



# Connect



October 2002

Newsletter to Members of APESMA CONNECT

## Professional women in small business

There remains a great deal of confusion and contradiction about the factors that contribute to women's success in small business.

While the "face value" approach is that the gender of the business owner/manager is irrelevant and the market will decide which businesses survive and fail, indications are that women may have differential access to business support services, to formal networking and training opportunities, and to business finance and advice which may collectively act as a barrier to establishing and operating small businesses.

While solid data for business exit rates by gender is difficult to obtain, there is evidence which suggests that business exit rates are disproportionately high for women – but simultaneously, indications are that once women have their businesses established, they have a higher success rate. Similarly, there is what appears to be contradictory information on women's access to business finance. While a Yellow Pages Small Business Index survey in 1994 found that there was no evidence to suggest that women small business proprietors are less successful in dealing with banks than are males, this finding contrasts with a great deal of anecdotal evidence suggesting that banks and other financial institutions may treat women less sympathetically than men when approving startup equity and debt finance.

Various reports over the last decade have recommended initiatives to address potential barriers including common interest support networks, support mechanisms for women making the transition from being employees to managing their own businesses, and training specifically designed to enable participation by all workers including women with carer/family responsibilities. Access to mentoring mechanisms, assistance with business planning and business skills training, and development of best practice models for home-based work have also been recommended.

Connect aims to assist in these areas by supporting the improvement of the business management skills of women operating small businesses, by promoting role models to demonstrate successful women in small business and their achievements, by providing flexible and accessible services for rural and regionally-based businesswomen, and by supporting and promoting women's networking tools.

There is no doubt that the rate of participation of women in small business is increasing. Ensuring that the pool from which small businesses are drawn reflects the diversity of the broader community, and that no particular group is disadvantaged or denied access to business support services, will ensure a thriving and competitive small business sector.

*Kim Rickard*

*Connect Executive Officer*

[www.apesma.asn.au/connect](http://www.apesma.asn.au/connect)



## CONTENTS

### Feature – Women in small business

- WISE – Support for women professionals in small business
- Facts on women in small business
- Profiles
- Mentoring for women in small business
- Small business incubators
- Networking resources for women in small business
- Business finance and advice
- Tips for business success

## Other News...

### Record keeping for new small businesses

### Business taxation – ATO's Bizstart seminars

### Lodgement dates for quarterly BAS

### Mentors Online nominated for a Micro Business Award

### PSI Update – Passing the Results Test – ICA's 20 point checklist

### Connect calendar – October, November and December 2002

*"... Connect aims to assist by supporting the improvement of the business management skills of women operating small businesses, by promoting role models to demonstrate successful women in small business and their achievements, by providing flexible and accessible services for rural and regionally-based businesswomen, and by supporting and promoting women's networking tools ..."*

# Connect's *WISE* initiative – supporting women entrepreneurs

– a web page, an invaluable reference book, business skills development, financial advice and mentoring

Win ...

- a year's free membership with the National Micro Business Network which includes your own web page in the MBN's Micro Mall and a listing in MBN's online directory
  - a copy of Jeffrey Oxnard's "How to Become a Successful Consultant"
- a free copy of Show me the Money – a Woman's Guide Through the Financial Maze
  - \* a free APESMA online short course
- the option of a guaranteed place on Connect's 2003 Mentors Online program

To be eligible, simply email [wise@apesma.asn.au](mailto:wise@apesma.asn.au) by **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October**.  
The winner will be notified by email by **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2002**.

## Facts on women in small business ...

At June 2001, there were 317,300 female operators of home-based businesses in Australia.

Women are establishing their own businesses at a faster rate than men.

Women are more likely than men to adopt a deliberate strategy to remain small rather than pursue a high growth strategy.

Women who have migrated from non-English speaking countries are more likely than other women to run their own businesses.

Women are less likely to have a formal business plan at start-up than men.

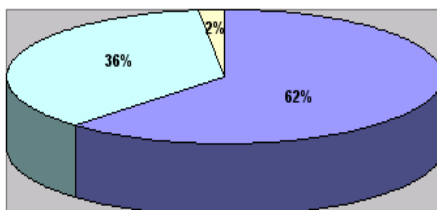
Once established, businesses owned and operated by women have better survival rates.

Women are less likely to obtain startup equity and debt finance from external sources than men.

Women are more likely than men to put their entrepreneurial plans on hold after a loan rejection.

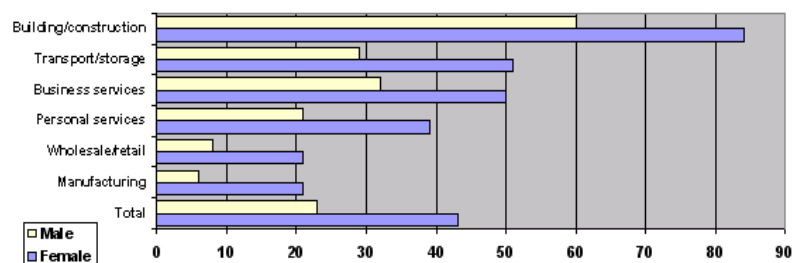
APESMA Connect has 94 women members making up 7 per cent of its total membership.

Perceptions of financial institutions' attitudes to women proprietors



Source: Yellow Pages Small Business Index, a Special Report on Women in Business

Home-based businesses as a percentage of small businesses by gender and sector



Source: Yellow Pages Australia Small Business Index

### Reasons for starting a small business – gender comparison

The Yellow Pages Small Business Index Special Report on Women in Business found that security is the main reason given by women for starting a small business, followed by "being my own boss", job satisfaction and financial gain. The following table compares the reasons given for men and women starting a small business.

	Total	Males	Females
Being my own boss	44%	46%	36%
Security	37%	37%	38%
Financial gain	37%	39%	31%
Job satisfaction	35%	35%	33%
Needed a job	11%	10%	13%
Saw opportunity	10%	11%	6%
A challenge	8%	6%	13%
Better lifestyle	8%	9%	5%



## Profiles

*These profiles aim to demonstrate the diversity of business operations owned and managed by APESMA's women members, to show how self-employed professionals juggle working lives with their other responsibilities, and to highlight some of the other key issues in the businesses concerned.*

### **DR. RACHEL WESTCOTT (DipAppSc, BSc, BVMS (Hons))** *Homecare Vet to Pet Mobile Veterinary Services*

My qualifications are DipAppSc, BSc, BVMS (Hons). My Diploma in Applied Science is in Medical Imaging, from UniSA in 1990. My BSc is in Veterinary Biology, the first 3 years of the vet school course at Murdoch Uni in WA. The 4th and 5th years of the course gain the BVMS, in which I gained First Class Merit Honors. I graduated in 1999. My business name is Homecare Vet to Pet, a mobile veterinary practice in Adelaide.

I'd wanted to run a high quality mobile vet practice since before graduation. I couldn't see myself setting up a clinic or hospital as the costs really are out of my reach. But I definitely wanted to be self-employed (I don't mind hard work but traditionally – and wrongly – the vet industry is a lot of hard work for very little reward unless you work for yourself) and could see a need in the community for quality vet care for people with access difficulties – the disabled, the elderly, those who are simply busy, young mums with little kids, and animals who hate travelling in the car and stress out at the vet hospital! I have a background in health care and service professions prior to Vet, so have the communication skills – just needed some vet experience! I also like getting out and about, meeting different people and their animals. I'm a vet because I love helping animals AND their owners. People forget that every animal has an owner – and vets spend most of their time talking to people.

My first vet job was in a high quality hospital but with serious conditions of employment problems (which the Adelaide office of APESMA



helped me with), and I left after 11 months. Then I found a great job in an excellent practice where I was very happy for the next 2 years. While I was never unhappy I started to get a little disgruntled, working 11, 12 or 13 hour days for someone else's benefit. There were a few things I wanted to do differently, so quite suddenly about last May I found myself looking seriously at suitable vehicles. I spoke to van drivers in the street and asked them about their vans, found some very honest opinions and quickly was directed to Australian Motors in Adelaide where I found fabulous people and the only vehicle which met my needs – the Mercedes Benz Sprinter, long wheel base, high roof model.

