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|  | **(change issue date as applicable and delete this text)**  **15 June 2015** |

# INTRODUCTION

We have pleasure in welcoming you to this edition of Improving Your Bottom Line.

If you have any questions on any item discussed within this article, please don't hesitate to contact the accountant at our firm with whom you normally have dealings.

# WHAT’S IN THIS EDITION

* Skills Development Grants Assist Businesses
* Industry Skills Fund
* Improving employment prospects for young people
* We can assist

## Skills Development Grants Assist Businesses

In the last few months, the Federal government has released two new grant programs, which offer significant benefits, not only to employees, also to the businesses. These grants are:

* Industry Skills Fund
* Training for Employment Scholarship

We can assist you to submit applications for these grants.

### Industry Skills Fund

The Industry Skills Fund has different levels of benefit available, depending on a number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees that are employed by the business. These range from:

* Micro businesses (0-4 FTE employees) – 75%
* Small businesses (5-19 FTE employees) – 66%
* Medium businesses (20-199 FTE employees) – 50%
* Large businesses (200+ FTE employees) – 25%

Your business contribution must be in cash and cannot be in kind.

The purpose of the grant is to assist businesses to access training so the businesses are better placed to succeed in a rapidly-changing economy.

The Industry Skills Fund has identified “priority industries”, including:

* Food and Agribusiness
* Mining Equipment Technology and Services
* Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals
* Oil, Gas and Energy Resources
* Advanced Manufacturing
* Enabling technology and service industries that support one or more of the priority industries listed, including:
  + Freight and Logistics
  + Infrastructure Related Construction
  + Information and Communication Technology
  + Professional Services

The government believes that these priority sectors are the industries where Australia enjoys a competitive advantage and is likely to have an opportunity to exploit favourable global market conditions or has a significant impact on the Australian economy.

Whilst the list doesn’t appear to be that large, the number of individual types of businesses that fit under these broad priority industry titles is significant.

Applicants who are within the priority industries will be fast tracked through a streamline assessment process.

However, applicants that don’t fall under the priority industries are still able to apply. If you have a worthwhile skills development program, you should apply.

In your application, you will need to clearly show that you have a significant growth potential and are prepared to reposition your business to take advantage of economic opportunities.

The program presents some tremendous opportunities for businesses to undertake some worthwhile skills development, with the government paying a significant amount of the cost.

We can assist you in the preparation of case to be submitted to Industry Skills Fund.

### Improving employment prospects for young people

The government has also released a pilot program, Training for Employment Scholarship, to run until 31st March 2016. This program is targeted at businesses employing less than 200 FTE employees and is located in specified outer metropolitan and regional areas, including:

* New South Wales:
  + Central Coast
  + Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle)
  + Sydney-Outer Western/Blue Mountains
* Queensland:
  + Sunshine Coast
  + Ipswich
  + Townsville
* Victoria:
  + Mornington Peninsula
  + Melbourne-West
* South Australia:
  + Adelaide-North
* Western Australia:
  + Perth-Southwest
* Tasmania:
  + Launceston-Northeast

The objective of this program is to provide businesses with greater access to appropriately skilled workers in their region and improve job prospects for young people, by providing incentives for employers to take on new workers.

Participants in the training must meet the following criteria:

* age 18-24 years from the date of employment;
* an Australian citizen, permanent resident or have working rights in Australia;
* employed by the business;
* agrees to undertake the training specified in the funding application; and
* hasn’t been in full-time employment or full-time study prior to commencing employment with the business.

The training must be delivered over a 26-week period.

The grant will reimburse businesses training costs of up to $7,500 (including GST) per eligible employee.

### We can assist

As your accountants, we’re able to offer a service to assist you to in the preparation of appropriate applications for these grants.

If you would like to have a discussion with us relative to any of the matters discussed within this article, please don’t hesitate to contact the accountant with whom you normally have dealings.

On behalf of our partners and team members, thank you for your interest. If you have any questions or any suggestions for future topics, we'd love to hear from you. Thank you for your support.