



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal

Volume 4

Issue 1 *Australasian Accounting Business and Finance
Journal*

Article 1

Editorial Volume 4, Issue 1

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Recommended Citation

Smark, Ciorstan J., Editorial Volume 4, Issue 1, *Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal*, 4(1), 2010, 2-5.

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Abstract

This journal was started with the generous support and encouragement of the School of Accounting and Finance at the University of Wollongong. From its inception, the journal has invited and had submissions of manuscripts from senior staff within the school, the distinguished diasporas of former colleagues and visiting scholars; and the larger academic community of which the School has had a long history of engagement. Notably, Michael Gaffikin (2007), Warwick Funnell (2007), Mary Kaidonis (2008), Ed Arrington (2007) and Alex Frino (Tan, Frino, and Jarnecic, 2007) all contributed manuscripts to the fledgling first issues.



Editorial

Ciorstan Smark*

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The establishment of the journal has arisen from a rich research culture within the School of Accounting and Finance, evidenced by over 20 years of annual Doctoral Consortia and the number and diversity of higher degree research students. The recent ERA B-ranking has marked a new era and a new format for the journal. This issue reflects this research culture through the breadth of research topics and theoretical and methodological considerations. All papers in this issue are co-authored with Wollongong staff and, consistent with the journal's aim to promote and foster student research, two of the papers feature work involving doctoral students. The papers cover the areas of financial reporting and disclosure, management accounting, market microstructure and corporate governance employing diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives. The research sites include the emergent market economies of Bangladesh and China, the Italian Bourse, Australian companies and the public sector.

Two papers examine the possibility of investment information asymmetry during periods of change. The paper by Hughes, Hoy and Andrew (2010) investigates the considerable debate surrounding the direct and indirect method of reporting cash flows in light of the recent IASB/FASB joint project on Financial Statement presentation. Despite the importance of operating cash flow information for firm distress prediction and assessing investment risk, the authors discovered material differences between the estimated and reported operating

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cash flows within a sample of Australian firms. At the micro-level of investment decision-making during a period of structural change, Gerace and Lepone (2010) have investigated the intra-day patterns in bid-ask spreads during the transition from an auction to specialist market at the Italian Bourse.

The papers situated in emerging economies focus on the issues arising from the adoption of internationally promulgated guidelines and standards. Ying and Andrew investigate reported financial accounting information usefulness by problematising the notion of comparability that has arisen from the IFRS project and the bias toward regulatory standardisation. They use communal land tenure in China as an example of an institutional factor that affects the recognition of assets within a normative comparability framework. The paper by Rashid, Lodh, DeZoysa and Rudkin (2010) examines corporate governance best practice regimes in Bangladesh and investigates the implementation of international guidelines by examining the role played by independent directors in a selection of firms to ensure the checks and balances of accountability. Both papers emphasise that mapping international standards to emergent economies is complicated by national regulatory and legislative frameworks and economic institutions. The paper by Watts, McNair and Baard (2010) also analyses accountability, but from a public sector perspective. Using a neo-institutional framework they investigate the adoption and subsequent decline of reported performance indicators in Australian universities as an example of a symbolic practice to gain organisational legitimacy.

While the professionally formatted and professionally colour printed issues of AABFJ presents a cosmetic change; the diversity of approaches and embracing of alternative viewpoints remains at the core of the journal. The editors have also decided to remain with our open access copyright policies – where the authors retain ownership of their material and assign their permission for us to publish their material, disseminate it on our website and distribute it to other non-exclusive content distributors (such as EBSCO and ProQuest). Our approach is influenced by the realisation that not all of the people who would like to engage with articles in accounting and finance have access to a fully-equipped and well-resourced library.

Some things will inevitably change with the new ranking. While the role and usefulness of journal-rankings have been the subject of considerable debate (see for example, Lowe & Locke, 2005; Tinker, 2006), rankings are nonetheless part of a perceived academic ‘reality’ which will inevitably affect this journal. Space for resistance is open and welcomed here. One of the most joyful aspects of this change has been a steep rise in the number of manuscripts submitted to AABFJ. One of our responses has been to streamline the process of receiving manuscripts by adopting a system of section editors to facilitate the swift reviewing and initial screening of papers sent to AABFJ.

So, with this acknowledgement of our roots in the School of

Accounting and Finance at the University of Wollongong, and with an acknowledgement of the diversity and richness that those traditions engender, we present Volume 4, Issue 1 of AABFJ as an overview of the research taking place in the School today as we embark upon a new stage in the life of this journal.

The Editors wish to acknowledge the generous support of Rob Hood (Design); Michael Organ (Research Online); Lee Moerman and Tina Mak (School of Accounting & Finance, UOW); and SAARC (Social, Accounting & Accountability Research Centre).

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