the body of announcements vs the headline.

Stage 7 (DFS)

- DFS results
- **Final Investment Decision (FID)**
- Permitting approvals
- Financing milestones (mandate signed, term sheet, drawdown)
- Binding offtakes

Catalyst potency: high. This is where the orphan period ends if the project is real.

Stage 8 (Construction)

- Ground-breaking
- Major equipment orders / arrivals
- First ore on ROM pad
- Construction milestones (mill installation, tailings dam complete, etc.)
- Schedule/budget updates (often negative)

Catalyst potency: moderate. Each milestone is a small re-rate. Cost overrun announcements are heavily punished.

ASX framing: GLN delivered the rare "construction completed on time and on budget" milestone on 31 March 2026. The default expectation should be the opposite — 30–50% capex blowouts and schedule slippage are the norm — so the absence of bad news at this stage is itself information.

Stage 9 (Commissioning)

- First concentrate / doré / cathode produced
- First sale / first revenue
- First positive cash flow quarter
- Achievement of nameplate capacity

Catalyst potency: very high. The second peak of the Lassonde curve builds here.

ASX framing: GLN's Q2 2026 first lithium chloride concentrate production is a company-defining milestone. The Stage 9 transition is when the market starts pricing the asset on cash flow rather than NPV — a different valuation regime entirely.

Stage 10 (Production)

- **Quarterly activities reports** (the heartbeat of producer SPs)
- Production guidance updates
- AISC reporting
- Reserve updates
- Dividend announcements
- Exploration results around mine
- M&A activity

Catalyst potency: moderate per event, but cumulative and consistent.

ASX framing: ELV through 2025–2026 — quarterly production and AISC become the core read on the stock. Macro overlay (Module 9) drives most of the SP movement; quarterly delivery either confirms or undermines the thesis the macro is implying.

Recurring scheduled catalysts (every ASX-listed company)

Build these into your calendar for every position:

Quarterly Activities Report (Appendix 5B)

Due dates: within 1 month of quarter end:

- Q1 (Jan–Mar): due 30 April
- Q2 (Apr–Jun): due 31 July
- Q3 (Jul–Sep): due 31 October
- Q4 (Oct–Dec): due 31 January

Contains: cash position, cash flow, quarterly activities, project updates, exploration spend.

For producers: production volume, AISC, sales, hedging position. The most important regular catalyst for any producer.

The Section 8 read — every Appendix 5B has a section showing actual quarterly cash burn (operating + investing). Divide cash on hand by that burn rate to get quarters of runway. This single calculation predicts cap raise timing better than almost anything else (covered in Module 6).

Half-yearly and Full-year financial reports

- Half-year (HY): typically March (for Dec year-end) or September (for Jun year-end)
- Full-year: typically August (Jun year-end) or February (Dec year-end)

AGM

Usually November for Dec year-end companies. May for Jun year-end. Sets up:

- 7.1A capacity vote
- Director re-election
- Performance rights grants
- Often a forward strategy presentation

Annual Mineral Resource and Ore Reserve Statement

ASX Listing Rule 5.21 requires an annual update. Often released alongside the annual report. Track resource/reserve growth year-over-year — this is where reserve depletion vs replacement becomes visible.

How to build a catalyst calendar

For each stock, track in a single document or spreadsheet:

Date / Window	Event	Type	Conviction	Expected SP impact
2026-Q2	First lithium chloride production (GLN example)	One-off	Very high	Major re-rate if successful; major fall if delayed
2026-mid	Maiden JORC resource (PC2 example)	One-off	High	+50–100%
2026-Q4	Scoping/PFS study results	One-off	Medium	+20–40% (if positive)
Quarterly	Drill assay batches	Recurring	Variable	-10 to +30%
2026-10-31	Sept quarterly	Scheduled	Low base case	Cash position read

Update monthly as company guidance shifts. Most companies telegraph their next 6 months in their quarterly investor presentations — read those.

Pre-event positioning patterns

The catalyst trade is well-understood and well-played. Recurring patterns:

Run-up into catalyst

SP often rises in the 2–8 weeks before a known catalyst as positioning builds. This is the cleanest part of the trade.

Sell-the-news

On the day of (or 1–2 days after) the catalyst, even good results often see SP fade as positioned holders take profit. Standard pattern especially for known/expected results.