Before I could commit to anything, I had to find a hospital base – required by the Veterinary Surgeons' Board, to admit hospital and surgery cases. I discussed the possibility with my then boss, and with a friend who had just purchased another friend's practice. After much thought I decided to make a fresh start and leave the job I had been so happy with –

I think I would have always felt like an employee if I'd based myself there.

Next a trip to the accountant (who was brilliant), the bank (who were fantastically supportive from the start), and on my 41st birthday found myself a Company Director and the owner of a new Mercedes Benz!

The van layout design was the next challenge, which I accomplished with the help of the best van fitter in the country, recommended by the dealer. I can't speak more highly of Dave's work. Then signs, logo, advertising, insurance, computers, software, phones ... I found great people all along the way. I think the phones were the most confusing – all those different plans and models! I settled on a deal with Optus through APESMA.

#### **The business structure**

I chose a company as a business structure and I am sole Director. My accountant set

*continued on page 4...*



## DR. RACHEL WESTCOTT *(continued...)*

*...continued from page 3*

everything up extremely efficiently. I decided to become a Company largely to keep Company assets separate from personal assets. I have a home office, but work out of my van, which is set up as a mobile consulting room. I see animals in the van, not in their homes. Anything that can be done in a consult room, I can do in the van, which is fully equipped with exam table, cages, fridge, hot & cold running water, plenty of lighting, computer, printers and air conditioning.

### ***How it grew and how you gauge its success.***

Well, I'm only in about week 6 of operation, so it's early days for me. As for marketing, I did a letter box drop of 10,000 fliers, have advertised in 3 local papers, community and Church newsletters, will be in the new Yellow Pages, the Police Journal (who rang me), and have been recommended by word of mouth by clients. Some clients from my previous job found me and it was very gratifying to have them call me! Family and friends helped with letter-boxing but I employed a contractor to do the bulk of the work, selecting various pockets throughout the southern metropolitan area. I'm not sure how to gauge success yet, but I managed to pay all the bills in the first month, so I guess I can't ask more than that. I'm still working 2.5 days at my hospital base for the Principal there, so maybe "success" will be when I can cut down on those hours!

### ***My role in the business***

Director, Principal Veterinarian, and also nurse, cleaner, secretary, purchasing officer, media manager, driver (although my Mum is a superb Honorary Secretary – hopefully not Honorary for too long)! I'm fairly independent so enjoy working largely on my own. I'm also not at all good at compromising – so don't envisage

every entering a Partnership! Continuing professional education is something I feel strongly about, so I plan to attend as many courses as possible and hopefully gain Membership of the College in Canine Medicine in the not too distant future.

### ***Some past achievements***

I really don't like writing about this soft of stuff. I have a bit of an unusual background, in that I always wanted to be a vet, but didn't quite get the score in Year 12. Back then I also had competition horses in showjumping and dressage and with the wisdom and enthusiasm of youth didn't want to give that up. So I joined the South Australian Police Force and had a great time there for 4 years. Loved the training and I learnt heaps about communication skills, and coping well in difficult, dangerous and stressful situations.

After this I really wanted to go to Uni but didn't know what, so did a part time year of Science at Flinders Uni and worked part time as a clerk/receptionist in Emergency at Flinders Medical Centre, a large public University teaching hospital and trauma centre. There I decided I liked what the radiographers did, so spent 3 years at Uni SA, graduating top of the class in 1990.

I worked in private practice and in the public sector, which I infinitely preferred, being in a major hospital. But there was still that desire to be a vet ... by now I'd lost my best horses in tragic circumstances, and the ones left were lovely but pretty hopeless (I still have 2 of them, as well as 2 cows, 4 dogs, 2 geese, 3 donkeys and a Shetland pony). So in November 1994 I paid a late application fee and applied to the Vet School at Murdoch University in Perth. I received a first round offer. I'm sure my good Uni record at UniSA helped.

Just to complicate matters a little I'd just bought a house several months earlier, when I'd had to really push to get a loan as a single female!

Even in 1994! Then a series of green lights, rented the house (had good tenants throughout) and moved to Perth for 5 years. Managed a couple of prizes (Anatomy and Nutrition) and worked VERY hard to attain First Class Honors. I worked as a casual radiographer for 5 years, which brought in quite a good income, and spent 5 years house-sitting for people, thereby not paying any rent but did move 33 times!! Had a great time, met great people and WA is second only to SA!!!

### ***Any formal business skills?***

None. I'm aware I'm very lacking in this area. Didn't ever really think of myself as a business person. The hardest thing is the time factor – there just isn't enough!!! I'm really just relying on my life experience, the help of a good accountant, and I'm sure Connect & APESMA.

### ***Business finance and financial advice***

I have relied on my accountant who has really been tremendous. He was recommended by other friends in the veterinary industry. A dealer financed my van (very helpful staff) and borrowed on the equity in my home for the rest. I needed about 80K in total and was fortunate to have no trouble raising this.

### ***Any particular set backs***

The van which took 5 weeks to complete was originally planned to take only 2. It has turned out to be absolutely perfect, but I made the mistake of having fliers printed with a dated offer and by the time the van was finished, the offer had almost expired!

### ***Key attributes***

The van looks really impressive. People notice it and every client without exception has commented on how good it is. It does work



## LISA HARVEY (B.A.)

*Energetica Pty Ltd, [www.energetica.com.au](http://www.energetica.com.au)*

*...continued from page 4*

well and I'm so pleased with it. I've had great people around all the time who are leaders in their fields, so I really recommend spending a bit more and finding the best. I'm really glad I decided to buy a new vehicle, too.

I think I'm fairly good at communication and relating to people – I've experienced plenty of tragedy in the loss of my own animals and I can truly empathise with a grieving owner and support and help them. I'm very enthusiastic about veterinary medicine, and tend to be a bit of a perfectionist – I aim to offer a high standard of care; I offer a personal service and genuinely love what I do and I hope it shows. Animals are wonderful and I don't think enough is done on many fronts to promote animal welfare and appreciation. I hope to become involved in PetPEP (Pets & People Education Program) in primary schools. I've had lots of support from family and friends, and my Rector held a Blessing Service at Church.

### **Employ others?**

Not yet, but hope to employ a part time nurse in the next 6 months. A vet nurse friend who is taking a break from work is kind enough to help me voluntarily one day a week. I hope I can start paying her soon! A lot of things I can do on my own with the owner's help, but there's always that difficult cat to take blood from!!

### **Any business tips**

Not really, I don't know enough. I like to deal with people I like, people I take to and feel I can trust. Like I said, I've been relying on life experience a fair bit. Talk to people, get a feel for what makes them tick, make the people who are helping you feel they are the only person that matters to you just then – and mean it! And don't settle for second best, but if you have no choice, make sure its temporary!

**After 5 years as IT Manager for a national member-based organisation, I wanted a new challenge. Few IT suppliers have specialised non-profit sector experience and I thought this would be a useful niche. My first client was a referral and after two and a half years they are still an active client.**

I work independently from my home office. I established a Pty Ltd company to strengthen my profile and to avoid ambiguity. To gain clients I try to raise my profile in the non-profit sector through seminars, articles etc. It is a diverse and difficult marketplace. Recently I have been asked to speak at a number of conferences. This as a good sign that my reputation is spreading in the sector and that people value my specialist skills.

I participated in the NSW Department of State and Regional Development Women in Business Mentor Program. A series of workshops discussed many aspects of business. The Mentoring was great and even though the program lasted only 6 months my Mentor and I

still meet together. It was useful to have someone to check up on me, challenge me, and offer wise, experienced words of advice.

My clients are all in the non-profit sector: unions, charities, associations, peak bodies, and the NSW Government. They are passionate, committed and fabulous people to work with.

Working in a slowing industry (IT) and an under-resourced market (the non-profit sector) has been difficult. The Olympics and September 11 added to the slow marketplace. I am confident that IT will rise again, and, while my chosen market will always be under-resourced, they are becoming more professional in their approach to technology and more receptive to the idea that a good management of IT implementations can save them money.

