

Volunteer fire brigades: Tax changes

THE Taxation Office wants to help volunteer fire brigades understand important legislative changes that affect how they collect tax deductible donations.

These changes, if they aren't made, may affect a brigade's ability to raise funds or receive gifts as they may no longer be tax deductible.

The changes affect both brigades who are currently endorsed to receive tax deductible gifts (deductible gift recipients) and brigades who are not endorsed. Tax deductible donations can be deducted by the person who made the donation from their income tax.

If brigades want to ensure these donations continue to be tax deductible, then they can set up their own public fund, or join the central fund being established by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

NSW Brigades have three options available to them:

Option 1 - Brigades can establish and maintain a public fund and apply for endorsement under the new fire and emergency services fund category. To do this, they complete two forms available on www.ato.gov.au and return them to the ATO.

Option 2 - Brigades can allow any current

deductible gift recipient endorsement to lapse.

Option 3 - Brigades can join the central fund that is being established by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

Brigades who are currently endorsed as deductible gift recipients need to decide which option they will select before December 31, 2012. After December 31, 2012, existing endorsements under the old legislation will be revoked.

Brigades who are not currently endorsed because they did not meet the criteria may find they are now eligible to apply for deductible gift recipient endorsement. This is

because the new legislation creates three new deductible gift recipient categories specifically for fire and emergency services.

You can find out more on the ATO website at www.ato.gov.au by searching for the fact sheet 'Fire and Emergency Services Funds'.

Or you can phone 1300 130 248 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

In August and September, depending on demand, the ATO will also be running:

* Webinars that cover how to complete or renew an application for DGR status

* Teleconferences to walk brigades through the new requirements.



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