



Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand

Strategic Plan

2016-2018



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Introduction

The Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand Ltd (SEAANZ) is a not-for-profit public corporation limited by guarantee, registered under the Australian Corporation's Act 2001. Founded in 1987, it is dedicated to the advancement, development and understanding of small enterprise within Australia, New Zealand and globally. SEAANZ is focused on providing thought leadership across the “four pillars” of research, education, policy and practice in the area of SMEs.

SEAANZ is affiliated with the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), which was established in 1955 and was the first international organisation dedicated to the promotion, growth and development of small businesses at the global level. The ICSB draws together a wide cross-section of academic researchers, educators, policy makers and practitioners, who specialise in the field of SMEs. SEAANZ is also a member of the Asia Council of Small Business (ACSB), a regional affiliate of the ICSB that includes Australia, Japan, China, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia.

It is important to note that SEAANZ is focused on “Small Enterprise” rather than the more generic field of entrepreneurship. As noted in the Association's 25th Anniversary Booklet, the term “enterprise” was specifically chosen to identify its “dedication to small scale operations – whether of a for-profit, non-profit, community or non-community, public or private nature” (Dunn, 2012).

The Association has several levels of membership with differing fee and benefit structures. It is managed by a Board of Directors comprising 12 with members drawn from Australia and New Zealand and across the “four pillars”.

Objectives of the Association

As outlined in its constitution SEAANZ has six primary objectives that are focused on the overall goal of advancing the development and understanding of small enterprise. These objectives are to:

1. Further the development of scholarship, education, research and practice in the relevant discipline areas, including encouraging the application of research findings;
2. Identify and develop proposals for programs to meet small enterprise needs;
3. Communicate and disseminate ideas and information on small enterprise, and promote their discussion by the holding of conferences, publishing material and other appropriate means;
4. Liaise and affiliate with other associations or bodies with similar objects;
5. Make representations and/or provide commentaries to Government or other bodies on any matter relevant to the Association; and
6. Do all such other things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.



The Purpose of SEAANZ

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – firms with fewer than 250 employees – account for 99% of all firms found across the 34 advanced economies that comprise the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2010). In Australia SMEs (those with less than 200 employees) comprise around 99.7% of all firms, the majority (60%) of which employ only their owner-manager (DIISR, 2011). However, SMEs employ almost half the total Australian workforce or around 4.8 million people. They also contribute over one third of the industry value added (DIISR, 2011). In New Zealand just over 97% of all businesses have less than 20 employees and firms with fewer than 50 employees provide more than half the country's employment (MBIE, 2013).

Despite their importance to the national economy small enterprises continue to be relegated to second place in relation to entrepreneurship. This is evidenced in the relative attention given to small business research and management education at universities when compared to that given to entrepreneurship. In the area of policy, small firms lack the voice and recognition of their larger counterparts in relation to securing appropriate regulation and legislative regimes. This can be evidenced in areas such as taxation, “red tape” compliance costs, and competitive fairness in contracting, labour laws and access to tendering and industry support.

The small business is not just a “little big business” (Welsh and White, 1981) and requires a different approach to how policy is framed and implemented, as well as a different approach to the application of management education and its related theories. Rather than viewing the small enterprise sector as a large number of “little big businesses”, it is important to realise that the key actor is the owner-manager. On average small business owner-managers and their firms are indistinguishable and decisions are made based more on personal than business reasons.

With such a high proportion of SMEs being non-employing micro-enterprises or “Freelancers”, there must be recognition that the small enterprise sector is as much about the thoughts and behaviour of millions of self-employed individuals as it is about the actions of firms within industries. Further, the majority of small business owner-managers are not entrepreneurs and seek only modest growth. Their challenges are nevertheless real and require a different frame of reference and research analysis than is commonly found in the mainstream academic focus on entrepreneurship.