#### **Key attributes for success:**

**persistence, creativity and the courage to make that call.**





## **ROBERTA PLACKETT (B.Arch)**

***Director of Rebon Pty Ltd Developments, [rainmakr@sprint.net.au](mailto:rainmakr@sprint.net.au)***

**I'm a New Yorker by birth, and did my Uni at Cornell University. After graduating, I moved to San Francisco, where I practised architecture for eight years, getting registered during that time.**

I always had a desire to live in Europe, so I moved there in the early '80's. I spent 12 years living for short periods in London and Paris, but mainly in Brussels, where I worked as Architect for the European Commission. The architecture group was a team of 6 in charge of projects for the Commission's 70 buildings in Brussels. My major project was the huge headquarters, a 1960's landmark building comprising 200,000 square meters in area – 13 storeys above ground, 4 below. They discovered a serious asbestos contamination problem and the whole building had to be evacuated, with 3500 staff offices relocated into the CBD within a few weeks. The headquarters building was then taken apart, decontaminated, remediated, redesigned and rebuilt. It was an extremely interesting project.

At the age of 40 I moved to Australia by myself with only two suitcases and a teddy bear. My first job here was as Associate in charge of Marketing for one of the major architecture firms, where I stayed for approximately 2 years. When I left, I decided to do something completely different. One of the things that I had always wanted to get into was property development, but I never had the courage. It was only when I was no longer working for someone else that I felt that I had nothing to lose by trying it.

I got together with two other women I knew who were involved with property and the 3 of us did a project together. I was hooked. I loved it. That first project was 5 shells. My next project, done without partners, was 12 apartments. I'm now finishing 10 townhouses. I like development because it is very bottom line-oriented. I like the deal-making, and putting the project together. I like sourcing it and driving around and passing a

'For Sale' sign, doing a double take and coming back and checking it out. I like the marketing. You're designing in anticipation of what the market is going to want, which is quite challenging and very different from working as an architect for a specific client. You're wooing the bank, handling the site supervision. You are doing all elements of the project. I feel developing takes me one level up in creativity. Doing all of it makes it really exciting, and in my case I am doing it for myself because it's my company. It's amazing how much and how quickly you learn when the buck stops here: you're responsible and you pay for any mistakes.

Making the transition from salaried employment to owning your own company is quite challenging. After twenty years of working in someone else's office, you now have a desk at home and you get up in the morning and sit at your desk and think, well where is everybody? Where's my stapler? Where's the copy machine? I felt absolutely bereft for about six months. I am pretty self motivated, so the problem wasn't about structuring work, but it's a scary feeling that you're a one-[wo]man band, you do it all and are solely responsible. You don't have a colleague or secretary that you can pass things on to. You don't have the support, structures or networks that a workplace can provide. Organisations like APESMA and other professional groups are so important to overcome the isolation. APESMA events also allow me to exchange experience with other professionals who have started their own businesses and to plug into the other professions, such as the Engineers, Pharmacists and Vets. All of these people are doing very interesting things, and it gives you a different perspective to just running around in your own little world.

I am involved in the APESMA mentoring program and I have been having discussions with my mentees about small business and how you make that transition. It is a very



interesting time of one's life to have the nerve, to take the jump. It is a good thing to try, even though some small businesses don't make it. If you do eventually go back to working as a salaried employee, at least you'll have tried.

The level of risk does vary with your business type and your personal circumstances. I suspect that I am typical of most people who get into these things without fully understanding the risk. The good thing is that it comes on you gradually and you grow into it. I have had some very risky moments in some of the projects I have done, which is probably normal. It gives you a very healthy appreciation of (and actually increases) your ability to cope. In development, you have to develop a "Zen-like" approach to uncertainty, or go back to that salaried job.

As development income is project-oriented, all you do is write cheques for two or three years, and at the end of that time all the money – and hopefully all the profit - comes pouring in, in one fell swoop. Very different from the reassurance of someone else paying you a regular salary. You have to develop confidence in your own competence.

### **Key attributes for success:**

**motivation, competence in your field, confidence, common/business sense, persistence, a lot of nerve, sense of humour, and perspective**



## **GENEVIEVE CARRIER (B. App. Sci. (Food Tech.)), *Rutherford Technical Services, [www.rutherfordtech.com.au](http://www.rutherfordtech.com.au)***

**I'm a food technologist and trainer and assessor with a B. App. Sci (Food Tech) and Cert IV in Assessment & Workplace Training (BSZ40198)).**

I graduated from uni in 1995 and have been a member of APESMA since 1998. I'm currently owner/director of Rutherford Technical Services Pty Ltd with my partner, Lee Evans, also a food technologist and APESMA member. Rutherford Technical Services is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and we provide accredited training and assessment in Food Processing and Frontline Management Certificates. In addition, Rutherford Technical Services provides food safety products and services to all sectors of the Food Industry – Manufacturing, Food Service and Retail. Products and services include training (recently including an on-line service), food safety plans (in customised and template form) and food safety consulting (such as site audits and development of procedures). We are the two principles and we bring in other consultants for specialist services (such as Language/Literacy training).

My partner first made an entrance into the training world after 12 month trip overseas, working for an RTO. I then saw the benefits of being a trainer/assessor and decided to follow suit. The benefits included improved flexibility, improved remuneration compared to being a "white coat" in a large manufacturing environment and improved job satisfaction.

Unfortunately we did not endeavour to get any formal business training and got involved with a persuasive "marketing" type and set up an RTO with him. We eventually discovered that we were being taken advantage of and involved in a "dodgy" situation and decided to part company. We were very inexperienced with business dealings, but we finally found a good solicitor and a good accountant (through word of mouth and family contacts) but as we had no contracts, nothing on paper, we basically had to let it all go.

Rutherford Technical Services was "born" because of a need to be able to control our destiny and we wanted to create a name for ourselves in providing quality products and services that would hopefully be a benchmark in the future.

Both my partner and I have the same qualifications and similar



experience and so the workload is split equally. I tend to look after the financials and Lee does more marketing.

Our success has been with a wide range of businesses both large and small (eg a small chocolate manufacturer, Australia's Wonderland and a selection of nursing homes) and also within the public sector (the Mid North Coast Area Health Service). We ensure that we are always flexible and encourage our past clients to contact us for information or advice (even though the original job may have finished).

Rutherford Technical Services has just made it's first anniversary and we are still putting all our energies into maintaining the cash flow so we can survive another year. As for the future, we would expect to keep a tight reign on all aspects of the business for many years yet.

For me, running a business has been the most traumatic, emotional, difficult and yet rewarding, ego boosting and exciting exercise I have ever undertaken but without a great deal of support from family and friends, I couldn't do it.

There have been some interesting programs on small business on Radio National (576AM). One (a while ago – "Doing Business") had a great quote: In a small business you have to do everything - you are the MINDER (ie financials), the FINDER (ie marketing) and the GRINDER (ie actually doing the work). Another program "From S to M" (on Fridays 2:30pm) has just started and seems pretty good.



## **FRAN CARROLL (B. Bus. Admin. ), Principal – Carroll Recruitment Pty Ltd,**

### **Background**

Carroll Recruitment Pty Ltd was established in March 2002. We specialise in recruiting for “influential” roles for the leading organisations of the Property, Engineering and Construction industries.

Our knowledge of the industries indicated a niche opportunity in the market which was often poorly serviced by current players. We felt that a new business focused on that niche which utilises a strong combination of skills gained in previous employment, together with high level of personal service could succeed. It would also provide an environment for a professional challenge and personal satisfaction.

My previous experience was in recruiting high level IT&T technical and managerial levels – applying a highly professional, ethical and synergistic model. My background, prior to that was in operational and managerial roles in the Property and Construction sector, so I merged the two knowledge and skills bases to form the new business.

I completed market research by interviewing key industry players who were 100% positive of my proposition and I then made the huge leap of faith.

### **Structure**

The business is structured as a Pty Ltd company, operating from a Collins Street office, with myself as Principal and my Life partner as key supporter and indispensable sounding board. The team includes 4-5 colleagues (all women – coincidentally) whom I knew from previous professional experiences that are/ maybe called upon for support with delivery – currently on as needs basis.

Our plans are to create a business structure that will allow the team (and possibly others) to build their own business within the structure

I have created. This will ultimately allow them equity, profit share and ability to build their own future.

Relationship marketing and personal networking created and identified growth opportunities in the targetted sectors. We exploited every opportunity to demonstrate our capability and to establish a reputation for a very high level of service, ethics and integrity, and to deepen our understanding of our customers’ needs and business environment. Many have now become repeat customers and excellent referees.

### **Principal’s role**

Currently I am responsible for all activities but this is no longer sustainable.

