Australian Business Numbers (ABNs)

The Australian Business Number (ABN) is your business’ unique identity number. This number is important when dealing with other businesses as well as when dealing with other government agencies. If you are in business you should register for an ABN.

If you have dealings with other businesses you may need to quote your ABN in your invoices to avoid having tax withheld from payments to you. Currently, the rate of tax to be withheld is 48.5% of your payment. If you are registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) you will also need to quote your ABN on the invoices as one of the requirements to make them valid ‘tax invoices’.

You can get an ABN for your business even if you are not registered for GST.

 Obtaining an ABN is not automatic. Entities, other than corporations law companies, must meet certain criteria to be entitled to an ABN.

Who is entitled to register for an ABN?

- Companies.
- Government bodies.
- Business entities operating on an enterprise in Australia (ie entities engaged in business, trade and grants of lease, licence or interest in property).
- Partnerships.
- Super funds and trustees of trusts.
- Charities and trustees of charities.
- Religious institutions.

Who is not entitled to register?

- Employees.
- Entities in recreational pursuits or hobbies.
- Individuals without reasonable expectation of profit.
Australian Business Numbers (ABNs)

**Australian Business Numbers (ABNs) and Australian Company Numbers (ACNs) for companies**

When companies register for an ABN, the number given to it will be its Australian Company Number (ACN) with two check digits at the beginning. The ABN will not replace your company’s Tax File Number (TFN) but it will eventually replace your company’s ACN.

Companies do not have to quote both the ABN and ACN. You can quote only your ABN if it includes your ACN as the last nine digits, and your company quotes its ABN in the same way it quoted its ACN.