Launching the Master of International Taxation
Sharing Expertise on the Global Stage

What to Expect in the Howard Government's Fourth Term
WELCOME TO OUR THIRD ANNUAL ISSUE OF TAX MATTERS. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW THE CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE AND DISCOVER NEW STUDY PROGRAMS IN TAXATION AS WELL AS INFORMATION ABOUT ATAX’S RECENT RESEARCH AND TEACHING ACHIEVEMENTS.

A key strategic priority of UNSW in recent years has been to foster international links and build its international engagement. During 2004, our academic team contributed to the internationalisation of the university by engaging in overseas research consultancy projects. For example, Atax is assisting governments of transition economies to strengthen their taxation base in order to sustain and improve their economic performance. We have also gone global with the launch of our Master of International Taxation.

We are also continuing to strengthen our domestic links with partners in industry and government. From 2005, we are providing graduates of KPMG’s professional development taxation program with advanced standing or credits towards the Master of Taxation/International Taxation. And we have consolidated and developed our links with the Australian Taxation Office with a series of initiatives, including the highly successful Compliance Officers’ Applied Audit and Accounting Program (COAAAP).

Throughout 2005 we will announce a number of initiatives to strengthen the linkages between our alumni and provide additional ‘value added’ services to these friends of Atax. Our team takes pride in the fact that Atax leads the field in student satisfaction ratings at UNSW. This endorsement helps drive the growth in enrolments for our study programs.

The impetus for successful tax reform is not likely to diminish as the Howard Government embarks on its fourth term in office, and Atax is involved in some major research initiatives designed to contribute to the reform agenda.

The Atax academic staff has been strengthened with the arrival of Associate Professor Margaret McKerchar from Sydney University, Helen Hodgson from Edith Cowan University and Kalmen Datt from Auckland University. Sadly we have said farewell to Rodney Fisher - lured to the bright lights (and better pay) of Sydney CBD with Ernst and Young - and Shirley Murphy, who has decided to bring her teaching days to a close. Both will be missed, although they will retain links through their involvement with the Atax Adjunct Faculty.

I hope you will enjoy this issue of Tax Matters.

Chris Evans
Director
Atax Continues to Push into Asia

UNSW recently announced that it is establishing a university campus in Singapore as part of its internationalisation strategy. UNSW Asia will become the first wholly-owned and operated research and teaching campus to be established overseas by an Australian university and will be UNSW’s first offshore campus.

UNSW realises that education of the future will be transnational. The university’s international push involves building research as well as teaching linkages, and moving students to overseas universities.

Atax is helping to realise this vision and has undertaken a number of international research projects in recent years in countries such as China, Thailand, New Zealand, Vietnam and East Timor.

Atax’s Yuri Grbich and Amber Ahuja (International Projects - NSGlobal), recently embarked on a mission to India to expand Atax’s global reach. They met leading Indian tax reform and administration players during their visit.

Atax has identified research and teaching opportunities that will ultimately contribute to the management of India’s severe budgetary problems - the combined state and central budget deficit was 10.1% in 2002-2003. The central government’s tax take is a mere 9.6% of GDP, which is among the lowest percentages in the world. Only 30 million out of 400 million workers contribute to the Indian tax base.

The Indian government has spelt out a significant reform agenda in the second Kelkar Report (Report of the task force implementing the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Amendment Act 2003). The rapid economic growth and social pressures that India is experiencing will require the expansion of public goods and wealth transfers.

The incoming Indian government is equally committed to this agenda and is in need of academic research and tax expertise to help it improve tax administration, reduce corruption and manage budgetary problems. In Australia, Atax’s strong relationship with the ATO emerged from a recognition that the Taxation Office needed to draw upon the teaching and research expertise of a leading university. This led to higher professional standards in auditing and tax administration functions as well as the expansion of the culture of self-assessment.

There is a natural ‘fit’ between the high level of policy expertise available in India and the applied experience of Atax and of tax administrators, especially in the indirect tax field.

Atax’s Yuri Grbich concluded after the mission, ‘It was clear that the institutional needs of India for consulting and training will be extensive and that Atax has the right blend of expertise and cultural similarity. We are excited by the potential to expand our global reach even further. These links will also contribute to the continual improvement in our international teaching program’.

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Public interest in tax policy often coincides with the federal election cycle. This usually means taxation captures public and media attention just before the election and then gradually fades away after election night.

