

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Professional Body for Australian Accounting Technicians Launches

Professional recognition and representation now available for Bookkeepers, Accounts Clerks, Payroll Officers, Assistant Accountants and other accounting staff

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, 1 May 2002 – The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) (Australia), under license from the world's largest dedicated body for Accounting Technicians, AAT, launched in Sydney today offering Accounting Technicians professional recognition and support for the first time.

Traditionally seen as accounting and financial support staff, today's Accounting Technicians work in all levels of finance and accounting with job descriptions ranging from accounts staff and bookkeepers to finance and office managers.

AAT (Australia) CEO Mr Roger Cotton said, "We estimate that there are more than 200,000 Accounting Technicians employed in all sectors of the Australian economy but until now they have not been recognised or supported in any way by a professional body.

"With the accounting profession under increased pressure as it adapts to ongoing tax reform and is subject to further ethical scrutiny, the need to support and represent all levels of the finance and accounting function in large and small organisations has never been so important.

"AAT (Australia) will help raise the standards of the Australian accounting industry by setting a benchmark for Accounting Technician skills and qualifications. In the same way the PNA, CPA and CA designations set a qualifications benchmark for qualified accountants, membership of AAT will recognise skills and qualifications to the Technician level, setting an industry benchmark for qualified Accounting Technicians."

In Sydney for the launch of AAT (Australia), AAT's UK-based CEO Ms Jane Scott Paul said, "Established in 1980 by four of the United Kingdom's major accountancy bodies, AAT has more than 100,000 members worldwide.

"AAT (Australia) has been established in similar circumstances by one of Australia's three peak accountancy bodies, the National Institute of Accountants (NIA), which has responded to a long-standing market demand for the formation of a professional association to support and represent Accounting Technicians.

“Recognising the urgent need to increase the number of qualified Accounting Technicians working in Australian business, the NIA has shown great leadership in initiating AAT (Australia) and has been extremely proactive in facilitating its establishment.

“In addition to representing members’ interests through advocacy, AAT (Australia) will help members develop their skills and provide tools and resources to facilitate career advancement, including a pathway for Accounting Technicians to qualify as an NIA Accountant.”

Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson officially launched AAT (Australia) at a function for employers, recruitment agencies, and finance and accounting educators in Sydney this afternoon. The Minister said, “Organisations such as AAT (Australia) play a critical role in developing a skilled Australian workforce, and providing opportunities for continuing professional development and education.

“In setting an industry benchmark for qualified Accounting Technicians, and providing a range of training and development opportunities for members at all stages of their career, AAT (Australia) will undoubtedly raise the skill base of the Australian accounting industry.

“By recognising skills and qualifications to the Accounting Technician level, employers will also benefit from the arrival of AAT (Australia) as membership will signify the level of a potential employee’s skills and provide a strong indication of the roles they are capable of performing in employment,” Dr Nelson said.

Membership information can be obtained by calling 1800 000 961 or visiting the AAT (Australia) website – www.aat.org.au

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