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BMO WINS BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

BMO Accountants picked up the prestigious title of 'Business of the Year' at the 2009 Dalby Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business Excellence Awards.

Businesses were judged against a strict criteria including leadership, strategic planning, using information and knowledge, people, customer and market focus, process management, improvement and innovation and success and sustainability.

Partner Adrian Rasmussen said winning the award was a pat on the back for the BMO team who have been putting in a great effort.

The Partners, Peter, Kelvin, Michelle and I, really want to congratulate every member of the BMO team for the part they played in winning this award.

"About half our team have been with us for more than five years and nine have been with us for 10 years or more. That kind of loyalty really says something."



The BMO Team celebrates at the 2009 Business Excellence Awards

Photo courtesy of Erica Stewart

"I especially want to thank our clients for their support – so many of our clients received awards and nothing makes us prouder than seeing our clients succeed."

Adrian said the management group had a shared passion for looking after people and focusing on team values.

"We believe our values set us apart. It might sound corny, but we really want to help our employees and our clients be all they want to be."

BMO also received a gold award for the category of Business and Professional Services - Finance, Legal and Medical.

Last Days for Investment Allowance

There is limited time to take advantage of the government's investment allowance tax break which will come to a close on 31 December. For small business entities (with turnover of less than \$2 million), the tax break provides a one-off bonus tax deduction equal to 50% of the capital cost of any new eligible assets. For more details refer to our fact sheets at www.bmo.com.au.

If you need urgent advice over the Christmas break, please phone Practice Manager Barry Jordan on 0438 552 055 who will direct your call to the appropriate partner/accountant.

Season's Greetings

The BMO office will be closed from 2pm on Wednesday 23rd December and will reopen on Monday 4th January.

The team would like to wish you a happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Will you be affected by new income tests?

If you currently receive tax concessions or Centrelink entitlements you may be disappointed to find that new income tests introduced by the ATO from 1 July 2009 may have an adverse affect on your situation.

The new income tests affect a large range of tax concessions and obligations. Centrelink entitlements, like Family Tax Benefit, Parental Income Tests for Austudy and the Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card, are also affected.

BMO Senior Taxation Consultant Neil Cameron said Australians now have to report New Income Concepts such as Total Net Investment Losses and Reportable Super Contributions which may result in an increase in an individual's assessable income.

That means that you may find that you are no longer eligible for certain tax concessions or a Centrelink entitlement, or you may find yourself with repayment obligations (e.g. Higher Education Loan Repayment, HELP).

Neil said that there are many changes and definitions that come into play with this new legislation.

For business clients, the BMO team will be talking with you about these changes when preparing your annual tax updates (around April/May). For clients who are on a salary or wage, feel free to contact us to discuss how the changes affect you and your individual circumstances. However, if you have any concerns in the meantime please contact us.

What's affected?

1. Tax offsets
 - Dependant Tax Offsets
 - Senior Australian Tax Offset (SATO)
 - Pensioner Tax Offset
 - Mature Age Worker Tax Offset
 - Spouse Superannuation Contributions Tax Offset
2. Eligibility for claiming deductions for personal super contributions
3. Eligibility for the Government superannuation co-contribution concession
4. Medicare Levy Surcharge
5. Obligations to make HELP (Higher Education Loan Program) repayments
6. Eligibility for Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card
7. Parental Income Test for Austudy and boarding allowance under Isolated Children
8. Family Tax Payment Part A and B
9. Income Test for Residential Aged Care

BMO bonds with booming Basin

BMO sponsored the Surat Basin Conference held in Dalby in August to get a better picture of what's happening in our region and what opportunities and threats exist for our clients.

Kelvin Tyler, who attended sessions on behalf of BMO, said the conference was quite an eye-opener.

"The Surat Basin has been producing Gas for Brisbane, NSW and SA since 1969, but with the new discoveries we are now the fourth largest in the world. It was described at the conference that if you

can imagine a pin head in the middle of an A4 piece of paper, the pin head would be what we have mined in the last 50 years compared to what is available."

The key messages for our clients are to arm themselves with information and to get connected as early as possible with the companies and subcontractors involved in the energy boom.

Check out:
www.nationbuilding.qld.gov.au;
www.suratbasincorporation.com.au;
www.deedi.qld.gov.au; www.icnqld.org.au

Don't get caught out...

Contractor vs Employee

Businesses that engage workers as an "independent contractor" when they are really an "employee" can face serious consequences.

According to Partner Kelvin Tyler, the distinction between who is a contractor and who is an employee can be a grey area at times, however it is vitally important that the right distinction is made.

"There are a number of factors to consider in determining whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor, and different legal and tax obligations apply.

"Even if someone quotes an ABN and provides a tax invoice with GST charged you may still have an obligation to deduct PAYG tax, pay 9% super or declare their payment under your Workcover policy."

Some key factors in deciding if a worker is an employee are - the degree of control, whether they are paid for the time they work or for a result, who provides the tools and equipment, and if they are free to subcontract the work.

"If someone is working for you as an individual, you direct how, when and where they perform the work, they are providing their labour only, and are paid by the hour rather than for a result, then it is likely that the tax office would deem them to be an employee," Kelvin said.

If you'd like to know more about this topic, check out the Employee Vs Contractor Fact Sheet at www.bmo.com.au or give us a call to discuss your particular circumstances.



BMO's Neil Cameron talks with Kellie Wenning in the conference trade hall

Team supports Relay for Life

The BMO team spent 18 hours together walking, jogging and skipping around the Mary Barry Ovals in September to celebrate, remember, and join the fight against cancer.

The Dalby Relay for Life event managed to attract 30 teams who together raised more than \$50,000 for cancer research, support and prevention. BMO was proud to be awarded the top fundraising team

The BMO team would like to sincerely thank our clients, family and friends who generously made donations towards our team and helped us to raise funds to support Cancer Council Queensland.