Original thinking was that we would need another person by October 2002 but this proved to be conservative so the second full-time person is currently in training. Another person has been utilised for several months on a casual basis and has been an invaluable resource.

### **Achievements**

- We have achieved strategic business partnerships status with two of the most highly regarded and influential organisations in the industry sector.
- We have achieved excellent relationships with other major players who recommend and referred us to others within their business and to the general marketplace.
- We have made placements with the top employers and into high profile projects
- Invitations for repeat business have been the norm.
- We have been profitable since the first quarter



### **Formal business skills training**

Business degree, MBA subjects and formal professional development in addition to excellent broadly based management and consulting experience has provided the background that is now being harnessed.

### **Business finance and financial advice**

The business has been self financed, based on preliminary budget planning. It has been profitable since the first quarter, however managing cash flow is critical and managing debtors is a “front of mind” activity. Recruitment, in this part of the market, is often “contingency” – or success fee based, so lots of work may be executed before a fee is billable and time elapsed before a payment is received.

### **Mentoring program**

We have not formally participated in a Mentoring program however we do mentor candidates on their career management. Personally, my life partner has been a strong and invaluable resource, and an earlier colleague has provided excellent guidance in a couple of critical areas where my skills or confidence were lacking during the formative stages (particularly the



# Connect



first three months). Gratefully, the support of colleagues and friends has meant that there has been a willing resource available to discuss issues when the need has been apparent.

## **Growth strategy**

We have chosen to establish and grow from cash flow, so careful cash management and conservative decision making has been our practice. This has meant that we have created some very effective systems that are scalable. From here on we will continue to establish in this sector and then expand into other sectors but always with focus on personal service from the Principals.

## **Clients**

Our targetted Market Sector is Property, Construction and Engineering Industry for Stage 1. This industry is easily segmented, so we have targeted one or two leading organisations in each sector.

## **Hurdles and setbacks**

I had originally started my own business in association with another

organisation in October 2001.

However it quickly became apparent that the “parent” organisation had internal issues, so I bought my fledgling assets from them and incorporated Carroll Recruitment.

## **Key attributes to success:**

- Very high level of customer focus – based on understanding customer needs, business environment and organisational culture
- Personalised service
- Transparency in negotiations – honesty and integrity
- Strongly, clearly (and personally) communicated vision based on good customer research
- Work hard generally but also to ensure that all interactions with clients are enjoyable and positive
- We nurture all relationships, ensuring that any interaction is respectful and positive
- We constantly strive to find and develop better techniques and systems
- Hard work, consistency of approach and a “persistent” sense of humour.

## **MARIA CUGNETTO (M. Eng, BE (Chem)), Principal – Cugnetto Consulting**

**Cugnetto Consulting was established in 1999 after I was given an opportunity to leave my full-time management position because the department’s services were tendered out to contract.**

It is a home-based business. I am the Principal and currently am consulting on my own. I specialise in utility (electricity, water) development work including project management and contract management. I provide a full range of services from strategy through to implementation. Works provided to date include preparation of tender submissions, technical writing, business management, quality assurance audits and reports and preparation of marketing plans and business overviews.

My clients are manufacturing suppliers of technological systems and contractors working for either the electricity or water distribution businesses.

I have a financial adviser. Since starting my business, my training has included project management, MYOB and a taxation course.

I am currently undertaking a Business Certificate course.

Past achievements include:

- \* Project implementation of a mobile water meter testing unit;
- \* Research on automated meter reading technology for high-rise, multi-unit developments;
- \* Presentation of papers at Australian and international technical conferences (Metering Asia, Metering America).

My business has grown from networking and presenting papers at conferences as well as keeping in touch with past associates.

**Contact details: Tel: (03) 9378 9311 fax: (03) 9350 5707**

**email: mcugnetto@aol.com**





## ELLEN O'BRIEN (B.Sc., M.Sc., MBA)

*enviroStrategy*, ph (02) 9517 1309, [ellen.obrien@envirostrategy.com.au](mailto:ellen.obrien@envirostrategy.com.au)

**I started my business through a driving need to change the satisfaction level in my professional life and the desire to take on different challenges.**

The position I held at the time was not offering any of those opportunities, so just over 2½ years ago I pursued the idea of establishing my own consultancy. At the same time, I took the opportunity to further my business skills by commencing a part-time MBA, which has now been completed.

Initially, the business was established as a sole trader as I was uncertain whether I would want to continue with the professional and lifestyle choices that I had made. The growth of business has been staged to accommodate sufficient time to complete the MBA and build a client base for the business. I am now planning to incorporate the business and look for opportunities to expand, form other strategic alliances and perhaps take on staff.

The business is currently home-based, providing environmental consulting and strategic advice to a range of public and private sector clients. A high proportion of my projects originate from referrals and direct negotiations, so the ability to deliver the solutions a client is seeking or to provide the appropriate level of advice are crucial for the business.



## RINA MACKLEY (B.Arch, M.Arch. (Melb.)) RIAA Registered Architect (ARBV) – Architect and Urban Designer, Rina Mackley Associates

**I operate as a sole practitioner to provide quality architectural services. After extensive experience in the architectural profession, 20 years plus, I set up my own practice.**

Architects operating small practices were influential in making my decision. I realised that if they could run a practice, so could I. I have now completed one year of operation and am now becoming known for quality design work in the domestic market in Melbourne. The practice is run from a studio at home.

The establishment of a viable network of colleagues has underpinned my enthusiastic attitude: architectural lectures; professional development seminars; computer training; and club memberships - all costly but well worth it.

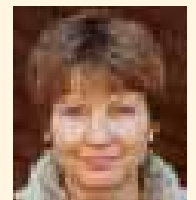
I undertake client briefing, design, cost estimates, planning permits, documentation, building permits, building contracts, contract administration and site inspections. A range of consultants are also required: landscape architects, quantity surveyors, engineers,

building surveyors, land surveyors and planners. The most complex phase continues to be the planning phase.

My clients currently range from single people to young couples, to developer builders in the domestic market. Attention to the client brief with quality design and personal service, which can be time consuming, is the main marketing strategy.

The design work is contemporary, whilst tailored to the site and its orientation. The whole of the site is "designed", in that the outdoor spaces are as important as the indoor spaces. In pursuit of continuing professional development I am enrolling at Burnley College to undertake further education in the areas of landscape and horticulture.

**Contact details: ph 03 9531 4701, fax: 03 9531 0384, email: [rmackarch@iprimus.com.au](mailto:rmackarch@iprimus.com.au)**





## KRIS GREENWOOD

*Director FM Innovations Pty Ltd, [www.fminnovations.com.au](http://www.fminnovations.com.au)*

**My name is Kristiana Greenwood and I am a Director at FM Innovations (FMI) Pty Ltd. Our company website address is [www.fminnovations.com.au](http://www.fminnovations.com.au).**

FMI was born from an inspiration to set up a professional software delivery and consultancy company that ensured implementation of high quality, accurate and tangible business solutions to the facilities management market.

We began by putting together a comprehensive Business Plan that was presented to potential clients to garnish their support; to an American software company who had a software product we wanted to distribute in Australia; and to the bank to gain a financial guarantee to enable us to establish our essential infrastructure. A month later we had acquired 25 customers, exclusive software distribution rights for the product called Aperture, an office in the city with 2 ancient computers and a registered company name.

We agreed from the beginning not to take a bank loan or overdraft facility so as not to over extend ourselves. To this day, FMI has functioned on a cash flow basis, and therefore has established a very good financial relationship with our bank giving us flexibility when we have needed it.

The process to build and nurture the company has had it's hurdles, but 5 years later we have modern offices in Bourke Street, Melbourne and a dedicated staff of 5 permanent salaried personnel, 2 permanent contractors and 5 part-time contractors. We have also increased our product and services portfolio and have now written our

own suite of software products to complement the Aperture system and enable us to provide complete Infrastructure and Resource Management business solutions. We currently have over 70 clients in Australia including large government departments such as NSW Health Department, Victorian Department of Education and Department of Natural Resources & Environment. Our large corporate clients include companies such as BP, AXA, Orange, NAB and AMP Henderson Property.

FMI has grown by concentrating on our core business and satisfying our customers needs and requirements at every stage of the sales and implementation cycle. We have an excellent business relationship with our suppliers and contractors and have an honest and open working ethic.