One important exception came about in the Howard Government’s second term of office, when heated debate about the goods and services tax dragged on. GST implementation problems and the business activity statements angered business and eroded public support for the Government. However, the Tampa and September 11 incidents then rendered taxation a second-order issue.

Reform is still needed, especially in the area of personal income taxation. In addition, several of the implemented reform measures - such as the capital gains tax discount for individual taxpayers - are not good tax policy and need to be reconsidered.

There is, in Australia, a heavy reliance on personal taxation as a source of government revenue. In 2000-2001, it accounted for more than 40% of total revenue collections, while the corresponding OECD average was only 26.5%. There have been widespread demands for tax reform from tax academics, ‘think tanks’ and tax professional associations.

In terms of the personal income tax burden, Australia’s high marginal tax rates apply from relatively low income thresholds by international standards. This strengthens the case for either reducing tax rates or widening tax thresholds.

In order to afford these tax cuts, the income tax base should be broadened. At present, the income tax base has been undermined on a number of fronts. Ad hoc decisions have been made to grant tax exemptions, deductions and rebates, often to particular sectional interests. Entities (individuals, trusts, companies) are being taxed differently. A resilient tax avoidance/evasion culture still exists.

The most feasible strategy to broaden the tax base would be to limit or even eliminate a number of the exemptions and deductions. Work-related deductions could be removed altogether, or a small, fixed amount of work-related deductions should be granted to all taxpayers. The Government should bravely consider removing negative gearing.

A difficult area that needs reform is the interaction of the social welfare and tax systems. It is well known that low-income households face a poverty or unemployment trap. This welfare-tax interface represents a real challenge to the Government, and should involve innovative measures in both tax and welfare policies. Income tax in Australia is complex, both in terms of legislation and compliance costs, primarily because it tries to serve many, often conflicting, purposes at the same time. The costs of complying with income tax law are high because most individuals need to lodge their tax returns annually and they need to keep records for making claims of deductions and rebates. Several studies have found that the costs of complying with personal income taxation in Australia are substantial. Practical measures for reducing compliance costs include, for example, the removal or standardisation of work related expenses and/or reducing the need for annual tax filing through a more comprehensive and accurate tax withholding regime.

On the subject of tax simplification, small businesses, especially sole traders, have suffered a far greater paperwork burden as a result of the GST-based reforms. On average, a small business spends several thousand dollars a year to act as GST collector. The Government needs to focus on making ‘wealth creation’ an easier task for small businesses to sustain our economic progress.
It is time for the Government to revisit tax simplification. What needs to be examined is a real, robust and fundamental simplification rather than the cosmetic pale imitation that has been embraced in the last eight years.

The tax agenda that has emanated from our federal parliament since 1996 has used various optimistic but misleading titles such as A New Tax System (Simplification) Bill.

New legislation such as consolidations is drafted in an allegedly simplified fashion that not even tax experts seem to understand. A case in point is the foundation principle of consolidations, which sounds simple - subsidiary companies linked to the parent company rather than separate entities. In practice, we so-called 'tax experts' don't know exactly what this means and to help us the ATO has had to develop rulings and determinations to explain how it thinks it works.

The solution to all this is to go directly to the tax system and introduce major reform. This should, at a minimum, focus on the following possibilities.

For all taxpayers, a three-tiered rate structure should be introduced as follows:

- $0 to $6,000 - no tax; $6,000 to $15,000 - 15% tax; $15,000-plus - 30 per cent tax on all income and capital gains;
- GST would be retained in its present form but all exemptions other than health, education and exports would be eliminated;
- The fringe benefits tax rate would be reduced to 30% but the complex regime for motor vehicles would be eliminated;
- The superannuation surcharge would be completely eliminated; superannuation payments would be taxed at a standard 30% and all tax on superannuation would be eliminated.

This would achieve some important outcomes. Firstly, taxpayers earning only small amounts of income and capital gains would be effectively removed from the system. Secondly, deductions for the great majority of 'pay as you go' taxpayers should be eliminated. This type of solution has operated well in Hong Kong for some time and oppressive record-keeping requirements would be curtailed.

Thirdly, GST and capital gains tax could be significantly simplified, eliminating large and complex laws dealing with unnecessary exemptions and concessions. Fourthly, by aligning corporate and top personal tax avoidance laws, the heat goes out of much of the tax avoidance laws.

