

What I Need to Know

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a broad-based tax of 10% applying to most goods and services. Private and Public Sector business and agencies collect and pay GST to the Australian Taxation Office and claim credits for any GST they pay for things bought for use in the business.
- The GST is:
 - a tax on most goods, services or anything else supplied;
 - designed to be ultimately paid by the consumer rather than business;
 - collected by business;
 - a multi-stage tax collected at each stage of the commercial chain; and
 - has a credit mechanism that eliminates cascading (tax on tax).

Australian Business Number (ABN)

- The ABN is an identifying number issued to a business (brigade) by the Federal Government that will become the single reporting number used when dealing with government departments and agencies.
- Registering for GST is not an automatic requirement for brigades holding an ABN.
- All brigades must obtain an ABN. Without it:
 - you lose your tax-exempt status
 - you are required to lodge income tax returns
 - the Rural Fire Service has to withhold 48.5% of any grant (Station Grants, Annual Group Grant) and pay to the Australian Tax Office 48.5% of the cost of any subsidised equipment.

GST Registration

- Brigades who register for GST submit a Business Activity Statement (BAS) quarterly (or monthly by request) to claim back the GST paid. Even if no GST has been paid or collected, you must still complete and send in a BAS. The BAS with no GST claim is referred to as a 'Nil Return'. There are penalties for non/late submission.
- Brigades who register for GST must have a bank account as all payments from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will be made electronically.
- The QFRS Rural Operations **recommends** that all brigades, apart from Class 1 brigades, register for GST.

How I do it

- **How to obtain an ABN**
 - Obtain the form "Application for ABN registration for companies, partnerships, trusts other organisations" (NAT2939) from the ATO.
 - Complete the application (see sample attached).
 - You may choose to register for GST on this form also.
- **How to register for GST (when already have an ABN)**
 - Obtain the form "Add a new business account" (NAT2954) from the ATO.
 - Complete the form for registration for GST (see sample attached).
- **How to change your authorised contact person**
 - Obtain the form "Change of registration details" (NAT2943) from the ATO.
 - Complete the application.

Reference Materials

- Area Reference Manual – Business Rule: D4.2.2 Manage Financial Administration
- Area Reference Manual – Business Rule: D4.2.3 Manage Brigade and Group Financial Compliance
- Brigade Secretary booklet
- Brigade Treasurer booklet
- Sample ABN application (attached)
- Sample GST application (attached)
- Sample Business Activity Statement (BAS) (attached)
- Rural Fire Brigade Manual - Business Rule: D7.10 Operating Account with Financial Institutions
- Australian Tax Office Website: www.ato.gov.au