



Who is agile in Australia and New Zealand?



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Troughton

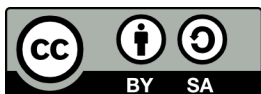
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Contents

To all reviewers & language police	1
Why the ‘Who is agile in Australia & New Zealand’ book?	2
Who is Renee Troughton?	3
Who is Neil Killick?	11

To all reviewers & language police

This book is currently a “Work in Progress”. We expect 30 Agilists from Australia & New Zealand to be featured in this book. The current number is at 19. The next updates would be quite frequent in keeping up with the spirit of lean publishing and your critical reviews/feedback is definitely going to matter to the subsequent versions of this book.

We look forward to your comments & suggestions, please email them to sunish.chabba@gmail.com.

Why the 'Who is agile in Australia & New Zealand' book?

After the resounding success of the book '[Who is agile](#)', an idea of scaling the book by creating local country versions came in the minds of Yves and team. This book, [Who is agile in Australia & New Zealand](#), is a part of this [Community project](#) with other local country books also in the offing.

This book is a collection of interviews with passionate Australian & New Zealand agilists who answer a set of questions that is going to give numerous insights to the readers of this book. Whether you're a novice or an Agile Guru, this book is going to help you learn a bit about the people behind the names & get their perspective on Agile.

Have fun reading their answers.

Sunish Chabba, Renee Troughton, Venkatesh Krishnamurthy
& Yves Hanouille

Who is Renee Troughton?



Renee

What is something people usually don't know about you but has influenced you in who you are?

I am fortunate enough to have gone through two life threatening events and come out alive. The first happened in my mid twenties when I had been working eighty hour weeks for almost half a year. It really put into perspective what life was about for me and that there was more to it than just work.

My husband, who was my high school sweetheart, also manages to keep me very emotionally balanced. He is my rock, my sun and stars and most definitely the ‘better half’.

What would have become of you if you were not doing the job you do today?

When I was younger I wanted to go into [meteorology](#) or be a [graphic artist](#), but at the time there were limited opportunities for employment in those fields in Australia. I have always loved watching wild weather, tornadoes and cyclones, but not the pain that those natural phenomenons inflict upon humanity.

I would still really love to be involved in the development of a [Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game](#) as a Lore Designer. Part of my impetus to write the fantasy trilogy the [Chronicles of Larnorn](#) was to build the world that I would want to play. I found over time that I really just enjoyed the creativity, complexity and escapism that writing my own world provided. I could quite easily spend all of my time writing.

I appreciate a lot more now that I am a creative person and that I need an outlet for this.

What is your biggest challenge and why is it a good thing for you?

Keeping a balance between family, fun, creativity and work. I have had times in my life when I have been so disengaged with work that it created a cesspool of apathy that bled into my personal life.

It is incredibly difficult to not slide into apathy; to remain focussed on enjoying the job that you do. If you don't enjoy your job then you need to make a change - either find something in it that you do enjoy and focus on that or look for other opportunities.

Equally as bad, is enjoying your job so much, that you ignore your friends and family, or having a job with so much pressure that it consumes your every thought. Not being able to sleep is really good indicator of such a problem.

Between my job and family I love to contribute to the Agile community by [blogging](#), [podcasting](#) and [writing books](#), but finding the time is very difficult.

What drives you?

Maximising human potential. This isn't about working too hard - it is about making the most of your time. It is about doing something with your life where you can make a difference. We can all be contributors to life, we can all be superheroes. Being a superhero isn't about having amazing powers, it is about doing something amazing with your life. Ask yourself this question - are you living your life or are you contributing to life, to humanity on this world?

I like having the opportunity when working with teams to try and make a spark in their life. Individuals may be disengaged for a number of reasons but I have found that with Agile, and the autonomy change that goes with it, that you can make a difference for the better in people's lives.

What do you think makes a great team?

