

# Unlocking corporate innovation

How innovative are Australian business leaders? A new tool outlines an easy path to developing a corporate culture of creativity and innovation

It seems that innovation is the latest hot topic for businesses and governments around the world.

Research conducted in Australia by the Applied Innovation Centre confirms the findings of international studies that although most organisations include creativity and innovation in their strategic vision statements, only 3% of them have a structured approach to achieving these objectives.

The Centre's research also found that organisations find it difficult to make the transition from vision to operations, usually because of the lack of any structured approach to the task.

To overcome this shortcoming, the Applied Innovation Centre has developed and published the *Business Creativity and Innovation Framework*.

The framework is laid out in such a way that organisations of any size can easily follow the process to focus on those elements that are essential to develop a culture of creativity and innovation.

The 10 essential elements range from strategic planning through to ideas management and human resource management and even include budget and finance considerations.

In essence, the framework provides a blueprint to combine people and process strategies within a supportive environment, so that innovative outcomes are achieved as a matter of course.

Applied Innovation Centre managing director Peter Newman says that too often organisations focus on only one or two aspects of innovation and consequently do not achieve the full potential that a fully integrated approach can bring.

"In every innovative and creative organisation, it's people who have made it that way, but corporate innovation doesn't occur in an ad hoc or random way. It requires a thoughtful, deliberate and integrated approach to creative problem-solving and the application of a specific set of strategies, processes and skills," says Newman.

"It also requires an overarching corporate environment that nurtures and facilitates innovation. A culture that supports innovation typically includes motivation to innovate, rewards for

creative ideas, sufficient time and funds for innovation, management practices that allow freedom, challenging work and supervisory encouragement."

The framework has also received recognition from international creativity and innovation experts.

Dr Susan Besemer of the State University of New York noted: "I find this an unusually comprehensive plan for improving creativity and innovation in an organisation. It's unusual to find such a detailed approach to the subject in a shorter document like this. There's a lot of material there."

While the framework is often all that is required for most organisations to achieve greater creativity and innovation, the Centre also provides consulting services to clients who need additional assistance.

"Some organisations may need assistance integrating the process across complex structures and we occasionally find that senior executives need access to expert resources to project manage the process, because they have insufficient time to devote to the project," Newman notes. **HC**

Further information on the *Business Creativity and Innovation Framework* can be found on the Applied Innovation Centre's website at [www.appliedinnovation.com.au](http://www.appliedinnovation.com.au) or by contacting the centre on 61 8 9228 9411

The framework is available for \$70 excluding GST and postage