These factors have not changed since SEAANZ was established in the late 1980s. Technology has advanced and the globalisation of the Australian and New Zealand economies has increased. However, as noted by Gibb (2000) there is considerable “ignorance and myth” that swirls around the small enterprise field, and a lack of “intimacy” found between academics, policy-makers, stakeholders and small business owner-managers. Only through the drawing together of these otherwise disparate communities (e.g. “four pillars”) can meaningful research, education, policy and practice be achieved. That remains the purpose of SEAANZ, one that has not changed in 30 years.

The SEAANZ Strategic Framework

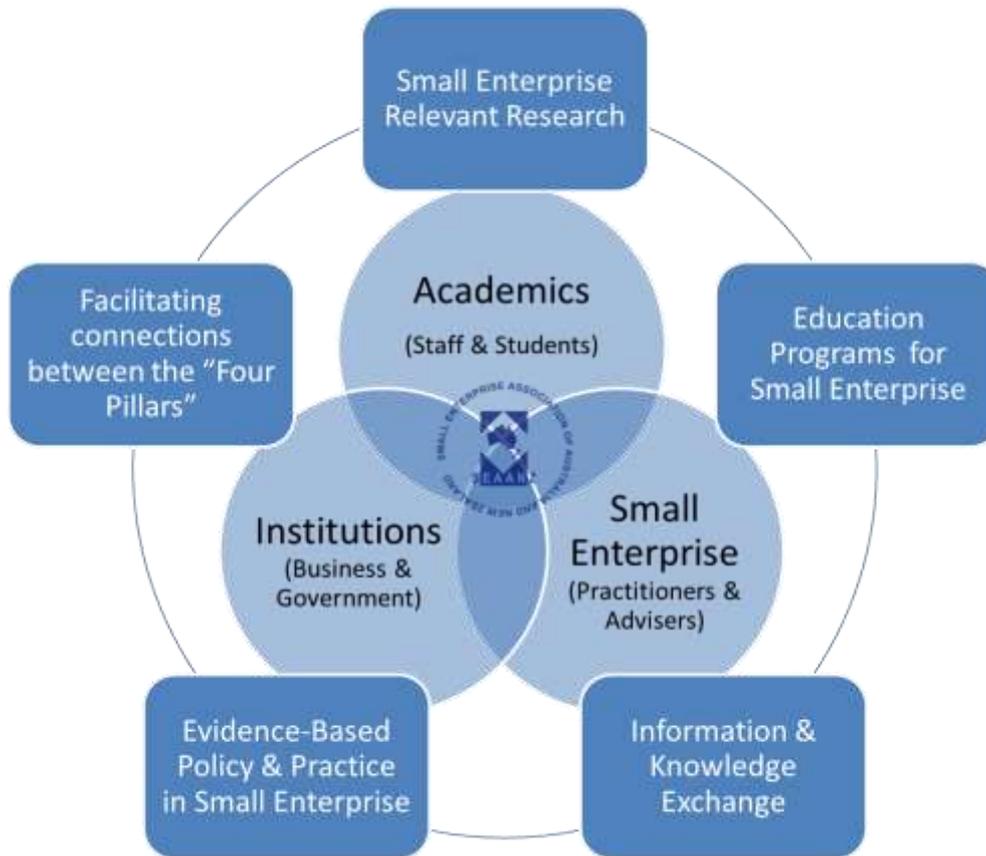


Figure 1: SEAANZ Strategy Framework

SEAANZ seeks to bring together within its membership three broad communities comprising the academics and students from universities and other higher education institutions (e.g. vocational training colleges), large government and business institutions, and the owner-managers of small enterprises and their advisors. As shown in Figure 1 these three communities are united by SEAANZ membership and organisation focuses on five key areas:

1. The development of theoretical and applied research into the field of small enterprise.
2. The development of education programs relating to the field of small enterprise.
3. The communication and dissemination of research, information and knowledge across the SEAANZ communities to enhance understanding and foster collaboration.
4. The promotion of well-informed, evidence-based policy and practice in small enterprise.
5. The facilitation of connections between the "Four Pillars" by SEAANZ through a range of mechanisms including conferences, workshops and other media.



Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The vision of SEAANZ is to be recognised as the most respected source of knowledge and information on small enterprise research, policy and practice in Australia and New Zealand.

Mission

The mission of SEAANZ is to serve as a hub and connection point for communities of practice across Australia and New Zealand that are engaged in research, education and training, support, policy and practice in the field of small enterprise.

Values

- **A-Political** – SEAANZ is not a lobby group and works across all party political lines.
- **Integrity** – SEAANZ maintains the highest standards of corporate governance, transparency and ethical behaviour in its management.
- **Independence** – SEAANZ is independent of government, corporate and political interests and represents all its members equally.
- **Information** – SEAANZ is a disseminator of information and ideas relating to small enterprise research, education, policy and practice.



Critical Success Factors

In order that SEAANZ fulfil its vision and execute its mission the organisation must possess the following resources and competencies:

- **A dedicated and committed Board of Directors** with a good cross-section of skills and the willingness to provide active leadership.
- **A strong membership base** that is of a size that can maintain the financial viability of the Association and one that is growing.
- **Ongoing links to the ICSB, ACSB and other relevant international bodies.**
- **Expanding links and alliances** with other complementary organisations.
- **Active engagement in leading research and education programs** that target small enterprise.
- **A range of corporate sponsors** who are willing to provide base-line funding for the Association in return for appropriate publicity rights and engagement with SEAANZ programs.
- **An ability to hold annual conferences** and other similar meetings that engage its members attract new members and raise its profile.
- **A well designed website and social media platform** that can serve as a hub for the communities of practice that SEAANZ will need to service.
- **Ongoing production of quality publications** including the journal “Small Enterprise Research”, with a gradual elevation of this publication within the academic rankings system, as well as books, discussion papers, newsletters and reports.

Operational Priorities Implementation Plan

The ability of SEAANZ to fulfil its objectives under its constitution will require the organisation to implement a number of concurrent strategies over the next three years. The following subsections outline the way forward for the implementation of an Operational Priorities Implementation Plan (OPIP). This focuses on each of the main areas that represent the strategic task environment of SEAANZ as it seeks to fulfil its constitutional objectives.



Objective 1: The development of academic scholarship

1. Further the development of scholarship, education, research and practice in the relevant discipline areas, including encouraging the application of research findings.

Implementation Strategy	Develop a clearly defined research agenda for the field of small enterprise that sets out key areas for future inquiry and key research questions that remain to be addressed.
Deliverables	Publication of a special issue of Small Enterprise Research (SER) commencing with a publishing plan focusing on enhancing the focus of academic research towards small business research as a distinct domain.
Implementation timeline	<p>SER issues to be prepared during 2016-2018 period will include:</p> <p>2016:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special issue 23(1) "Ecopreneurship" 2. General issue 23(2) 3. Special issue 23(3) "Small business research" <p>2017:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special issue 24(1) Indigenous Enterprise 2. General issue 24(2) 3. Special issue innovation and commercialisation 24(3) <p>2018:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special issue 25(1) Entrepreneurship and small business in the South Pacific 2. General issue 25(2) 3. Special issue 25(3) Small business marketing in the digital age <p>2019:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special issue 26(1) Entrepreneurship and small business in Asia 2. General issue 26(2) 3. Special issue 26(3) Financial management of small and entrepreneurial firms
Resource requirements	This task will be processed via the Taylor & Francis journal publishing system and editorial board of the SEAANZ journal SER.
Operational responsibility	This task will be the responsibility of the SER Editor in Chief Professor Thomas Cooney and the Editorial Board of SER.