We have adopted a contained growth strategy and have grown and expanded our services with very careful timing. Our approach to taking on additional external products to market within Australia has been conservative as this could lead to a short-term dilution of our focus on excellence. Although we have declined many offers, we have not discarded the notion of change.

My role has focused on marketing and business development. My background is not technical and this has proven to be advantageous as our solutions, although complex in their technical makeup, are all designed for non-technical users. My limited technical knowledge has given us a users' perspective on business requirements, and my European business and marketing experience has given us a fresh approach to



tackling the Australian market.

Over the years we have enlisted professional assistance when required, including a Business Psychologist Consultant who has been working with us for several years and has been an integral part of our success. All staff, including Directors, are sent on regular training programs and their input into the internal business processes and ideas on business growth is encouraged.

I have a 3 ½ year old daughter and am expecting a second child this November. Juggling home life and business life successfully is easy if you have the internal support. The key to your own juggling success is to be organized, and to plan your weeks well in advance, putting into place contingency plans for those unexpected business hiccups that may occur.



## Mentoring for women in small business – WENDY LORIMER (B. Pharm., ND), Focus on Health



**I'm a 31 year-old Pharmacist based in Frankston Victoria with a Graduate Diploma in Naturopathy. I have recently registered my business. I plan to offer services in the area of natural therapies and think that my pharmaceutical background combined with my Grad Diploma combine to give me a marketable combination of skills.**

APESMA's Mentors Online program came along just when I was looking for a Mentor. I was really hoping to be matched up to someone – I thought I might be left out as I didn't think many in my professional area would be participating. I requested a female Mentor because I wanted to include in our discussions balancing work and other responsibilities, return to work and glass ceiling issues, and felt that this might be more appropriate with a woman. At the end of April I was advised that I'd been matched with an IT professional operating a successful IT business based in Queensland.

Mentors Online was a fantastic program and I am so glad I had the chance to participate. It gave me the opportunity to connect with someone that I may not have otherwise been able to. It really helped me to fast-track lots of aspects of my business. My Mentor always treated me with respect and was interested in

my progress.

The last few months of discussions had a huge impact on my business and on my life. I can see opportunities where previously I didn't and feel that I can tackle challenges and succeed. The discussions with my Mentor about networking in particular really opened my eyes as to how to maximise opportunities. I've realised that this is the area that will help my business to grow. I'm in the process of trying to formally diversify my client base and am considering doing a short course to further develop my business management skills.

I'd certainly recommend mentoring to anyone wanting to move their business forward – it's a great way to challenge your thinking, consider new ideas, new ways of networking, alternatives for marketing, and in general to bounce ideas off someone who's already been there.

**Connect would like to thank all the members who found time in their busy schedules to contribute to this newsletter.**

### APESMA and Connect resources

- APESMA has a well established women's network with over 2,000 members which is open to women in small business
- Connect acts as a network providing support in the form of information and referral for women making the transition from employee to independent contractor or consultant
- Connect provides a relevant and accessible mentoring option for small business professionals (37 per cent of those participating in the pilot Mentors Online program were women while comprising 11 per cent of the general APESMA membership)
- Connect provides access to relevant continuing education which is flexibly delivered in short modules at low cost via its Partnership 2002/2003 scholarship program and relationship with the APESMA Management Education Program
- Connect assists with business planning and business management by way of the Connect Small Business Monograph Series which provides specialist information and advice on how to successfully set up and run a home-based business, how to put together a business plan, how to set up a business management system, and how to write good contracts for service
- Connect provides referral to quality accounting, taxation, legal and financial planning specialist advisors
- APESMA provides access to business finance options through the Commonwealth Bank and the Members Australia Credit Union.
- Connect promotes positive role models for women in small business via its profiles of businesses owned and managed by women.



## Business Matrix – a women-focussed small business incubator

*While comprising almost 50 per cent of small business owners, only 13 per cent of those involved in small business incubators are women. Business Matrix was set up to provide women with priority access to this form of business support. Business Matrix Manager Anne Lewis spoke with Connect about the value of small business incubators for women.*



### **What is Business Matrix and what inspired its creation?**

Business Matrix is the first women-focussed business incubator in Australia and has been established by the Victorian Women's Trust, with initial funding being provided by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The Victorian Women's Trust has, as its core mission, working towards achieving the economic security of Victoria's women. Much of the Trust's work is done through grants to organisations, and funding projects which benefit women. Business Matrix is a more 'hands-on' involvement in promoting economic sustainability for women's businesses.

Women represent close to 50% of small business owners and are starting small businesses at a faster rate than men, and are staying in business longer. But they currently only represent 13% of businesses located within incubators. Business Matrix addresses this imbalance. Women play a significant role in Australian small business. They are a major force in innovation and job creation.

While Business Matrix is women-focussed, we don't exclude men. A small percentage of the businesses are operated by men, however we have exemption under the Equal Opportunity Act to give priority to women. So if we had one vacancy and a man and a woman were competing for the space, we can lawfully give preference to the woman.

### **What makes Business Matrix women-focussed?**

Business Matrix encourages an atmosphere of which takes into account both people's work

and family responsibilities – it's a family-friendly workplace. No-one bats an eyelid if people bring their children in during school holidays, or if they are too sick to go to school. This is all within reason – kids aren't allowed to run up and down the corridors screaming or otherwise disrupting the others there – but needs must. We recognise that there are times when you have to bring the kids to work – we've had a few babies born to tenants (not on the premises!) and there are always willing people to watch the baby while mum's in the board room meeting with a client.

### **What do you offer at Business Matrix?**

The aim of Business Matrix is to provide business premises, assistance and support to new and existing businesses in order to facilitate business growth, employment and success. We're located in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, and currently provide office space for up to 35 diverse businesses. We've recently received funding from the Commonwealth to carry out refurbishment works and create up to 10 additional offices. Businesses located at Business Matrix have access to serviced office facilities, including reception, photocopier, fax, courier and mail receipt and despatch, kitchen/dining facilities, meeting rooms & a training room.

All applicants have to meet selection criteria – they need to have a business plan, a client base, and they need to 'fit' the mix of businesses already located at Business Matrix.

Business Matrix houses a mixture of new-start and established businesses, including professional services and product based businesses. Tenants are selected on their ability to complement each other and their willingness

to participate in professional development. They are encouraged to stay at Business Matrix for 2-3 years, though they are able to leave with 1 months notice.

### **Who are your tenants?**

The businesses housed at Business Matrix are diverse. At present, we have an architect, a landscape architect, two town planning firms, a marketing firm, a business and training strategist, a solicitor, writers and editors, a freelance journalist, a homewares designer, a fashion designer, an outward-bound type adventure business, software developers, film makers, a crossword puzzle designer, a computer technician, and workplace health and well-being consultants. Many of the businesses are, in fact, graduates of the Women's Enterprise Connection, which was a women-focussed New Enterprise Incentive Scheme which was de-funded in 1999.

We've had people leave Business Matrix – but usually it's been for the right reason – they've outgrown us – needed more space, because their business has grown.

### **Explain how Business Matrix provides business support and networking**

Part of the business support offered includes seminars, and mentoring, on a formal basis. There have been seminars on business planning, public speaking, stress management, health and well-being, and the GST. Seminars planned for later this year include planning for business growth, marketing, and e-commerce.

