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## ABSTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

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### **Title: Environmental Management training programs for small businesses: Where is the motivation for engagement?**

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*Abstract: Stakeholders have invested considerable resources into environmental programs to aid small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to improve their environmental performance. Globally these programs have not engaged SMEs sufficiently in order to improve their collective environmental performance. This outcome suggests that greater understanding is needed about what will motivate the majority of SMEs to engage in better environmental management. Academic research offers a number of insights into what SME owner-managers say will drive their engagement (e.g. education, financial incentives, and regulatory pressure). However, there are sticking points on each of these options and they contribute to the limited success that has been achieved thus far.*

*One of the identified drivers for SMEs is for stakeholders to demonstrate a convincing business case (i.e. a specific purpose to engage). It is acknowledged that a business case could give more SME owner-managers the required motivation to engage in environmental management. The main difficulty stakeholders' face, however, is quantifying the business case (e.g. measuring expenditure, return on investment and environmental outcomes). The key problem is that SME owner-managers are often reluctant to share the commercially sensitive data needed to develop such business cases. This lack of co-operation has resulted in there being limited useful information published that allows stakeholders to develop a business case, and SME owner-managers to determine the viability of investing in any changes to their environmental management. This paper discusses research that sought to establish a business case for Australian SMEs to reduce energy consumption. The research required SME owner-managers to share sensitive financial and other data with academics. The findings of the*

*research suggest that much more could be achieved for SMEs and the environment if greater co-operation can be achieved between SMEs and other stakeholders, particularly in regard to sharing confidential, sensitive data.*