Objective 2: The development of education programs

4. Identify and develop proposals for programs to meet small enterprise needs.

Implementation Strategy	Develop a SEAANZ Academy program for entrepreneurs and small business owner-managers built on the ICSB Academy framework.
Deliverables	<p>The ICSB Academy is a program designed to provide participants with a “full-immersion” experience of entrepreneurship and new venture creation. It was piloted by the ICSB in Dubai in 2015 and will be run for the first time in New York in 2016. The program has 8 modules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovation and Creativity 2. Online venture challenge 3. Lean Start-Up Workshop 4. Business model innovation 5. Funding the venture 6. Communicate the idea 7. Teams mentoring 8. Breakfast with an entrepreneur <p>SEAANZ will adapt the program for Australian and New Zealand cohorts and run in conjunction with the ICSB Academy</p>
Implementation timeline	To be prepared and delivered at the 2016 SEAANZ conference in August 2016.
Resource requirements	This task will require a multi-disciplinary cohort of contributing instructors, places for up to 200 participants, opportunities for “real world” networking and business mentoring.
Operational responsibility	This task should be assigned to a program working group reporting to the SEAANZ board.

Objective 3: The development of research and practice

5. Develop research findings with specific application to managerial practice.

Implementation Strategy	Undertake applied research projects in collaboration with industry and government partners targeted at specific outcomes to inform policy and practice.
Deliverables	<p>Currently there is a major research project (2016-2017) with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) that is investigating workplace management for SMEs across seven key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitating flexible work 2. Inspiring future workplaces 3. Spotlighting workplace regulation 4. Enhancing workplace diversity 5. Improving management and leadership 6. Enabling healthy and safe workplaces 7. Empowering entrepreneurs <p>SEAANZ is coordinating the work for 5 of these themes (1-4 and 7). This involves academic and practitioner communities to translate their research into business friendly language and publish it via selected channels (e.g. seminars and forums, workshops and professional development, newsletters, websites, industry media and social media. Monash U, Curtin U and UNE are engaged along with researchers from UWA and industry.</p>



Implementation timeline	<p>ACCI have indicated the following timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – literature review – March-May 2016. • Phase 2 – database analysis – May-July 2016. • Phase 3 – employer and employee surveys – July-September 2016. • Phase 4 – Industry forums – September 2016 to January 2017. • Phase 5a – Case studies – January-April 2017. • Phase 5b – Cross-case analysis – April-June 2017.
Resource requirements	<p>Each project task involves a small team of academics and industry practitioners with a designated project leader. Funding has been provided by federal Department of Employment via ACCI. The project teams will report to the SEAANZ board for final oversight of the project deliverables and the board will allocate funding according to progress.</p>
Operational responsibility	<p>This task is assigned to a program working group reporting to the SEAANZ board with sub-contractors assisting with management and coordination.</p>



Objective 4: Communication and dissemination of ideas and information

6. Communicate and disseminate ideas and information on small enterprise, and promote their discussion by the holding of conferences, publishing material and other appropriate means.

Implementation Strategy	Position SEAANZ as a thought leadership forum for small enterprise research, education, policy and practice within Australia and New Zealand.
Deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold an annual conference that attracts both academic researchers and representatives from small business training, education, advisory and support agencies, as well as those from government agencies tasked with formulating small business policy. 2. Develop an online strategy and associated website that seeks to build a community or communities of practice within the online environment. SEAANZ should begin to view itself as a virtual organisation in which the primary mechanism for communication is online and the website becomes the principle distribution and reception point for information and knowledge exchange. 3. Continue to publish the journal <i>Small Enterprise Research</i> on a regular basis and have its academic ranking elevated over time from “C” to “B”. 4. Continue to publish the annual SEAANZ Research Book series but consider refocusing it for 2017-2018 as a dedicated “state of small business” manuscript. 5. Develop a SEAANZ Discussion Paper series with its own ISSN classification. 6. Continue to produce the SEAANZ newsletter “Networker”.
Implementation timeline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual conferences to be held in Melbourne 2016 and 2017 with possible move to New Zealand in 2018. 2. Online marketing communication strategy to continue through 2016-2018. 3. SER journal to publishing three volumes per annum focusing on a special issue relating to research issues, a general issue and a special issue focusing on a small business policy and practice issue. 4. Publish the SEAANZ Annual Research Book in August 2016 and subsequently in 2017 and 2018 in new format. 5. Continue production of e-newsletter “Networker”.
Resource requirements	Conference requires appointment of a professional conference organiser (PCO) and a small team of 2-3 SEAANZ directors based in Melbourne. The journal will be resourced by the existing Editor in Chief and SER Editorial Board with support from publisher Taylor & Francis. The SEAANZ book will require a small editorial team drawn from the SEAANZ board and members. It will be supported by publisher Tilde Publishing. The website, e-newsletter and social media communications will require appointment of part-time sub-contractors.
Operational responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conference is delegated to a sub-committee and PCO. 2. Newsletter and social media is overseen by board and managed by sub-contractors. 3. Website management is overseen by board and managed by sub-contractor. 4. Journal to be managed by Editor in Chief and Editorial Board. 5. Book to be managed by Editorial Board.