*continued on page 14...*



## Business finance and advice

*Various studies on women and business finance have shown that women represent a smaller percentage of commercial loan applications and approvals than men, and that women tend to rely more on internal sources of finance such as savings and loans from family and friends for startup finance. Not surprisingly, a recent “National Foundation for Women Business Owners” survey of small business indicated that 41 per cent of respondents considered access to capital either a very important or extremely important issue in their businesses - securing business finance is one of the most basic business activities, and Connect looked into resources available which might assist in this complex and sometimes frustrating area:*

### Resources

- The Victorian government recently released “Show me the Money – a Woman’s Guide Through the Financial Maze”. The information assists women in small business identify the financial instrument which best suits their needs, considers alternative approaches to financiers, and compares the relative merits of debt finance and equity funding. The Guide is available from the Victorian Business Access site at <http://www.businessaccess.vic.gov.au> or by phoning **13 22 15** if you would prefer a hard copy.
- The Micro Business Network has a section on their website on Business Finance. Visit [http://www.mbn.com.au/pages/default.cfm?page\\_id=3774](http://www.mbn.com.au/pages/default.cfm?page_id=3774) for information on business finance alternatives, costing, cash flow and debt collection.
- The Australian Businesswomen’s Network has a range of free articles on finance and accounting issues available from their website at <http://www.mbn.com.au/>. Titles include: Plan for financial success as a woman in small business, Keys for raising capital for your business, Pricing for profit, A Business plan can do more than raise capital, How to turn your business into a profitable one, and Investing in an accounting system.
- The Victorian Small Business site has a range of fact sheets available on business finance issues including bank reconciliations, budget preparation and actual results, cash flow planning, control and budgets, leasing vehicles and equipment, overheads, profit planning and breakeven analysis. The information can be accessed via: <http://www.sbv.vic.gov.au/web/sbv/sbvinfo.nsf/General?OpenView&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=7#7>.
- The Tasmanian government business site has a document available called Financial Management for Small Business owners at <http://www.dsd.tas.gov.au/publications/Finance.pdf>.
- Making a successful loan application as a small business owner – information available at [http://freebizplan.org/financing/business\\_loan\\_app.htm](http://freebizplan.org/financing/business_loan_app.htm).
- Raising Capital for a Small Business including how to write a loan proposal and locate sources of finance – useful information available at <http://seeit.net/cbstax/fg-Raiseacap.html>.
- For a sample Commonwealth Bank of Australia **Application for Business Credit** form, email [connect@apesma.asn.au](mailto:connect@apesma.asn.au).

...continued from page 13

But the true dynamism of Business Matrix is reflected in the informal networking and interaction between the businesses located there. On any day, around the communal lunch table, there will be a mix of business people chatting informally about the work they do, the latest client they’ve snared, playing devil’s advocate about new business ideas, offering each other advice and support – we encourage a collaborative rather than competitive approach. Away from the lunch table, behind the scenes, the homewares designer will be assisting the freelance

journalist with her business plan, the outward bound person will be receiving marketing advice from the marketing specialist, the business strategist will be helping the fashion designer with a funding submission to Aus Industry. Everyone will be coming to grips with their Business Activity Statements.

Most of the businesses at Business Matrix started out from home based offices. I’ve run a business from home – in partnership with another woman who works from her home. We ran up huge phone bills talking to each other, or emailing - partly because that’s the nature of the work we do, but also I suspect

because it’s lonely working from home. We are social animals! At Business Matrix, there’s always someone else to talk to.

***If Connect members would like further information on Business Matrix, how can they contact you?***

For further information I can be contacted at Business Matrix by email at [anne@businessmatrix.org.au](mailto:anne@businessmatrix.org.au) or by phone on 03 9411 4000. Our website is at [www.businessmatrix.org.au](http://www.businessmatrix.org.au).



## Networking resources

Networking is about making contacts and selectively investing time and effort in these contacts. As a rule of thumb, contractors should be spending up to 20 per cent of their time developing new business, and all the indicators are that new and repeat business are very often benefits gained from networking. The Australian Micro Business Network suggests that men tend to network with business acquaintances who are professional and usually more successful and influential than they are. They use their network to get ahead in business, while women tend to network with businesses at a similar level of expertise, or with those at a lesser stage of development than their own – that is of course not to say that one form of networking is more effective than another. There is no doubt that networking – no matter what form it takes – is a long-term and critical investment in your business, and these are some options you may want to consider:

### Australian Businesswomen's Network

The ABN is an excellent way to expand your networking opportunities. The Network has a range of free articles available on business issues, interviews with entrepreneurs, information on marketing, PR and IT, and an online members' directory. You can subscribe to their free monthly Women in Business email newsletter by going to <http://www.abn.org.au/subscribe.html>.

### Micro Business Network

Visit the MBN website at <http://www.mbn.com.au/>. The site contains information on networking as well as a series of articles of interest including the following titles: the Micro Sector find Taxation is taxing, Passion leads to success, Home Based Businesses Are To Be Rewarded, Accurate Record Keeping Is The Answer, Don't leave the important thing until later, Driving Success, Change – Is It For The Best?, Marketing on a Shoestring Budget, Micro Businesses can successfully export, Discriminate at your peril, Confusion reigns, Plan for Future Success, Long Term Investments Work Smarter, not Harder, The Successful Image, Change on the home horizon, Second opinions can save the day (and the home), Home Based Business is here to stay, The Role of Business Networks.

### APESMA's Professional Women's Network

Visit <http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/contents.htm> for information on remuneration, balancing work and family responsibilities, discrimination, equal opportunity, reports on women in professions and articles of interest.

### WA Small Business Development Corporation (WA SBDC)

The WA Small Business Development Corporation has a Women in Small Business website at <http://www.sbdc.com.au/drilldown/content.asp?refid=2.16>. They host a Women in Export Network.

### NSW Department of State and Regional Development (NSW DSRD)

The NSW DSRD runs a Women in Business Program. Details available from <http://www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/frame.cfm?l=/interest/women/links.html&r=/interest/women/index.html>. The DSRD hosts a discussion forum, an Exporters Network and a Business Migrant Information and Referral Service.

### QLD's Department of State Development (QDSD)

QLD's DSD hosts a Women in Business initiative which includes an electronic networking

facility called the Women in Business Discussion Forum, as well as a series of "Useful Links" for women in business. Visit the site at <http://www.sd.qld.gov.au/dsdweb/htdocs/global/content.cfm?id=166>.

### Tasmania's Women in Business Program

The Tasmanian Department of State Development runs a women in business program. For further information, contact Business Tasmania on **03 6233 5577**.

### Women's Network Australia

Information on business networking and tools to help with combining business and family responsibilities – <http://www.womensnetwork.com.au/>.

### Women in small business information site (WISBIS)

Hosted by QLD University of Technology at <http://www.wisbis.qut.edu.au/>, this site is a gateway to a wide variety of sources of information on business tools, chat groups, courses, exporting, grants, GST, industrial relations, professional organisations, management, finance, marketing, networking, occupational health and safety, quality assurance, risk analysis, self assessment skills tests, technology, teleworking, training, venture capital and women's organisations.



## Tips for business success ...

- Don't panic if you don't have any work.
- Keep your face and name in people's minds.
- There is no such thing as failure, only feedback.
- If people criticise you, always listen, don't defend – it will usually give you some insight.
- Maintain a balance between work and home.
- Stick your neck out a bit further – have more confidence in yourself – sell yourself a bit more.
- Don't go out on your own too early.
- Learn to take the quiet times and use them. The pendulum will swing back. Quiet moments are for making contacts, reading and developing new ideas.
- Make sure you keep your skills up to date.
- Have a web site – if you are not on the net you don't exist.
- Have a good web site – bad websites are detrimental to your business.
- Changing hats: if you mentally change hats when you change jobs, it helps you focus. If you are doing marketing work then put on your marketing hat; if you need to do accounts work then put on your accounts hat, etc.
- Dare to dream - but back it up with a reasonable business plan.
- Treat your company from the outset like the serious business it is.
- Develop a good "team" (accountant, solicitor, banker, mentor, etc) to give you professional advice – and then listen to them.
- Pace yourself: taking risks may be "sexy", but sleepless nights are not.
- Don't underestimate the capital you need.
- Take good care of yourself: treat yourself like the esteemed professional you are.
- Love what you do.
- Start each day by reading your business goals.
- Learn as much as you can about what you do.
- When you have an idea, write it down immediately and talk about it.
- Always take a lunch break.
- Get outside and take in some fresh air.
- Don't procrastinate. Whatever you're thinking, do it now.
- Allocate time throughout the day to do certain tasks (eg 10am - 11am reply to e-mails).
- When writing your business plan, write as if you have a team of 100 people. This way your plan will support your business to grow rather than simply meet the immediate issues.
- Have a fresh bowl of fruit at work for you and your staff.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Without them, you will not learn how to succeed.
- Start each Monday with a work in progress meeting to establish tasks and goals for the week.
- Have no more than seven things to do on your daily list.
- Remember your business can't be everything to everyone. Find a niche market and fill it.
- Drink at least one litre of water per day.
- Go for a 15 minute walk at least once a day.
- When applying for a bank overdraft, always go for as much as you can. It's easier to get it at the start than later when trouble strikes.
- The beginning of the year is the best time to get your team together to talk about your vision and goals.
- Don't think about hiring staff until your business is solid and making money.
- The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.

