

BAS Agent registration concerns raised by AAT

The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) has raised concerns about inadequate publicity by the Tax Practitioners Board (TPB) to inform small businesses and BAS Agents about BAS Agent registration deadlines.

AAT raised its concerns as the TPB announced it had commenced a prosecution under the Tax Agents Services Act against an unregistered person practising as a Tax Agent.

Mr Robert Comelli, CEO of the Association of Accounting Technicians Australia (AAT Australia) said that "as a recognised BAS agent association under the legislation, AAT Australia has actively promoted compliance with the legislation; conducting information seminars; collaborating with the training providers and insurers to offer cost effective education qualifications and professional indemnity insurance packages that are mandatory under the Tax Agents Services Act 2009" (TASA).

"AAT Australia has also consistently urged the TPB to publicise more effectively the requirements of the TASA, including highlighting the obligations of self-employed bookkeepers to attain the requisite education and professional requirements in order to apply for formal registration as a BAS agent".

Mr Comelli said "AAT Australia is also disappointed that there has been limited formal consultation with organisations representing BAS agents by the TPB in the lead up to the end of the transition period, despite the potential for thousands of bookkeepers to breach the law and face possible prosecution".

He said that as the peak professional body representing self-employed bookkeepers (BAS agents), AAT shared industry concerns about the substantial numbers of unregistered bookkeepers who are breaching the law if they continue to provide BAS services to small business. "AAT Australia was a staunch advocate for the introduction of legislation to regulate the activities of bookkeepers compiling accounts for the preparation of Business Activity Statements (BAS)."

A substantial numbers of self-employed bookkeepers potentially face prosecution as they have not been granted registration by the TPB. "The unintended consequence is that considerable numbers of small businesses would have to find a new bookkeeper from a diminished number of practitioners," he said.

February 29 was the expiry date for bookkeepers who had been granted transitional registration as BAS agents, to formally register as BAS agents with the TPB.

From 1 March, the Tax Agents Services Act 2009 allows bookkeepers who have extended their transitional registration or formally registered as BAS agents to provide BAS services to clients, who are predominately small business.

Bookkeepers have a two year transition period within which to meet a number of educational and professional requirements before they could formally register as BAS agents.

Enquiries

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