

Bond hosts inaugural Family Business Advanced Education Program for PwC Partners

Bond University recently welcomed PwC Partners from across Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and New Zealand for the inaugural Family Business Advanced Education Program, a two-day professional development program designed for professionals advising business-owning families.

Led by Professor Justin Craig, the program drew on family enterprise frameworks developed, stress-tested and refined through decades of work with business-owning families around the world.

Across the two days, participants explored family enterprise structures and processes through foundational frameworks, live and published case studies, and practical tools designed to support their work with clients.

Members of PwC's family business leadership team also participated in the program, contributing professional context to discussions around the challenges and decisions advisers encounter when working with family enterprises.

Reflecting on the experience, Ryan Smith, Private Partner, said:

"Participating in this intensive was incredibly beneficial. It wasn't just about theory; we walked away with highly practical frameworks that can be directly applied to our work. These tools are invaluable for guiding deeper conversations with family businesses, helping us address complex issues with clarity and build much stronger relationships."

An underlying theme throughout the program was the long-term perspective inherent in family enterprise.

As Professor Craig reflected during the program:

"Family business leaders have a long-term perspective ... they work for their kids' kids ... and so do we."

The program has parallels with family business executive education previously delivered by Professor Craig for PwC at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in Chicago, while the Bond program was delivered in an Australian context.

PwC Partners travelled interstate and internationally to attend the program, reflecting an investment in continued professional learning for those working with business-owning families.

Learning that travels

While the participants were advisers rather than business-owning families themselves, much of the learning focused on situations they may encounter when supporting clients through succession, governance, ownership and generational transition.

A framework explored in the classroom may help an adviser recognise a family enterprise issue earlier. A case study may offer another way to approach a difficult conversation. A practical tool may provide structure around a challenge that can otherwise be difficult to articulate.

As Professor Craig told participants:

“My role is to educate educators. I educate you so you can educate your team members and clients.”

For Glen Frost, National Lead Partner, one of the central challenges in family enterprise advisory work is creating the conditions for important conversations to happen before they become urgent.

“Every family enterprise is different, however, the one consistent challenge is helping families have the important conversations they should be having before circumstances force them to. Advisers need both sound technical knowledge and the communication skills, judgement, frameworks and confidence to guide those conversations.”

While the immediate beneficiaries of the program are PwC Partners, the broader impact extends beyond the participants themselves.

Knowledge developed through executive education can be applied within teams, inform professional practice and contribute to the conversations participants subsequently have with the clients and organisations they support.

Extending the value of professional development

Executive education is often associated with senior leadership development, but professional learning can also support people across a much broader organisational environment.

Participants might include emerging leaders, advisers, partners, technical specialists or client-facing professionals whose expertise and judgement influence organisational and client outcomes.

In some circumstances, organisations may also choose to create learning experiences involving clients, industry participants or broader professional communities.

The question therefore extends beyond:

“What training do our executives need?” to:

“Where could deeper learning build capability across our organisation and the people we serve?”

The value of executive education is not simply access to information.

It is the opportunity to step away from everyday work, examine an issue deeply, challenge existing thinking, apply evidence-based frameworks and consider real situations alongside others working through similar challenges.

Every element of the learning experience, from program design and delivery through to the learning environment, can be intentionally considered to support engagement, reflection and practical application.

For organisations, this can mean professional development supports strategic priorities, creates shared language, develops specialist capability, prepares future leaders and strengthens the knowledge people take back into their day-to-day work.





Designed for the organisation and its people

The Family Business Advanced Education Program was designed around a specific area of professional practice: advising business-owning families.

For other organisations, the learning need and audience may be entirely different.

Participants might be employees, leaders, advisers, technical specialists, clients or a combination of these groups.

Bond Business School regularly delivers executive education and professional development programs for a range of organisations, with programs designed around particular organisational, professional and learning needs.

The opportunity is to consider where focused learning could create the greatest value and how far that learning might ultimately extend beyond the classroom.

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