

ACCORD seminar
Co-operative Attitudes and Institutional Innovation in Australia

Thursday 14 April 2005, 4pm to 6pm

Seminar presenters

Andrew Passey, Senior Research Fellow, ACCORD
Dr Mark Lyons, Adjunct Professor, UTS.

Venue

South Wing, Gallery Function Centre, Level 6 UTS Tower Building, Broadway

About the seminar

Despite compelling international examples the idea of linking entrepreneurial economic activity with social outcomes via new forms of mutualism has failed to capture the imagination of Australian governments or of the third sector itself. It seems that in Australia the zeal to find solutions to pressing problems in people's capacity for self-organised co-operation has long been lost.

But if government and the third sector have failed in Australia to generate an interest in new forms of organising, does it also follow that the principle of mutuality or co-operation is no longer espoused or understood within the population as a whole? Or might there be a residual loyalty or attachment that can be revived by imaginative proposals for new organisational solutions to some old, and some new social and economic problems?

In this seminar Andrew Passey, Senior Research Fellow at ACCORD and Mark Lyons, Adjunct Professor at UTS, use data from the 2003 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA) to argue that the public is ready to back a greater role for social enterprises across broad areas of the Australian economy. There is evidence for a large sub-section of the population that is most especially supportive of co-operatives. Such support extends across the age spectrum, but the factors underpinning it are different among the younger age cohort. The seminar will present the evidence, which leads the authors to suggest that greater support for social enterprise and institutional reform are overdue in Australia. We conclude that any such attempts to bolster the role of co-operative enterprises in the Australian economy and in areas of the 'public services' would find support among a significant proportion of the population.

The seminar will be of interest to third sector scholars, policy makers working in areas where the third sector is active, and third sector industry-based practitioners.

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