Fifthly, superannuation would be taxed on the way in and the way out. The tax deduction on the way in and the tax free nature of earnings while in superannuation would provide valuable incentives to save through super. Finally, high marginal rates would be removed, bringing us into line with many of our trading partners, including the US. There is significant tax competition among countries to attract investment dollars.

This is neither a complete agenda nor one on which uniform agreement can be reached. Further, I have not begun to assess costing issues. Whether the government has the political will to drive the long-overdue reforms depends on how well it can manage expectations of vested interest groups that may be affected by the reforms. Clearly, both the volume and complexity of tax laws need to be addressed.
Global Research and Consultancy Projects

Wielding an axe to tax compliance costs in New Zealand

Senior Atax researchers Professor Chris Evans and Associate Professor Binh Tran-Nam were engaged in a 2004 project to help the New Zealand government minimise the disproportionate compliance burden that small-to-medium enterprises face. A strategic commitment has been made by the New Zealand Inland Revenue Department (NZIRD) to simplify tax processes. Atax investigated key determinants of compliance costs and provided NZIRD with a detailed planning framework for compliance cost research in the next 10 to 15 years.

Shaping tax policy in the world's most populous country

Professor Yuri Grbich, Dr Binh Tran-Nam and Nolan Sharkey from Atax lead a team of tax experts to the People's Republic of China to assist in the development of the Chinese Taxation System. Funded by AUSAID, the year long project was part of the review currently being undertaken by the Chinese Government. The success of the Atax tender highlights the reputation of Atax and its staff internationally, and presented a unique opportunity to shape tax policy that will affect over 1.2 billion of the world's population.

A partner in Korea

In early 2005, Associate Professor Binh Tran-Nam, armed with a grant from the Australia-Korea Foundation to study tax reforms in South Korea and Australia, will lead a team consisting of Associate Professor Neil Warren, Matthew Wallace and Nolan Sharkey to participate in a conference organised by the Korean Institute of Public Finance in Seoul.

The team will present papers on a variety of topics including tax evasion and the cash economy, tax simplicity and tax operating costs, business taxation (especially of self employed persons) and international tax issues. They will also visit the National Tax Service of South Korea.
The Master of International Tax - going GLOBAL

ATAX HAS ADDED A TRULY INTERNATIONAL FLAVOUR TO ITS POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS WITH THE LAUNCH OF ITS MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL TAXATION IN FEBRUARY 2005.

This Masters program caters for an increasing number of tax and business professionals who are thinking and operating globally. Tax advisers and administrators are being sought out for consultancy advice about multiple taxation jurisdictions.

A number of taxation professionals are also hungry for professional experience in the global marketplace. Increasingly, a higher percentage of Atax graduates are targeting 'high profile' international organisations as their employer of choice. The Master of International Taxation will assist these students to realise their career goals.

There is also an urgent need to increase tax professionals' comparative tax knowledge of other jurisdictions. The dissemination of crucial tax expertise and best practice methodologies have been given a 'kick start' with the launch of the Master of International Taxation.

Professor Bob Deutsch, Program Convenor, argues that tax professionals will increasingly be uncompetitive in the marketplace unless they expand their knowledge of international taxation. 'An international tax focus is increasingly becoming an imperative as travel, technology and communication continue to globalise. Increasingly, knowledge of international tax and the tax laws of other countries is an essential part of the tax professional's armoury'.

Many multinational organisations have been investing in the development of training programs to enhance their key tax professionals' expertise in international taxation. Atax's new tax program will ease the training and compliance burden on these organisations.

The academic team at Atax has recently secured a number of research and consultancy projects off-shore in both developing and developed economies. They are providing crucial intellectual capital in tax to government departments in India, Korea, New Zealand, China and Vietnam. Atax students benefit from this research expertise as they are trained to be the next generation of international tax advisers and administrators.

Atax recognises that many professionals are juggling heavy workloads and personal commitments and can't always commit to a heavy study load. To satisfy these needs, students are offered the choice of studying single courses in international taxation. As these students' circumstances change, they can pursue a heavier study workload and commit to a full program of study. They can then gain credits for the study they have already completed with Atax.

Graduates of this program acquire expertise in areas such as comparative taxation, tax policy, the implications of cross border investment and income flows, double tax arrangements, anti-avoidance provisions and a range of specific tax jurisdictions.