Sources: Thanks to Lisa Harvey and Roberta Plackett for these tips. Also the Telstra Business Startup website at <http://www.telstra.com.au/smallbusiness/startup.htm>, and Sally Garratt (*Going it Alone: How to survive and thrive as an independent consultant*, Gower Publishing, 1998)

### Exempting small business from unfair dismissal laws

The Government has reintroduced a Bill to exempt small business from the unfair dismissal rules. The Workplace Relations Amendment (Fair Dismissal) Bill 2002 [No 2] was introduced in the House of Reps on 18 September 2002 and seeks to amend the Workplace Relations Act 1986 to prevent the unfair dismissal provisions from applying to small businesses with fewer than 20 employees. The Bill will require the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to order that an unfair dismissal application is not valid if it involves a small business employer. This provision will only apply to the new employees of a small business, not to existing ones. However, it will not exempt small businesses from the unlawful termination provisions of the Act. *Source: Terry Hayes, Weekly Tax Bulletin, 20 September 2002*





## Other news ...

## Connect's mentoring service for small business professionals nominated for an Australian Micro Business Award

The Australian Industry Group has nominated APESMA's Mentors Online program in the 2002 Micro Business Awards in the Not-for-Profit category.

In nominating the program, Ai Group Chief Executive Bob Herbert said: "Small business professionals often struggle to find time to participate in relevant work-integrated training opportunities which develop their business skills and provide an opportunity to bounce ideas off someone who has greater business experience. Yet such training has uniformly been shown to lead to better business practices and reduced business exit rates. This program has provided such an opportunity for a diverse range of micro-business professionals. The fact that this mentoring program was email-based appeared to facilitate participation for all those involved including rural and regionally based businesses, and a program which manages to do this is worthy of the Ai Group's enthusiastic support."

Winners will be announced on the 30<sup>th</sup> October.

APESMA's Mentors Online is also to be used as a best practice model for a program being developed in the UK.

In March 2002, Mentors Online participated in a review of current e-mentoring practices by the UK's Small Business Service, one of three subsidiaries of the Department and Trade and Industry. The purpose of the review was to interview leading e-mentoring practitioners to establish current best practice as a precursor to introducing a pilot e-mentoring program for the South East of England.

The final report, by Senior Researcher James Bianco of RSB Consulting, recommended that APESMA's Mentors Online program along with the USA's MentorNet and the UK's Business Volunteers Mentor Association, be used as a best practice model for introducing a pilot scheme for SME managers and entrepreneurs.

Mr. Bianco said of Mentors Online: "This program, which has only recently gone live, is run by the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia (APESMA). The e-mentoring program for small business professionals is comprised of email-based communication between mentors and mentees and is supported by a comprehensive website. APESMA acts as host and facilitator and assists e-mentoring partners establish, sustain and conclude their relationships by way of fortnightly communication and a series of structured exercises. The program incorporates a range of protocols, practices, documentation and tools which represent current best practice in e-mentoring for SME's and the program has been quality certified to the new international standard ISO 9001:2000. APESMA's Mentors Online program provides the closest fit and best model for setting up an E-mentoring program for SME's in the UK."

The full text of the Evaluation Report to the Small Business Enterprise Culture Program is available from The Program – Other Information area of the Mentors Online website at [www.apesma.asn.au/mentorsonline](http://www.apesma.asn.au/mentorsonline).

## Record keeping for new small business

This guide is for small businesses and non-profit organisations with an annual turnover of less than \$1m. It is designed for businesses that keep paper records and account on a cash basis. It may also be useful for charities, gift deductible entities and government schools with a turnover of more than \$1m that choose to account on a cash basis. The guide describes how to keep paper records based on receipts and payments. It also contains step-by-step guidelines for day-to-day record keeping and information for completing activity statements and tax returns. Other items covered include GST tax invoices, PAYG withholding, super-annuation and FBT. The guide is available on the ATO Website at <http://www.taxreform.ato.gov.au/content/downloads/nat3029.pdf>.

## Business taxation

The ATO regularly conducts BizStart seminars which aim to provide small business operators with an introduction to the taxes that will affect their business. The seminars are free and conducted in each state and territory.

Topics covered include income tax and de-ductions, Business Activity Statement, record keeping, capital gains tax, Pay As You Go, Fringe Benefits Tax, superannuation and GST. Should you wish to register for the seminars or find out more information, call the National BizStart booking number on **1300 661 104** (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) or email the ATO at:

**ACT** – [actbizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:actbizstart@ato.gov.au)  
**NSW** – [nswbizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:nswbizstart@ato.gov.au)  
**NT** – [bizstart-NT@ato.gov.au](mailto:bizstart-NT@ato.gov.au)  
**SA** – [sabizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:sabizstart@ato.gov.au)

**QLD** – [qldbizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:qldbizstart@ato.gov.au)  
**TAS** – [tasbizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:tasbizstart@ato.gov.au)  
**VIC** – [vicbizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:vicbizstart@ato.gov.au)  
**WA** – [wabizstart@ato.gov.au](mailto:wabizstart@ato.gov.au)

### Lodgement dates for Quarterly Business Activity Statements

28<sup>th</sup> October, 2002      28<sup>th</sup> February, 2003 (includes month extension to allow for Christmas break)  
28<sup>th</sup> April, 2003      28<sup>th</sup> July, 2003



## PSI Update – *Passing the Results Test – ICA’s 20 point checklist*

Independent Contractors of Australia (ICA) is a not for profit association incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act (1985) of South Australia. Membership is open to all persons who are or wish to be independent contractors or seek information on independent contracting. ICA was formed to protect the rights of independent contractors to be treated fairly, justly and equitably in Australia and to be allowed to work free from intimidation or harassment from bureaucrats, the Australian Taxation Office, political parties, unions and others. They aim to assist members by way of education, networking and lobbying. APESMA Connect has observer status membership with the ICA.

The ICA website is located at [www.contractworld.com.au](http://www.contractworld.com.au) and you can contact them by emailing [contact@contractworld.com.au](mailto:contact@contractworld.com.au).

ICA has a particular interest in the Alienation of Personal Services Income legislation and has kindly agreed to allow Connect to reproduce their 20 point checklist for passing the results test.

**This checklist should be read alongside the interpretative advice on passing the results test obtained by Connect from the ATO which is available from the Small Business Monograph Series Business Finances and Taxation page at [www.apesma.asn.au/connect](http://www.apesma.asn.au/connect).**

### ***Are you an independent contractor?***

This checklist will assist you in determining whether or not you are a bona fide independent contractor. If you answer “yes” to all (or most of) the statements listed below, then your status as an independent contractor is reasonably secure. It is, however, the overall way you work that is important. You need to acknowledge, and the people for whom you work must acknowledge, that neither of you wishes to engage in an “employer-employee” relationship. Making sure you follow this ‘20-point’ assessment will help you avoid any uncertainty.

	YES	NO
1. I became an independent contractor – and remain so, of my own free will		
2. I trade as either an individual, a partnership, a registered business name or a Pty Ltd company		
3. I advertise for business		
4. My primary objective is the achievement of an “end result”		
5. I am paid by invoice for completed work – although hourly rates may be used as a convenient basis for calculating invoice amounts		
6. I accept that work lasts for the term of each particular job or contract		
7. I freely accept the financial terms contained within the contracts I enter into		
8. I acknowledge and accept that the basis of agreement between myself and the other party is what is contained in the contract		
9. I acknowledge that no part of the financial consideration of the contracts I enter into has been withheld for holiday pay, sick leave, long service leave, superannuation, or any other statutory “employment-related” provision		
10. I profit from my work but also acknowledge that there are risks associated with running my own business as an independent contractor		
11. I accept work on the basis of offer and free acceptance. I am not obliged to accept work and I may reject work if I so desire		
12. I reserve the right to employ or sub-contract any aspect of the work I do to another person		
13. I reserve the right to employ an apprentice or trainee in the execution of the contracts I enter into		
14. I control the way I work however discussions with and direction from my clients may be a normal commercial need		
15. I have discretion and flexibility regarding work performance including start and finish times		
16. I accept responsibility for any defective or remedial work which was my doing		
17. I provide my own tools and equipment depending on the needs of the job		
18. My taxation obligations are managed through the PAYG and PSI systems		
19. I provide my own public liability and sickness and accident insurance cover		
20. All contracts I enter into whether verbal or in writing are consistent with the above principles		



