

ANZTSR NINTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

AUKLAND NEW ZEALAND

24-26 NOVEMBER 2008

**ABSTRACT**

**theme 3: private partnerships, corporate social responsibilities and social enterprises**

**TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN FOURTH SECTOR? :**

Research conducted in 1998 in Tasmania indicated that a fourth sector of society distinct from Market, Government and community, was emerging (Alessandrini, 2001). The comparative analysis between 7 Tasmanian and 7 Texan non-government human service organisations showed dramatic differences between the two groups but also common ground. There was evidence of an emerging social group, possibly a new fourth sector of society, calling into question the conceptual adequacy of civil society (Alessandrini, 2002). If these organisations cannot be regarded as government, market or community [or civil society] a new category is indicated. Evidence in 1998 indicated that an 'entrepreneurial civic service' sector was in its infancy in Australia. Ten years on, in 2008, what has happened? Has the anticipated change eventuated and how robust is the concept of a fourth sector? The 7 organisations case-studied and qualitatively analysed in 1998 were recontacted and updated data collected. When analysed, this revised data is revealing in that dramatic change has indeed occurred with significant increases in collaborative and co-operative modes of operation that have accrued benefits to the organisations involved.

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