Surprise upside

When results materially exceed the priced-in best case, you get a fresh leg up after the initial sell-the-news fade. Discovery holes far above expectations, DFS economics significantly above PFS, met recoveries 5%+ above pilot — these can re-rate.

Surprise downside

Cap-ex blowouts, met recovery shortfalls, permitting denials, delayed financing — punished hard, often -30% to -60% in a session. Recovery can take years.

How to use catalysts in position sizing

A position with a known catalyst within 8 weeks should be sized differently from a position with no catalyst for 12 months.

Crude framework:

- **Pre-catalyst position (≤8 weeks out):** can be sized to your full conviction allocation
- **Mid-cycle position (catalyst 3–6 months away):** half of full allocation; add into the catalyst window
- **Orphan period position (no catalyst within 6 months):** quarter allocation max; you're being paid for time risk via lower entry price, not catalyst risk

This naturally aligns position size with the rate at which information arrives.

What kills a catalyst trade

Slippage

Companies miss guided dates. A "Q2 2026 PFS" routinely becomes Q3, then Q4. Every quarter of slippage is a quarter of dilution risk and SP decay.

Pre-leak

Information sometimes leaks. The SP runs ahead of the announcement, and by the time results are public, the trade is over. Watch for unexplained volume / SP moves in the days before scheduled events. ASX speeding tickets ("Aware?" letters) are a tell.

Better-priced alternatives

Even a positive result can fail to move the SP if the market has already moved past it. A good DFS in a hot lithium market in 2022 moved stocks 50%+. The same DFS in 2025's bear market barely moved the SP.

Macro override

A perfect drill result during a commodity crash can be ignored entirely. Sentiment and macro determine whether the catalyst actually translates to SP movement.

When the absence of a catalyst is itself the catalyst

Some companies announce nothing because there is nothing to announce. This is structurally different from a company in the orphan period waiting for a known event. Tells:

- **Quarterly activities reports that copy-paste content from previous quarters.** Phrases like "drilling continues at site X" or "metallurgical testwork progressing" recurring verbatim across multiple quarters indicate the project is dormant. Change the date and the announcement could be from 18 months ago.
- **No drill rig on site for an extended period** despite quarterly references implying work is ongoing.
- **Cash burn that doesn't match the activities described** — if the quarterly activity report describes active drilling but the Section 6 spend on exploration is below what a rig program would cost, the activity is overstated.
- **Management remuneration high relative to actual progress** — covered in Module 6/8.

The dormant company is the worst trade in mining. The thesis dies of slow attrition rather than a single bad event. By the time you realise nothing has happened in 18 months, the SP has bled half its value and the cap structure has dilated through funding rounds.

Practical exercise

For every position in your portfolio:

1. List the next 3 catalysts in chronological order
2. Estimate the date window for each
3. Assign a conviction level (high/medium/low)
4. Estimate plausible SP impact ranges (positive and negative)
5. Identify which catalyst you're being paid to wait for
6. **Re-read the last 4 quarterly activities reports — does each one describe substantively new progress, or are phrases recurring verbatim?**

If you can't list 3 catalysts within the next 12 months for a stock you hold, you're holding a story with no scheduled events to validate or invalidate it. That's not investing — that's a time-decay trade against your own capital.

Cross-reference: ASX continuous disclosure

Under ASX Listing Rule 3.1, listed companies must immediately disclose information that a reasonable person would expect to materially affect the SP, subject to certain carve-outs (incomplete proposals, confidential negotiations, etc.).

This means catalysts cannot be "saved up" for AGM season. When something material happens, it must be announced. The exceptions are where companies wedge new "material" news into already-scheduled releases (like quarterlies) to make the news look less significant.

Watch for material content buried in the body of quarterlies that wasn't pre-announced — that's a deliberate framing choice. (Module 4 covers reading announcement bodies vs headlines as a discipline.)

What I'm uncertain about

- Specific quarterly due dates can be extended in unusual circumstances (e.g., COVID-related extensions in 2020). Default to the dates above.
- The threshold for what triggers continuous disclosure is a judgment call and ASIC has periodically issued enforcement actions where they disagreed with companies' interpretations. Recent specifics worth verifying if you need precision.
- Catalyst potency varies enormously with the broader macro cycle. The same announcement that drives a 50% re-rate in a bull market may drive a 10% bounce in a bear market. Module 9 covers how to read the cycle backdrop.

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