

Bookkeeper Industry Advisory Group (BIAG) Meeting Summary

28 February 2006

A Bookkeeper Industry Advisory Group (BIAG) meeting was held on 28 February 2006 at the Tax Office in Hurstville, NSW.

Items discussed at the meeting included:

Bookkeeper Consultations: Information and Education Preferences

The new 'Bookkeeping essentials' pathway page on ato.gov.au is on track for implementation in mid March. The design of the web page is complete and feedback from the user consultation process will be incorporated before the release.

The key components include various fact sheets and guides with specific coverage on record keeping, BAS service providers, employer obligations and non-profit organisations; activity statement essentials; and online services. A separate document, 'Essential references for bookkeepers', will provide a reference list of helpful Tax Office telephone and web reference contact points. It will be accessible from the pathway page in both HTML and downloadable PDF formats for use as an on or offline reference tool.

ECI Online Lodgment for Bookkeepers

Recommendations from the second ECI pilot evaluation report have been implemented for the roll-out of ECI to eligible BAS service providers (BSPs). While many focus on clarifying aspects of the ECI information kit for bookkeepers, the inclusion of an electronic BSP application form will make the process quicker and easier to complete.

Articles aimed at raising awareness that the ECI platform enables BSPs to lodge activity statements online will be included in the next editions of the Activity Statement Update, Tax Agent Newsletter and e-Link. Articles will also be provided to both bookkeeper and recognised professional associations for inclusion in their respective association journals.

Links to relevant information will also be included on the 'Bookkeeping essentials' pathway page.

Compliance Strategy for Bookkeepers

Representatives from a broad range of Tax Office areas recently participated in a workshop aimed at aligning the Tax Office's various bookkeeper compliance approaches. The need to build capability through the provision of help and education products was recognised as the primary focus area, with the issue of ineligible BAS service providers also being addressed.

Guidelines for 'working under the direction of a registered tax agent'

The [Guidelines for 'working under the direction of a registered tax agent'](#) were published on 10 February 2006. Feedback can be forwarded to the Tax Office through professional and bookkeeper associations.

Review of Industry Scan

This session focussed on how the bookkeeper industry has developed, where it is now, and where it needs to go. The outcomes contributed to the afternoon's discussions on the Review of Forums particularly those focussing on the role of the BIAG.

Review of Forums

The Tax Office is currently undertaking a review of all forums including the BIAG. Until any findings or recommendations are made available, the BIAG will continue to meet quarterly. It was recognised that the Bookkeeper Industry Working Group is an industry group and not affiliated with the Tax Office.

Standards Australia

A representative of Standards Australia attended the meeting. The current procedures for the development of standards and becoming an accredited standards developer were discussed.

BIAG 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; professional associations; bookkeeper associations and franchises; and bookkeepers.

The next BIAG meeting is scheduled to be held on 1 June 2006.