I certainly don't think it is a Social Contract that does that. I'll give you a tip - if you need a Social Contract then there are bigger problems with your team - specifically around trust and respect.

Joseph Pelrine began writing a white paper/book on teams a few years ago that described teams using an analogy of cooking a stew or a soup in a saucepan on a stove. If you didn't apply enough heat then they would never cook. If you applied too much heat then it would spill over or burn. The balance was in getting a simmer and keeping the team there.

Applied in context, good teams are about ensuring that there is the right amount of focus and pressure but not too much pressure. Good teams are about individuals who have not succumb to apathy, who are not being driven by fear and who are empowered to find their own path to the outcome desired. Good teams are teams that have fun. They are teams that live the [manifesto](#) - focussing on delivery of value to customers and reducing waste whilst at the same time respecting and collaborating with the individuals in their team.

What is the essence of Agile?

The efficient production of complex thought work items by empowered and collaborative teams through rapid feedback loops on both the work that is being done and how the work is being delivered.

‘Efficient production’ requires a focus on waste reduction. ‘Complex thought work’ is appreciation that Agile is a set of strategies for dealing with [complexity](#) when doing work that requires some form of mental effort to enact a transformation.

[Cynefin’s](#) ‘Probe, Sense and Respond’, [Lean’s](#) ‘Plan, Do, Check, Act’, [Scrum’s](#) ‘Sprint Planning, Sprint Review and Sprint Retrospective’ and [Lean Startup’s](#) ‘Build, Measure & Learn’ cycles are all variants of this concept. The basics are start to build quickly, analyse the effectiveness of what you have built and then determine if a new direction is required.

What is the last book you have read and which book made a huge impact in your life?

The last book I have read is ‘[Nonviolent Communication](#)’ by [Rosenberg, Marshall](#). I have found it both a very useful book for a framework on personal empathy when coaching, but also at home when trying to grow connections with my children.

The book that has probably made the biggest impact on my life is [Richard Dawkin’s](#) ‘[The God Delusion](#)’. Raised a Roman Catholic, I had only just started to question my faith when I was encouraged to read this book. It brought into light all the questions that had been lurking in my soul and overnight I became an atheist. This triggered a period of melancholy and loss in my life until I re-established my drive for maximising human potential.

If you were going to have a dinner party with anyone

alive or deceased - which three people would you invite and why?

The first person I'd invite is [Jim Carrey](#) to entertain the kids and the rest of the dinner party if it got too serious.

The second person I'd invite is either [George R. R. Martin](#) or [Chris Metzen](#) so that I could learn from their expertise.

Lastly I would invite [Michael Polanyi](#) - an Agilist before his time in the scientific community.

What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone just starting with Agile?

Keep experimenting and learning. When Agile was new there was no rule book. Best practice emerged through vast amounts of experimentation. But best practice isn't always going to fit in your environment which is why experimentation is critical.

What question do you think I should also ask and what is your answer?

I'm going to pass on this as all the questions I wanted asked in this book are here.

Whom do you think we should ask next in Australia and/or New Zealand and why do you feel they should be included in the book?

As an author of this book I had the opportunity to seed it by choosing the four people in Australia and New Zealand that have influenced me the most. This was incredibly hard, as once I had listed all the names of coaches and

community members that I have worked with over the years I ended with a list of sixty-nine people.

The first person I was keen to invite to participate in this book was Kim Ballestrin. I have had the pleasure of working with Kim as my co-chair for the Agile Approaches and Practices stream for the [Agile Australia](#) conference. I have found Kim to be incredibly thoughtful, dedicated, driven, pragmatic and patient. She was the first to teach me about [Cynefin](#) and started up Australia's first Cynefin Meetup group.

The second person I was keen to invite was [Ilan Goldstein](#). One of Australia's few [Certified Scrum Trainers](#), Ilan is incredibly pragmatic when applying Agile, is a great trainer and has been in the trenches long enough to learn [all the nuances of how to make Agile work](#).