Objective 5: Liaison and affiliation

7. Liaison and affiliation with other associations or bodies with similar objects.

Implementation Strategy	Forge mutually beneficial relationships between SEAANZ and other like-minded organisations.
Deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop closer ties with institutions (e.g. Wrays, ACCI, NAB, Treasury) to enhance the profile of SEAANZ at the national level in Australia. 2. Develop a similar relationship with New Zealand based organisations such as the Small Business Advisory Group and the Ministry of Economic Development. 3. Establish a regular SEAANZ Policy forum within the annual conference. 4. Consider co-hosting the ACSB Annual Conference in Melbourne in August 2017. 5. Engage with ICSB Academy via proposed SEAANZ Academy. 6. Collaborate with groups focusing on disseminating information for small business owners (e.g. Navitas and the Industry Skills Fund program for Australian business).
Implementation timeline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue momentum established in 2014-2015. 2. By August 2016 for SEAANZ Academy. 3. Throughout 2016 for Navitas Industry Skills Fund program promotion. 4. By mid-2017 with ACSB.
Resource requirements	These tasks are associated with existing tasks highlighted under previous objectives. They will require some additional resources that can be developed from sponsorships and fee for service.
Operational responsibility	SEAANZ board of directors.

Objective 6: Representation and commentary

8. Make representations and/or provide commentary to Government or other bodies on any matter relevant to the Association.

Implementation Strategy	Position SEAANZ as a significant and respected source of information and commentary on small enterprise research, policy and practice within Australia and New Zealand.
Deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a media engagement plan that identifies key SEAANZ members willing to provide media commentary and briefing. 2. Develop a SEAANZ Annual Research Book on the state of Small Enterprise in Australia and New Zealand and seek corporate sponsorship for this.
Implementation timeline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media engagement plan by end-February 2016. 2. Book project by mid-2017.
Resource requirements	These tasks are associated with existing tasks highlighted under previous objectives. They will require some additional resources that can be developed from sponsorships and fee for service.
Operational responsibility	SEAANZ board of directors.



Objective 7: Financial sustainability

9. Develop sufficient income sources to position SEAANZ as a financially self-sustaining body.

Implementation Strategy	Develop sufficient income sources to position SEAANZ as a financially self-sustaining body.
Deliverables	Annual income of \$25,000 minimum with a target of around \$50,000 per annum or more.
Implementation timeline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get SEAANZ accounts managed via Xero with up-to-date record of members who are financial. 2. Set membership fees across only three categories (e.g. ordinary, student and institutional supporter). 3. Develop sponsorship strategies with key institutions (e.g. NAB, Wrays, Top Education Institute and Victorian Government). 4. Acquire sponsorships from within Australia and New Zealand for conferences and research projects.
Resource requirements	This will require a coordinated effort by all SEAANZ directors to develop the sponsorship and funding structure of the organisation.
Operational responsibility	SEAANZ board of directors.

References:

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