

A New Tax System (ANTS) It is now law and oh so real: Australia has a Goods and Services Tax (GST). As people, businesses and governments scramble to implement GST accountants and lawyers will be in demand. The Internet offers the ability to obtain up-to-the minute information if used by the professions, publishers, courts and governments.

There is already a plethora of information available on the Internet. The following sites are providing useful information:

The Australian Taxation Office, via their Internet site ATOassist (www.ato.gov.au/reform) have published the bills, factsheets, guides and the explanatory memorandum to the GST.

The Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, MP, has authorised A New Tax System (www.taxreform.gov.au). Although this site is aimed more at the individual than a legal practitioner, it is certainly worth a visit.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Competition (www.accc.gov.au), the official watch dog on prices during the



Cyberlex

by Jason Schoolmeester

introduction of GST, will be publishing their guidelines on their Internet site (at the time of writing, only the draft guidelines were available).

At the moment, the only legal publisher using the Internet for GST information is CCH (www.cch.com.au/scripts/nc.dll?FileName=cch/tax/gst.html or www.cch.com and follow the links). Hosting an open forum, CCH has the potential to become a really valuable knowledge resource.

The large accounting firms all have a variety of information ranging from services they offer to guides for implementation. The Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants (www.cpaonline.com.au/library/pg_taxreform.htm) and The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (www.icaa.org.au/TR/main.cfm) both have a range of information useful for lawyers as well as accountants.

The fact that all the above organisations are making use of the Internet to deliver their information once again highlights the need for lawyers to take up the challenge and embrace technology. The critical date for GST is 1 July 2000. Those lawyers waiting on paper based updates may find themselves pressed for time and behind the eight ball.

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Have you ever gone to open a bottle of wine only to find the cork break or crumble in the neck of the bottle? Then when you finally get all the cork out, you smell the wine only to find that it smells like someone has strained it through a wet hessian bag. That odour is one form of cork taint.

An astounding 10% of all the worlds bottled wine will already have a cork taint before it gets to the market place. Cork taint is basically a reaction between bacteria in the cork and the wine. This is the reason why wine producers will look for a regular supplier of good quality cork. But due to an increase in countries that produce wine, the demand for good quality cork has dramatically increased

The traditional producers of cork are not able to keep up with the demand for their product, thus leaving a gap in the marketplace for other suppliers.

As a rule the winemaker will generally reserve the premium corks for the premium wines and the lesser corks for his more commercial wines. This means subsequently that the Australian wine producers are sometimes using a lower grade cork which is not always consistent in quality.



Some of the bigger wine companies have now undertaken steps to try and overcome this problem. They have spent much time in developing a synthetic cork. They have developed several different synthetic compounds and at present are testing them in the market place.

The synthetic cork does have some problems as unlike cork they are nonporous. As the synthetic cork doesn't allow air to pass through it, the natural aging process is prohibited. This could be used as a benefit to wine production. The corks will basically allow the wine to be preserved at their current age. There are applications where this would be of great benefit, for example using the synthetic corks to seal varieties which are best drunk fresh. Another use is for vintage wines that are nearing their optimum consumption, allowing them to be kept for a longer period.

Although at present synthetic corks are used for some commercial wines, they are

not yet used on premium wines as not enough is known about them and their properties. Unfortunately it is still necessary to keep using the traditional corks, so just hope that next time you open a bottle there are no problems. And just remember, it's what's inside that counts.

This month's specials:

Hardy's Nottage Hill Wines - With the introduction of Vintage Shiraz we have decided to discount the whole range at a very special price of **\$6.95**.

Orlando Jacobs Creek Wines - This ever popular wine range contains the following varieties: Chablis, Chardonnay, Riesling, Chardonnay Semillon, Shiraz cabernet, and Grenache Shiraz. Once again Jacobs is at a price to good to be true: **\$7.45**.

McWilliams Hanwood Wines - This range contains a Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon Chardonnay, Verdelo, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sparkling Pinot Noir Chardonnay. These wines represent excellent value for money at only **\$8.45**.

Blues Point Wines - This range consists of a Semillon Chardonnay and a Sparkling Brut which are great value at only **\$8.95**.