[Neil Killick](#) was my third choice to be added to this book. He is one of the highest contributors to the Agile community on twitter and has been leading the charge on the [#noestimates](#) movement.

And last, but by no means least is my best friend, and business partner, Craig Smith. I first worked with Craig over eleven years ago when he was still coding and I was starting my foray into Agile. When I returned back to Australia after a five year stint in New Zealand I was pleasantly surprised to see how strong Craig was in fostering an Agile learning culture and community throughout Australia. Craig co-runs the [Agile Brisbane Meetup](#), is an extensive contributor to all facets of the [Agile Australia](#)

[Conference](#) and runs the [YOW Conference](#). He is also an active podcaster for [The Agile Revolution](#), contributes heavily to [InfoQ](#) and trains often with [Software Education](#).

Who is Neil Killick?



Neil

What is something people usually don't know about you but has influenced you in who you are?

I am intensely shy, self-conscious and paranoid. I know this, so I work hard not to let these character traits have a negative impact on my life.

What would have become of you if you were not doing the job you do today?

Wow, who knows?! I know when I was at school I was passionate about music, both playing (piano and guitar) and production, and was an avid [snooker](#) player.

In the realms of software, I might still be a developer if I hadn't chosen to try new things a few years ago. I joked at the recent [DDD conference](#) that I realised I wasn't smart enough to be a top developer, so I moved into management :)

I still miss coding sometimes; the creativity and discipline of it. The feeling of producing things that people love using.

What is your biggest challenge and why is it a good thing for you?

The path that I have chosen requires me to step quite significantly outside my comfort zone. I am not a natural public speaker, nor even really a natural collaborator. I work and socialise well with people when I know them and/or feel comfortable in their company, but often become quite insular and introverted if this is not the case.

While I often feel challenged, or that I am not capable of doing what I am attempting, I have learned that I need to keep on pushing myself in this way. In the past I have become far too comfortable with things, and tended to revert

to what is easiest rather than what reaps maximum reward. Going out there on my own as an Agile Coach/Consultant has forced me to confront some of these demons.

What drives you?

I can't help but care about the waste of human potential found in typical software development teams. I have experienced first hand the negative effects on my personality and productivity of working in uninspiring environments with unmotivated people.

I am passionate about humanising the way development teams get treated by their managers and the wider business. Bridging the divide between "IT and the business". Helping people to work together toward common goals in environments that inspire, motivate and bring joy to the working day.

What do you think makes a great team?

There are many ingredients that must come together to make what I would describe as a "great team". Self-organisation. Time. A desire from the individuals to share achievements and failures, and to improve together. Autonomy, mastery, purpose. Having intrinsic discipline and motivation. Passion and love for what you do. A supportive and trusting environment.

What is the essence of Agile?

The [Agile Manifesto](#) and [Principles](#) describe Agile better than I ever could :)

What is the last book you have read and which book made a huge impact in your life?

Last book I read was [Eric Ries](#)' "[The Lean Startup](#)".

"[Run](#)" by [Dean Karnazes](#) inspired me as a runner and a human being.

If you were going to have a dinner party with anyone alive or deceased - which three people would you invite and why?

[Ron Jeffries](#), [Bob Marshall](#) and [John Lennon](#). Three great minds, for different reasons. Never met any of them in person, which is as good a reason as any! Would be an interesting conversation with lots of humanity and practical ideas for improving our lives via improving the world of work.

What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone just starting with Agile?

Read as much as you can about Lean and Agile.

What question do you think I should also ask and what is your answer?

"Is Agile a methodology or a mindset?" - Mindset

Whom do you think we should ask next in Australia and/or New Zealand and why do you feel they should be included in the book?

[James Holmes](#). He is a fantastic example of an Agile developer, given his passion for technology as well as delivering value for the customer and the business. But

most importantly, he is a caring human being who wants people to be happy at work and in life.