

# Managing Business for Sustainability

Steve Elliot, University of Sydney, Australia

## Abstract:

Scientific evidence has been presented in a compelling case that human behaviour is responsible for severely degrading our natural environment. In response, the governments of 193 countries have committed to urgent action to resolve these challenges. Business has two critical roles; terminating business practices that contribute to the deteriorating environment, and creating sustainable solutions for business, government and society.

Business leaders acknowledge the environment as a major issue of concern. However, they express persistent uncertainty about how to address what is acknowledged by the UN as representing, 'one of the greatest technical, organizational and financial challenges that humanity has faced' (UNSDSN 2013, p20). Calls have been made for new ways to produce actionable knowledge about such complex societal challenges.

This presentation describes work in progress to: address business uncertainties, motivate business responses to sustainability, and generate new knowledge. An exploratory model based on the experiences of a pioneer in business sustainability is tested, reviewed and revised through comparison with 10 companies purposively selected for diversity in countries, sectors and sizes. The outcome is a transdisciplinary, transformative model to assist business in re-creating their current practices in pursuit of a more sustainable environment. The roles of information systems and technology in enabling these solutions are explored. Opportunities for creating research with impact on practice are considered.