

Global SME Themes in the Australasian Context: A SEANZ Research Symposium

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Keynote presenter



Dr. Gerard McElwee is currently Professor of Entrepreneurship at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK where he teaches, Entrepreneurship and Research Methods.

Gerard is the Editor of *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (<http://www.ipublishing.com/ei.htm>) which he launched in 2000. He sits on numerous Editorial Boards in the area of Entrepreneurship.

He developed an interest in entrepreneurship in the rural area after carrying out research and consultancy work with small rural businesses and farmers. He has over 50 refereed publications and has published extensively in the area of Entrepreneurship. He has a particular methodological expertise in qualitative methods and social constructionism.

Gerard has taught extensively in Zambia, UAE, Oman, India and in Europe.

Presenting: ***A bottom up approach to rural sustainability***

Presenters



Dr. Candice Harris is a Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management and Deputy Director of the New Zealand Work and Labour Market Institute based at AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand. Candice has a MBS in Management and a PhD in Tourism Management. Her areas of research include work-life balance, employee participation, gender issues in management, and qualitative and critical approaches to research.

Presenting: *Work-life balance in SMES: Throwing the baby out with the bathwater?*

In this presentation we seek to debate the accepted rhetoric of 'work-life balance' and its appropriateness to the SME context. This will be done primarily through the lens of a study on mumpreneurs in New Zealand, which explores how mumpreneurs engage in entrepreneurial activities. We find that mumpreneurs are largely motivated by a desire to balance their life stage needs for personal motivation and fulfillment, family life and work life balance. Incorporating critique of 'work-life balance' theory from general management studies, we will also posit future directions for examining the concept of work-life balance in the SME context.



Dr. Kate Lewis is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Management at Massey University (Wellington). She is an Associate Fellow of the NZ Work & Labour Market Institute at the Auckland University of Technology and a Research Associate of both the New Zealand Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship Research Centre and the New Zealand Centre for SME Research at Massey. Her current research focuses on older and younger entrepreneurs; environmental management in SMEs; gender and identity in the entrepreneurial context; and, the sustainability - social entrepreneurship nexus. She is a co-editor of the journal 'Small Enterprise Research'.

Presenting: *The third age entrepreneur: Older & wiser?*

The world is facing a dramatic shift in its age profile. Those in the 'third age' (>50 years of age) comprise an even greater proportion of the global population. One proposed solution to concerns regarding the sustainability of intergenerational social support systems is to encourage older workers to remain in the labour market for longer. Self-employment is seen as a means to achieving this (full time or as bridging employment). In the presentation the experiences of a group of third age entrepreneurs are reported, including: start-up decision factors; business assistance needs; success barriers and drivers; and, work practice characteristics.



Dr. Eva Collins is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Her area of research and teaching is business strategy related to sustainability with a focus on small and medium size enterprises. She is an award winning writer of sustainability case studies on small businesses. She received her PhD in Environmental Public Policy from George Washington University. She is a member of Hamilton City's Leadership Forum on Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Presenting: *Sustainability Practices of Small and Medium Size Enterprises in New Zealand During the Recession* (Eva Collins, Professor Stewart Lawrence, Professor Juliet Roper & Jarrod Haar)

The presentation details the results of one of the first national studies tracking the impact of the recession on the sustainability practices on small and medium size enterprises. A survey of businesses was conducted in 2003, 2006 and again in 2010 on what is the nature and extent of business adoption of sustainability practices in New Zealand. In addition, in 2004/05 and 2009, a series of interviews and focus groups were conducted across the country with a random sample of survey respondents.



Dr. Jill Thomas (BA, MBA, PhD) is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Adelaide Business School where she teaches the Leadership and Family Business courses in the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program both in Adelaide and offshore in Singapore. Jill has published extensively in the family business field, including journal articles, book chapters, and case studies as well as having presented papers at numerous national and international family business conferences where she has received several best paper awards. Jill is a member of the SA chapter of Family Business Australia (FBA-SA) and is a member of FBA's National Education Sub Committee. She has recently been elected to the Family Firm Institute (FFI), the peak body based in the USA for family enterprise advisors, educators, and researchers. Jill is on several editorial boards including those for the *Family Business Review* and the recently established Elsevier journal, *Journal of Family Business Strategy*.