BMO step ahead with financial advice

BMO Financial Services has welcomed the findings of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services, known as the Ripoll Report, which recommends tighter regulations on financial planners and a move away from commission-based payments.

Financial planners in Australia currently use commission based, fee-for-service or a combination of both remuneration models.

Senior Financial Advisor Shane Lee said that the findings handed down last month confirmed that BMO has been taking the right approach.

"The majority of our clients are already paying fee-for-service for their financial planning advice – so you could say we are already a step ahead of many other financial planning firms," Shane said.

The Report recommends that financial planners have a "fiduciary duty" to place their clients' interests first.

"If the Government adopts the recommendations, we will see the



licensing for financial planners become much stricter – which is great for the industry."

Shane also welcomed the reports' recommendation to make financial advice tax deductible. Currently, advice on investments is tax deductible, but general financial advice is not.

"Some people need up-front advice to get them on track, but they may not yet have investments in place. The Financial Planning Association has been lobbying for some time for this to change, so it's encouraging to see this report make that recommendation."

A full copy of the report can be found at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/corporations_ctte/fps/report/index.htm

Fair Work changes from 1 January

Employers need to be aware that changes to existing arrangements in relation to awards and agreements covering their staff will come into effect from 1 January 2010 in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009.

From 1 January 2010, both the National Employment Standards (NES) and the Modern Awards will take effect. Wageline will cease as at 31 Dec 2009.

For more information contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au.

A Modern Awards Fact Sheet is available at www.fairwork.gov.au/Fact-sheets-tools/Documents/FWO-Fact-sheet-Modern-awards.pdf.



BMO Practice Manager Barry Jordan is requesting that all clients record your name and/or client reference number when making a payment via electronic funds transfer. We have had difficulty tracking some payments.

BMO makes a splash

BMO came to the rescue of the Dalby Swimming Club during the September school holidays by providing daily bus transport to Bell for a special squad coaching clinic (while the Dalby pool was being renovated).



Team News



WELCOME CHONTELLE BERTING



Chontelle Berting joined BMO in 2009 as a welcome new face at reception. With a background in nursing, Chontelle has developed excellent administration and

computer literacy skills, and a natural flair for relating to people.

Chontelle was born in Canberra and moved to the Sunshine Coast as a teenager. She completed her nursing degree at QUT and worked in general nursing, rehabilitation and juvenile mental health in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast for nine years.

When Chontelle and her family decided

to move to Dalby to be closer to extended family, she saw it as an opportunity for a career change. Her skills in health have translated seamlessly into her role at BMO.

Chontelle is passionate about supporting and mentoring young people, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. She enjoys spending time with her husband Shane and their three young children.



IT'S A GIRL!

Senior Accountant Tanya Berderow and husband Brad welcomed Addison Paige on 22 September weighing in at 7 pound 11 ounces – a little sister for Dana. Tanya is currently on maternity leave.



FOR LEASE

Commercial Space Available

BMO is making available for lease the vacant office / commercial space in the western side of the BMO Business Centre. With easy access and two separate spaces (200 m² and 300 m² respectively), it would be ideal for storage, warehousing or office space. The two spaces could be leased together or separately.

WANTED

Conference Centre Caterer

BMO is seeking an individual or organisation to assist with the catering and management of its modern conference centre. The person/organisation would be based on-site at BMO and would be responsible for:

- Cooking / catering for conference bookings
- Setting up and servicing conference rooms
- Catering for BMO team functions (staff of 40)

The position may be a contract or employment arrangement with flexible hours. Kitchen facilities will be developed in consultation with the successful applicant.

POSITION VACANT

Financial Planning Administration Officer

Are you looking for an exciting new challenge? Do you have high computer literacy skills, are competent with Word and Excel, are an effective time manager, pride yourself in attention to detail, and have excellent verbal and written communication skills? Then why not apply to join our financial planning team?

For more information about any of the above, please contact Barry Jordan on 4662 3722.

Incentives continue for first home owners

BMO Lending Services is urging first home buyers not to panic and rush their decision just because the First Home Owners Boost payment finishes on 31 December.

Finance Manager Paul Logan said it was important to realise that although the Boost finishes on 31 Dec, the First Home Owner Grant of \$7,000 will continue into 2010.

The First Home Owner Grant (FHOG) is a Commonwealth Government initiative that is administered and funded by the State Government. Eligible first home owners receive \$7,000 from the FHOG scheme.

In addition to the FHOG, the First Home Owners Boost will be paid to eligible first home buyers (until 31 Dec) -

- \$3,500 for those who purchase an existing home (total payment of \$10,500), and
- \$7,000 for those eligible parties who sign a contract to purchase or construct a new home (total payment of \$14,000).

Paul said there is also the possibility of further incentives for people purchasing their first home in regional Queensland.

“Premier Anna Bligh announced in November that the Queensland Government is considering offering a \$3,000 boost to the federally-funded First Home Owners grant, to encourage people to settle outside south-east Queensland.”

If you'd like to know more about the grants schemes or access the home loan that's right for you, contact Paul Logan on 0458 266 737.

Finance Manager Paul Logan



BMO Assistant Accountant Tamara Ashurst-Dakin took advantage of the first home owner incentives to purchase her first home with her partner.



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Disclaimer – Information provided in this newsletter is general in nature. In preparing information BMO Accountants, BMO Financial Services and BMO Lending Services have not taken into account any particular person's objectives, financial situation or needs. Investors should, before acting on this information, consider the appropriateness of this information having regard to their personal objectives, financial situation or needs. We recommend obtaining financial advice specific to their situation before making any financial decisions or investments.