To find out more about the Master of International Taxation, please visit www.atax.unsw.edu.au or telephone our Student Services Team on (02) 9385-9333.
New Atax Programs, Courses and Modes of Delivery

The launch of the Master of International Taxation enables Atax to offer a number of new internationally focused courses in 2005. Two new courses - Foundations in International Taxation and Specific Tax Jurisdictions: Europe - will be offered in five day intensive mode in Coogee shortly after Easter 2005.

Foundations in International Taxation is being convened by Atax international tax specialist Professor Bob Deutsch, who will lead a team that will include other Atax international tax lecturers as well as senior national and international practitioners. The course will focus on developing generic international tax knowledge and skills, and will be a fundamental building block for those interested in more advanced international tax study. It explores a variety of cross-border tax issues, including international anti-avoidance measures, harmful tax practice and double tax treaties.

The Specific Tax Jurisdictions: Europe course will focus, this year, on the UK international tax scene and will be anchored by Professor Chris Evans and involve one or more eminent UK tax specialists. Particular attention will be paid to the way that the UK tax laws operate from the perspective of international investors, and the UK rules will be compared and contrasted with those in operation in other jurisdictions. The course will also consider the implications of EU membership on UK international tax transactions.

Later in the year, two further five day intensive courses in the international arena are planned - Specific Tax Jurisdictions: North America and Double Tax Agreements. Again, the courses will involve a mixture of Atax and high profile national and international presenters.

These courses, as well as the two intensives from Session 1, are available to students enrolled in any of the Atax Masters' level courses, and also to students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Advanced Taxation.

Many taxation professionals also enrol in these courses as part of their professional development. Once they experience the flexibility of Atax study and its commitment to teaching excellence, they are then motivated to enrol in a full program of study.

All four of the five day intensives build on the success of this mode of delivery in 2004. It gives yet more flexibility to postgraduate students who - in 2005 - will be able to study up to 26 courses in the traditional flexible delivery mode, up to ten in the Sydney CBD mode and four in Coogee in the five day intensive mode.

As well as these new international courses, Atax is also offering a new postgraduate course designed for those with an interest in the growth area of financial planning. Tax Strategies in Financial Planning, which critically examines the taxation of property, equity and structured and alternative investments in a financial planning environment, will be offered in the Sydney CBD on Monday evenings (6pm to 8pm) in session 1 2005.

For more information about any of these programs, courses or modes of delivery, please telephone our Student Services Team on (02) 9385-9333 or visit www.atax.unsw.edu.au
Financial services risk

In 2004, Atax senior researchers Maurice Cashmere and Professor Bob Deutsch were engaged by the Australian Taxation Office to investigate tax compliance in relation to large corporations’ financing options. These researchers mapped the architecture of corporate financing in Australia and identified the associated tax risks. This project provides a clear picture of how large corporations manage their finances and has defined a ‘first class’ model from which to maximise compliance efficiencies.
Industry Partnerships and National Tax Research

Small business record-keeping: implications for compliance?

Professor Chris Evans, Shirley Carlon and Darren Massey are evaluating the extent to which poor record keeping can increase business compliance costs, add to the probability of an Australian Taxation Office audit or cause liquidity problems. This research will identify the characteristics of effective record keeping that can help to reduce compliance problems, and in particular compliance costs, for small businesses. It will provide a framework to advise tax practitioners about how they can best assist clients to minimise compliance risks and burdens. The research is being funded by CPA Australia.

Stimulating innovation in the hybrid securities market

Atax Senior Lecturer Gordon Mackenzie has reviewed the impact of some of the Ralph Reform changes on the hybrid securities market. Clear cut rules about taxation of debt and equity were introduced by the Government in 2001 to reduce tax leakage and create certainty in this market. Gordon's empirical research investigated the extent to which changes in the market could be attributed to these tax rules. He reviewed data before and after the introduction of these regulatory changes. Gordon concluded that the new tax rules have stimulated innovation within the hybrid securities market.

GST and the expectations gap

This study by Atax researchers Associate Professor Michael Walpole and Senior Lecturer Jacqui McManus investigated whether there is a match between the expectations that tax advisers have of tax administrators, and those that tax administrators have of tax advisers. Hansford and Hasseldine (1999) argued that this gap exists overseas and this study provided an Australian context to this research. The Atax researchers identified the dimensions of the expectations gap, outlined how it was harmful to the administration of GST and recommended areas for improvement. This research will lead to improvements in the administration of GST which will contribute to improved efficiency levels and a reduction in business compliance costs.

