

# Research Directions

Office of Research Services

## ***EMS for SMEs***

**Associate Professor Robyn Bushell from the Centre for Cultural Research and Mr Bruce Simmons from the CRC Irrigation Futures are collaborating with the NSW Environmental Trust to share research results and outcomes from work with the NSW Camping & Caravan Industry and Manly Council with tourism SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprises) through an Environmental Trust grant.**



'There are numerous negative effects of tourism on the local environment and community which need to be proactively managed by local government' says Associate Professor Bushell. 'Environmental management skills and knowledge are essential to reduce the impacts from tourism, and lack of awareness is a major impediment preventing businesses from engaging in sustainable practice. The majority of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) implemented at a local level to improve the environmental performance of small businesses don't focus on the full range of economic, social and environmental costs. Small businesses need to see the economic benefit of environmental management initiatives. This project addresses training needs and capacity building key staff within these businesses to improve their overall performance, and compare that performance through continuous innovation rather than inappropriate benchmarks.'

In previous collaborations with Manly Council and the camping and caravan industry, UWS researchers have developed a methodology that allows small businesses to measure their performance by a context specific process of continuous improvement. The research team now aims to build on the previous study to extend the application of these principles into other local councils and other small businesses. This will be done by developing environmental management case-studies that will highlight the advantages of a triple bottom line focussed methodology, share the lessons learned, and provide a 'how-to' guide to implementation. Individual businesses will also be guided through a staged process of auditing and analysing current practices, as well as workshops to facilitate adoption of improved EMS strategies. The research team will study processes and analyse case-studies in order to develop a resource kit which can be marketed and promoted to local governments for small businesses throughout the state, encouraging environmentally and socially responsible business practices.

This project will raise awareness of the costs and benefits of good business practices and sustainability outcomes. In turn, this may reduce impediments to small business adopting such practices, and thereby increase the benefits and partnerships between small businesses and their local communities.

**Project Title:** Dissemination of Environmental Management Training for Tourism Businesses

**Funding has been set at:** \$32,560

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Contact Details:

[r.bushell@uws.edu.au](mailto:r.bushell@uws.edu.au)

<http://www.uws.edu.au/ccr>