Presenting: *Governance challenges for the family business*

This paper reviews some of the challenges that family owned small to medium enterprises experience as they begin to formalise their governance structures, systems and processes. As a family business grows and transitions to another generation of ownership and management, challenges arise from actual and potential competing interests of the incumbent and the 'next' generation. To 'manage' the increased number of stakeholders - from multiple generations, from increased numbers of owners and their families, and from the growing business and numbers of nonfamily employees and managers - the family business needs to professionalize. To do so it needs to pay attention to developing appropriate governance mechanisms for each of the subsystems of the business, the ownership, and the family. This paper outlines possible governance mechanisms drawing on three case studies to explore the implications for the growing family business. While the extent of formalisation of governance structures varied in each case, each 'business' was performing well while each 'family' demonstrated different levels of the effectiveness in terms of its dynamics.



Dr. Alan Coetzer is currently a Senior Lecturer in the School of Management in the Faculty of Business & Law at Edith Cowan University. He was previously a Research Associate of the New Zealand Centre for SME Research at Massey University. Alan has published several papers in international peer reviewed journals in the area of employee learning and development in SMEs.

Presenting: *Owner-manager decision making regarding employee access to training and development in medium-sized enterprises*

Small and medium enterprise employees form part of a 'disadvantaged' group within the workforce that receives less access to formal training and development than employees in large firms. The owner-manager's decisional role is critical when considering employee access to training and development. Unfortunately, there is scant research into factors affecting owner-managers' decisions regarding employee access to a requested development opportunity in medium-sized enterprises. To address this research gap, semi-structured interviews incorporating critical incidents will be conducted with a purposive sample of 20 owner-managers. The interviews will provide rich, nuanced and contextualized information on the decision-making role of owner-managers that can be analysed for key themes.

Co-presenter: **Dr Janice Redmond** is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Management and works within the Small and Medium Enterprise Research Centre (SMERC). Dr Redmond is involved in several projects for SMERC including the SME Environmental Sustainable Industry Projects, management skills and competencies in small business and online training education for small business.



Dr. Retha Wiesner is currently an Associate Professor in Management, within the Faculty of Business at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research activities are focused on the development of organisational capabilities and enhancement of firm performance and economic sustainability through the effective improvement and implementation of people management strategies, organisational change strategies and environmental sustainability strategies. She is the chief investigator of a major national and international study on human resource sustainability, organisational change and competitive advantage in SMEs. She was also chief investigator of an Australian study on developing a best practice framework for managing environmental sustainability in SMEs. Retha has published over 70 refereed publications and co-authored 6 books on management, human resource management and organisational behaviour.

Presenting: *Managing and engaging human resources in the pursuit of business sustainability change: Lessons from SME sustainability leaders* (Retha Wiesner, Doren Chadee & Peter Best)

The topic area of business sustainability innovation and change is a new direction in research within the SME context. The objective of this paper is to report on the sustainability journeys of sustainability SME leaders and explore how these firms optimise environmental sustainability by managing and engaging their human resources. This is done through a qualitative research design employing mini-case studies in twelve SME sustainability leaders. A framework is presented that supports the view that a heightened propensity for participative employee management and engagement ensures that SMEs are better equipped for meeting the challenge of successfully progressing sustainability and achieving triple bottom line outcomes.



Dr. Jessica Kennedy is an Associate Professor at Central Queensland University based in Rockhampton. She has been a lecturer in both management and accounting disciplines, teaching courses in small business management, entrepreneurship, and strategic management as well as management accounting. Her research interests are in the areas of the management of high-risk entrepreneurial ventures, regional small business development, and entrepreneurial intentions.

Presenting: *Financing high risk ventures: The Australian innovation*

Research and development ventures are difficult to finance because.. While various tax incentives and subsidies are often called for to improve finance availability to these ventures, one Australian innovation was the formation on no-liability companies. This paper explains the history of the no liability company in Australia and explores its impact on the financing of mining ventures, with a focus on the period from 1980 onwards.



Dr. Martie-Louise Verreynne is a Senior Lecturer in Strategy at the University of Queensland Business School in Brisbane, Australia. She holds a PhD in Strategic Management from Massey University in New Zealand and has worked at universities in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Martie-Louise has presented numerous papers at national and international conferences, and has written several book chapters and articles in leading journals. She has also received various awards and grants, including three best paper awards in the strategy and public sector areas in the last four years from ANZAM. Her current work is in the areas of small firm growth, strategy, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Presenting: *Participation and innovation in small firms*

The global financial crisis is prompting small firms to re-examine the practices that they use to deal with dynamic environments. Researchers and practitioners are gradually recognizing that participation during strategic decision-making and innovation processes provide an avenue to actively manage change and uncertainty. In this paper, two sets of data are examined - one each from New Zealand and Australia - to understand how these processes influence performance in small firms. Findings indicate that internal participation yields the greatest gains in stable environments. External stakeholders, through networking and other practices, help to clarify and improve ideas that were developed internally, and are best involved in dynamic environments.

