

Great Lakes BUSINESS

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October 2008

Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.

Bill Gates

Hunter Business Centre Update

Welcome to Narelle McClelland, the Hunter Business Centre's new General Manager. Narelle commenced this role on September 1st and brings with her a wealth of experience in business management and development.

Narelle will be working with HBC's local Business Facilitator, Sue Druce and Great Lakes Council Economic Development Officer, Deb Tuckerman to assist businesses in the Great Lakes area to better manage and understand their businesses - hopefully towards growth and success.

To view more of the services and information available from the Hunter Business Centre & Business Advisory Services go to www.businesscentre.com.au.

Fuel Tax Credits

Fuel tax credits provide you with a credit for the fuel tax (excise or customs duty) included in the price of fuel you use in:

- *business activities
- *machinery
- *plant
- *equipment, and
- *heavy vehicles.

The only fuels that are not eligible are:

- *aviation fuels
- *alternative fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), ethanol and biodiesel, and
- *fuels you use in lighter vehicles of 4.5 tonne gross vehicle mass (GVM) or less travelling on a public road.

Fuel tax credits were introduced on 1 July 2006 and the entitlement expands from 1 July 2008. This means even if you weren't eligible before, you may be able to claim fuel tax credits for fuel you acquire, manufacture or import for use in your business activities from 1 July 2008.

You must be registered for GST and fuel tax credits before you can make a claim on your BAS. If you are already claiming fuel tax credits, check to see if more of your fuel is eligible.

from the Australian Taxation Office website www.ato.gov.au

[For further information](#)

Financial Support for Businesses

National Australia bank has introduced the Microenterprise Loan to assist small business owners.

The Microenterprise Loan is an unsecured, low interest business loan of between \$500 and \$20,000 for people who are financially disadvantaged and have few or no avenues to access affordable credit. NAB supplies the loans on a not-for-profit basis.

The loan is only part of the assistance provided. Through the support of the Hunter Business Centre, eligible applicants will get access to business skills, training and advice during their first year of operating their business.

You can download the Application Requirements and the Application Form by going to the HBC website www.businesscentre.com.au and then phone 02 4925 7700 to discuss the next steps.

Managing for Safety - Workshop

WorkCover would like to invite you to attend a free occupational health and safety workshop especially tailored for the **residential** building industry.

The workshop has been designed to help you further improve health and safety in your workplace.

The workshop is being held at the following location and times:

DATE: Wednesday 15th OCTOBER

Registration: 2.00 pm, commence 2.15 pm to 6.30 pm

ADDRESS: "Club Forster", Strand Street, Forster. (Forster Tuncurry Memorial Services Club)

Seating is limited, so call now to reserve your place at this interactive workshop. For more information or to secure your place, call the Business Assistance Hotline on **1800 624 097**.

[For further information](#)

Invitation for Manufacturers

Ausindustry and Enterprise Connect invite manufacturers to an information session on their new programs including Re-Tooling for Climate Change, being Climate Ready and accessing the Manufacturing Network.

[For further information](#)

Creative Industries Forum

Are you part of creative industries in the Mid North Coast? Do you have an ABN & receive some form of income from the industry as an individual, business or organisation? Then go to www.mnccreativeindustries.blogspot.com to find out how to become involved in the Mid North Coast Creative Industries Research Project.

[For further information](#)

Volunteer Grants Program

The Volunteer Grants Program through FAHCSIA is now open and will close on Friday the 17th October at 5pm.

The Volunteer Grants Program 2008 provides funding for eligible not-for-profit

organisations to support their volunteers and encourage volunteering by:

- **purchasing small equipment and sporting items** to help their existing volunteers and to encourage more people to become volunteers
- **contributing towards fuel costs** incurred in their volunteering work, such as when using their cars to transport others to activities, deliver food and assist people in need.

[For further information](#)

How can I learn from my customers?

Your whole company has a responsibility to become involved in the business of understanding customers. Regularly ask your customers how well you're currently serving them. Give them a chance to tell you what they want - where you are failing and where you are succeeding. A good way to do this is by using customer feedback forms. Listen to what your customers tell you - allow your customers to complain and use these complaints to address the causes behind any dissatisfaction. Find out ways you and your staff can look at your product and the service you provide from a customer point of view.

If we don't take care of our customers, someone else will.

UNKNOWN

Source: BEC Frequently Asked Questions

Useful contacts

Comments and feedback on the Newsletter's content is always appreciated. You might also like to suggest a topic or share some ideas or tips for future editions - good news stories are also welcome - email Sue Druce of the Hunter Business Advisory Service to do so. For past editions of the newsletter please visit

www.greatlakesbusiness.com.au

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