

## **How owner/managers decide to participate with new apprenticeships for the first time?: A grounded theory approach**

*Bruce Rowlands*  
*Research Centre for Vocational Education & Training*  
*University of Technology, Sydney*

This paper presents the findings of a study into small business decision making experiences with New Apprenticeships. The issue of small business participation with New Apprenticeships is empirically investigated from a owner/manager and organisational perspective. The literature on vocational education and training, and specifically participation with work-place based training schemes, is reviewed demonstrating the research need. Using a grounded theory research approach, the study focused on contextual and processual elements as well as the action of key players associated with participation - elements that have been largely omitted in previous studies of Australia's apprenticeship and traineeship system so far. The paper makes three principal contributions. First, drawing on the rich data of twenty-one case studies, the paper generates a grounded understanding of the decision-making process associated with owner/manager participation with New Apprentices for the first time. Second, the grounded theory adds substantive content to our understanding of the central role played by owner/managers, their organisational context, and the processes they enact. Third, the paper integrates a specific grounded theory with the more formal insights available from the innovation literature, developing a more general framework that will allow researchers and practitioners to explain and account for the actions of key players, and the participation process followed by small business.

**Topic area:** Australia's apprenticeship and traineeship system

**Key words:** New Apprenticeships, Case study, Grounded theory, Small business.

### ***Presenter & Address***

Bruce Rowlands  
PO Box 269  
Bond University, Qld., 4229