Professorial discussants



Professor Beth Walker is the Professor of Business Enterprise in the School of Management at Edith Cowan University and the Director of the Small and Medium Enterprise Research Centre (SMERC). SMERC has two main goals, to conduct relevant and applied small business research and to provide community outreach, all through partnerships.

Over the past 9 years Beth has conducted over 30 different research projects, including 2 Australian Research Council grants, written over 50 peer reviewed articles and papers and successfully delivered 7 federally funded SBEC/BESB programs. Revenue raised for the Centre is in excess of \$3.4 million. Prior to joining Edith Cowan University she worked in both big and small business, including her family business in the UK.

She is also the co-editor of *Small Enterprise Research* and guest editor for a special edition of the *International Journal of Business Studies*



Professor Mary Barrett is Professor of Management in the School of Management and Marketing at the University of Wollongong. Her research focuses on the link between three areas important to small enterprises: learning, entrepreneurship, and gender. She has published extensively on leadership and entrepreneurship in family firms, women as firm owners and managers, career issues for professionals in small firms, and gender issues in workplace communication.



Professor David Deakins holds a Chair in Small Business at Massey University and is Director of the New Zealand Centre for SME Research (NZSMERC). He joined the Centre in September 2009 after spending 15 years at the former University of Paisley in Scotland, where his research interests covered many aspects of small firm innovation, growth and development, but focused on access to finance and ethnic minority entrepreneurship. He has a successful textbook on *Entrepreneurship and Small Firms* with co-author Mark Freel and he is currently working on a sixth edition. While at Paisley he set up the Paisley Enterprise Research Centre and completed projects for the Scottish Government on women's enterprise, minority ethnic enterprise and SMEs' access to bank finance. At NZSMERC he is currently leading a major project on SMEs Capability to Manage Regulation which is a cross departmental project for the New Zealand Government.



Professor Brian Gibson is a Professor of Accounting at The University of New England in Armidale, NSW, Australia. His principal teaching is in management accounting while his major research interest is in entrepreneurship and small firm financial management.

He has contributed to two books on small firm financial management and has over 80 refereed journal and conference papers including publications in the *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Small Business Economics*, *Small Enterprise Research*, *The Journal of Small Business Finance*, *Contemporary Accounting Research*, and *Accounting and Business Research*.

He is consulting editor of the journal of SEAAANZ, *Small Enterprise Research*, and serves on the editorial advisory panel of several journals including the ICSB's *Journal of Small Business Management*. Brian is a Past President and a Wilford White Fellow of the ICSB, currently Chair of the Vision and Strategy Committee of that organisation, and President of SEAAANZ.



Professor John Breen is Acting Director of the Centre for Tourism and Services Research.

In November 2009 Professor Breen was presented with the Australian Best Entrepreneurial Educator award by the Business Higher Education Round Table.

He is a Life Member of the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand (SEAANZ) and a former Board Member of the International Council for Small Business. He has served on a number of small business committees including for the Commonwealth government, Victorian government, Australian Taxation Office, CPA Australia and VECCI.

He has a passion for developing the entrepreneurial capacity of the community and created a Business Plan competition for secondary students from the Western region of Melbourne. He is also a judge of the national schools Business Plan competition. He supports local entrepreneurship through involvement as a judge of business award programs.

His research interests include small business learning, home-based businesses, entrepreneurship, and small business and the community.



Professor Anne de Bruin (PhD) is Professor of Economics in the School of Economics and Finance and founding Director of the New Zealand Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Research Centre, Massey University, New Zealand. Her research interests are entrepreneurship, social innovation, sustainable employment and regional development. In entrepreneurship, her current focus is on the creative industries, new conceptualizations, social entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurs. Anne sits on four journal editorial boards: International Small Business Journal, Journal of Management and Organization, Forum for Social Economics, Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management and International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship. She has been guest co-editor for Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice.

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seanz1@gmail.com

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