

ABS To Survey Business Organisations

As part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics ongoing program of service industries surveys, questionnaires are being despatched in late August to organisations in the business services sector. These include legal services, accounting services, computing services, real estate services and consulting engineering services.

The questionnaires will seek information for the 1995/96 financial year, with results from the survey being available in mid 1997. The ABS has worked closely with organisations in the above mentioned fields regarding the detailed content and design of the survey. Information collected will provide a picture of the contribution the sector makes to the economy and will be a valuable resource for planning, policy formulation and decision making.

The survey will seek a breakdown of gross income, expenses, assets, liabilities, capital expenditure and disposal of assets which are all readily available from annual reports and audited accounts. Additional questions on employment and transactions with non-residents will also be asked. As with all ABS surveys the information provided will remain strictly confidential to the ABS and will only be released in aggregate form.

If you would like further information about the Business Services Survey please contact Kathleen Horgan on (03) 9615 7642 or toll free on 1 800 670 770, or write to the following address:

Services Industries Surveys Section
GPO Box 2796Y
Melbourne VIC 3001.

BALANCE

Published by
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National Native Title Tribunal - Office in Darwin

Andrea McCallum, Senior Case Manager, advises that the National Native Title Tribunal has recently established a Darwin office in order to have a regional presence in the Territory.

The office is located at the Commonwealth Law Courts and is intended to facilitate easier public access to the NT Tribunal for claimants, representative bodies and other interested parties. This office has been established for a pilot period of six months to assess the need for a permanent office.

Ms McCallum is interested to meet with stakeholders to discuss issues in relation to native title such as the proposed amendments to the Native Title Act and potential claims to be lodged.

The office is able to assist with general enquiries about native title and can provide advice on Tribunal policies and procedures. They will also conduct searches to determine whether a parcel of land is affected by claims for native title and will receive applications and provide assistance with the lodgment of applications.

Contact details for the Native Title Tribunal Office in Darwin are as follows:
tel: 08 8981 2747
fax: 08 8981 6081
GPO Box 9991
DARWIN NT 0801.

The Law Society hopes to run a CLE with Ms McCallum as the presenter in October and further details will be advised as they become available.

Software Copyright Protection

The Business Software Association of Australia is an industry body established to ensure the protection of copyright in software. Its four main objectives are:

- to educate consumers in copyright law as it relates to software
- to communicate the benefits of using original software
- to commence legal action on behalf of its members against offenders

The Association offers a reward of \$2000 for information leading to the successful conclusion or prosecution of individuals or companies copying or using illegal software.

They also offer advice to small businesses on how to avoid the threat of legal action from illegal use of software.

Techniques include:

- management commitment to use legal software
- ensuring familiarity with licensing agreements
- having employees sign an Employee Compliance agreement
- establishing a simple software register
- locking away original disks.

The Association argues that there is little benefit in using illegally acquired software, citing the benefits of having proper access to manuals, cost effective upgrades and product support. In addition, the likelihood of exposure to viruses and faulty products is lessened by proper use of software.

The BSSA was established in 1989 to combat software theft. It is a worldwide association of software companies in more than 50 countries.

Penalties for breach of software copyright can be severe - up to \$50,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for organisations.

A Software Compliance and Audit Manual giving detailed guidance to licence compliance has been produced by the BSSA.

Further information can be obtained from the BSSA hotline on 1 800 021 143.



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