## Connect calendar – significant dates, events and workshops

October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect women in small business month</li> <li>• Updated APESMA rates for chemists engaged as contractors available</li> <li>• Quarterly BAS lodgement date – 28 October</li> <li>• Winners of Australian Micro Business Awards announced 30 October – Connect's business mentoring service Mentors Online nominated in the not for profit category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate Committee Inquiry into Small Business Employment tables its Report and recommendations</li> <li>• Findings from 2001 University of Melbourne survey of Connect members expected</li> <li>• APESMA Short courses in November: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Contract management</b> – Nov 14/15 Adelaide and Nov 11/12 Perth</li> <li><b>Project management</b> – Nov 25/26 Melbourne and Nov 27/28 Sydney</li> <li><b>Strategic asset management</b> – Nov 19/20 Melbourne</li> <li><b>Financial management for non-financial people</b> – Nov 12/13 Melbourne</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect's Partnership 2003 scholarship – applications open 1 Dec 2002 &amp; close 31 Jan 2003</li> <li>• Updated contractor rates for Professional Engineers available</li> <li>• Launch of new online publication <b>Marketing</b> for Connect Small Business Monograph Series</li> <li>• Final Connect newsletter for 2003</li> <li>• Launch of Connect's Business Diagnostix – an online tool to measure your business's key capabilities</li> </ul>

## Seminars and workshops\*

Victoria		
<p><b>7 October</b> – Knox Homebiz Networking Evening, 03 9800 3599</p> <p><b>7-11 October</b> – Whitehorse Business Week, 03 9262 6373</p> <p><b>12 October</b> – Swan Hill Region Business Excellence Awards, 03 5032 3033</p> <p><b>15 October</b> – Boroondara Getting started in small business, ph 03 9278 4807</p> <p><b>16 October</b> – Maroondah Business Breakfast, 03 9846 6195</p> <p><b>17 October</b> – How to access finance – a woman's guide through the financial maze, Ballarat Business Expo, 03 5320 5900</p> <p><b>22 October</b> – Inspiring Women Seminar – Park Hyatt, 7pm, 03 9326 1009</p>	<p><b>4 November</b> – Knox Homebiz Networking evening, ph 03 9800 3599</p> <p><b>6 November</b> – seminar – Retire Busy – home based businesses that work, ph 03 9879 0622</p> <p><b>14 November</b> – Getting started in small business, ph 03 9298 8103</p> <p><b>20 November</b> – Product devt workshop, ph 03 9650 4733</p> <p><b>20 November</b> – Franchising – is it for you?, ph 03 9696 8122</p> <p>26 November – DIIRD Pre-business workshop</p>	<p><b>2 December</b> – Knox Homebiz Networking evening, ph 03 9800 3599</p> <p><b>4 December</b> – Free seminar – ideas, patents and inventions, ph 03 9650 4733</p> <p><b>4 December</b> – Eastern Business Network meeting, ph 03 9213 6710</p> <p><b>5 December</b> – Commercialise 2002 seminar series – bringing it all together, ph 08 8235 7542</p> <p><b>10 December</b> – DIIRD Pre-business workshop, ph 1800 136 034</p>
New South Wales		
<p><b>16 October</b> – Business efficiency seminars, 02 9977 3778</p> <p><b>23 October</b> – Making your marketing really work, 02 9977 3778</p> <p><b>30 October</b> – Developing the face of your business – business growth forum, (02) 9977 3778</p>	<p><b>1 November</b> – BusinessWorld Expo 2002, ph 02 9428 1177</p> <p><b>6 November</b> – Proactive financial management for your business, Business Growth Forum, ph 02 9977 3778</p> <p><b>19 November</b> – Effective leading in business, contact stephen.watt@business.nsw.gov.au</p>	<p><b>2 December</b> – Trade Mission – India, contact eric.cantwell@business.nsw.gov.au.</p> <p><b>5-6 December</b> – Symposium – Beyond 30 Australia China Educational Exchange Retrospect and Prospect, contact r.holenbergh@edfac.usyd.edu.au</p>



## Connect calendar – significant dates, events and workshops

ACT		
<p><b>3 October</b> – Business intro seminar, 9am-11.30am, ph 02 6260 5000</p> <p><b>4 October</b> – Professional women's network, ph 0412 850 983</p> <p><b>8 October</b> – Business plus workshop, 6pm-8.30pm, ph 02 6260 5000</p>	<p><b>1 November</b> – Professional women's network, ph 0412 850 983</p> <p><b>7 November</b> – Business intro seminar, ph 02 6260 5000</p> <p><b>12 November</b> – Business Plus workshop – ph 02 6260 5000</p>	<p><b>5 December</b> – Business intro seminar, ph 02 6260 5000</p> <p><b>11 December</b> – Canberra Business Advisory Service Christmas Dinner, ph 02 6260 5000</p>
South Australia		
<p><b>1-31 October</b> – Starting your own business workshops, ph 08 8463 3800 for dates and locations</p>	<p><b>5-28 November</b> – Starting your own business workshops, ph 08 8463 3800 for dates and locations</p>	<p><b>December 3-11</b> – Starting your own business workshops, ph 08 8463 3800 for dates and locations</p>
Queensland		
<p><b>8 October</b> – Planning for success, ph 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>16 October</b> – E-commerce seminar, ph 07 5591 5977</p> <p><b>22 October</b> – Smart marketing, 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>15 October</b> – Managing for profit, 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>29 October</b> – Managing your cash, ph 07 3225 1915</p>	<p><b>5 November</b> – Leading edge, ph 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>12 November</b> – Planning for success, ph 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>26 November</b> – Smart marketing, 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>19 November</b> – Managing for profit, 07 3225 1915</p>	<p><b>9 December</b> – Export pathways, ph 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>10 December</b> – Leading edge, ph 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>17 December</b> – Managing for profit, 07 3225 1915</p> <p><b>3 December</b> – Managing your cash, ph 07 3225 1915</p>
Northern Territory		
<p>Starting a business, business structures and tax, marketing, bookkeeping, business planning, ph 1800 229 500</p> <p><b>3 &amp; 4 October</b> – Katherine</p> <p><b>17 &amp; 18 October</b> – Alice Springs</p> <p><b>28 &amp; 29 October</b> – Darwin</p>	<p>Starting a business, business structures and tax, marketing, bookkeeping, business planning, ph 1800 229 500</p> <p><b>18 &amp; 19 November</b> – Darwin</p> <p><b>11 &amp; 12 November</b> – Nhulunbuy</p>	<p>Starting a business, business structures and tax, marketing, bookkeeping, business planning, ph 1800 229 500</p> <p><b>9 &amp; 10 December</b> – Darwin</p>
Western Australia		
<p><b>8 October</b> – How to start a business, feasibility of your business idea, intro to business planning</p> <p><b>9 October</b> – How to buy a business, intro to market research, costing and pricing, home based business, ph (08) 9220 0222</p>	<p><b>25 November</b> – How to start a business, feasibility of your business idea, intro to business planning</p> <p><b>26 November</b> – How to buy a business, intro to market research, costing and pricing, home based business, ph (08) 9220 0222</p>	<p>December dates for SBDC business startup seminars not yet available.</p>
Tasmania		

Business seminars are run by Tasmanian Enterprise Centres on an as needs basis. Contact Business Tasmania on 03 6233 5577 for the contact details of the Enterprise Centre nearest you.

\* For further information refer to Government Business websites in each state & territory:

Victoria ([www.sbv.vic.gov.au/web/sbv/](http://www.sbv.vic.gov.au/web/sbv/)), NSW ([www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/)), ACT ([www.canbas.com.au/](http://www.canbas.com.au/)), QLD ([www.sd.qld.gov.au/](http://www.sd.qld.gov.au/)), NT (<http://www.betterbiz.nt.gov.au/>), WA ([www.sbdc.com.au/](http://www.sbdc.com.au/)), Tas (<http://www.bt.tas.gov.au/dsd/dsdr4.nsf/>), SA (<http://www.tbc.sa.gov.au/>)