

Bookkeeper Advisory Group Meeting Summary

27 June 2006

A Bookkeeper Advisory Group (BAG) meeting was held on 27 June 2006 at the Tax Office in Hurstville, NSW.

Items discussed at the meeting included:

Government announcement of a new national regulatory regime for tax practitioners

Discussion focussed on the need to prepare for the possible release of an exposure draft of proposed legislation in the coming months. Bookkeeper organisations were encouraged to work together inclusively as one voice that represents the best interests of the bookkeepers.

The Tax Office re-iterated the stance that it values bookkeepers and is committed to supporting a capable and well regulated profession that is sustainable.

CEO meeting

The CEO's of the Recognised Professional Associations and the Commissioner of Taxation have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis. Past discussions have focussed around the sustainability of the profession, including how the Tax Office and Recognised Professional Association's co-design and support the integration of Bookkeepers as a para-professional grouping within the accounting service industry.

Review of Forums

The Tax Office is currently undertaking a review of all forums including the BAG. The Tax Office has developed a Draft Corporate Managements Statement (CMPS) relating to Committee Management. The BAG needs to develop a Charter to replace the current Terms of Reference. Members of the BAG have been invited to comment on the draft Charter.

Bookkeeper Research

The Tax Office, with the assistance of Recognised Professional Associations and BAG members, has co-designed research into bookkeepers. A research company has been engaged and focus groups have been conducted with bookkeepers. As part of the quantitative research phase, 2000 bookkeepers will be contacted and asked to participate.

This research has received unprecedented response from bookkeepers wishing to be involved. Initial feedback indicates bookkeepers are very positive about the future of the industry.

Fuel Tax Credits

A representative from the Tax Office – Excise, delivered a presentation on Fuel Tax Credits and explained that these will now be claimed on the BAS rather than through separate submission to the Tax Office.

IBSA Presentation

A representative from Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) attended the meeting to give an update on the development on the Certificate IV in Financial Services (Bookkeeping).

Electronic products and services

The Tax Office indicated the intention was to continually develop the Bookkeeping Essentials page on www.ato.gov.au. The Bookkeeping Essentials page has received over 40 000 hits since the launch in February.

BAG meetings are hosted by the Tax Office and are presently held quarterly pending a Tax Office review of forums. Membership consists of representatives from the Tax Office; Recognised Professional Associations; bookkeeper representative organisations; franchises; and bookkeepers.

The next BAG meeting is scheduled to be held on 8th September 2006.