Compliance costs are not 'blowing out' because of the non-commercial loss provisions

The Board of Taxation recently utilised Atax research services to investigate the potential 'blow out' in compliance costs due to the introduction of the non-commercial loss provisions of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Atax Senior Lecturer Garry Payne, Associate Professor Binh Tran-Nam and Professor Chris Evans investigated the compliance burden on both taxpayers and tax practitioners. The research concluded that these provisions were not particularly onerous, and had not contributed to any significant increase in either transitional or recurrent compliance costs.

Atax assists the Australian Association of Professional Bookkeepers

The Australian Association of Professional Bookkeepers (AAPB) is committed to the development of industry standards for its members. Atax is helping AAPB to develop a course which will provide professional bookkeepers with a formal qualification.

Developing a sustainable Personal Income Tax model for the future

In late 2004, Binh Tran-Nam and Chris Evans, in partnership with Professor Brian Andrew and CPA Australia, won an Australian Research Council (ARC) linkage grant to develop a sustainable personal income tax model. The project has attracted a funding pool of approximately $300,000 over two years from the ARC and CPA Australia.

Personal Income Tax (PIT) is a crucial component of the Australian tax system, largely untouched by recent (primarily business and indirect) tax reform. It currently faces serious defects. Solutions need to be found to a variety of problems relating to the tax base, tax rates and tax administration. The project aims to explore alternative PIT models that can sustain high revenue inflows and other expectations imposed upon it, and yet deliver enhanced equity, efficiency and simplicity. By testing these models against world 'best practice' and taxpayer, tax practitioner and tax administrator resistance, the project aims to deliver a model that can attract community support and achieve traditional tax policy goals.
‘The Challenges of Globalising Tax Systems’ - The 6th International Conference on Tax Administration

One of the world’s premier tax conferences ‘Atax’s 6th International Conference on Tax Administration’ was held in the Sydney beachside suburb of Coogee between April 15 and April 16 2004. This conference once again took a leadership role by stimulating critical debate on issues such as taxation compliance, global tax collection, the role of information technology in tax collection, judicial review of taxation decisions and penalties for taxation crimes. The conference featured high calibre presenters such as Michael Carmody, Commissioner of Taxation Australia, David Vos, Inspector-General of Taxation, David Butler, Commissioner for Inland Revenue New Zealand, Paul Drum, Senior Counsel for CPA Australia (sponsors of the conference), and many leading academics from Atax and across the world. The opening address was delivered by Sir Anthony Mason KB AC.

The Conference Convenor Rodney Fisher said ‘Atax is proud to host this premier event that brings together prominent decision makers in tax to debate the issues that will shape the future of taxation administration around the globe’.

### Real Business of GST
Delegates got their hands dirty once again as the workshop attracted many heavyweight stakeholders in tax such as GST practitioners, representatives from corporate Australia, and senior decision makers from the Australian Taxation Office and Treasury.

‘Thirteen papers were presented on a range of GST issues from a legal and technical perspective. These issues are very real and they have significant revenue implications for taxpayers and industry’, said Jacqui McManus, Conference Convenor.

*Division 165* and the specific anti-avoidance rules were addressed by Justice Graham Hill in his keynote address. The presentation by the ATO’s Bruce Quigley (*Deputy Chief Tax Counsel*) focused on the GST rulings panel. Expert commentators from either the Corporate Taxpayers Association or the ATO stimulated debate following the presentation of each paper.

If you would like more information about the 2005 GST workshop, please telephone Anna Bartholomaeus on (02) 9385 9320 or email: anna.b@unsw.edu.au

### Tax Reform in Transition Economies
Atax brought together economists, lawyers, political and social scientists from around the globe for a one day symposium in Coogee (Sydney) on August 18 2004. These delegates reviewed the current tax issues facing transition economies in Eastern Europe, Russia, China, Vietnam, Afghanistan and East Timor as they tackle the challenges of economic development and dislocation, budgetary restraints, and the pressure to provide public goods and wealth transfers.

Presenters included Atax Research Fellow Professor Peter van der Hoek (*Erasmus University, Holland*), Associate Professor Stephen Fortescue (*UNSW School of Politics and International Relations*), Associate Professor Melanie Beresford (*Macquarie University*), Associate Professor Hans Hendrichske (*UNSW School of International Business*), Nolan Sharkey (*Atax*) and Professor Rick Krever (*Deakin University*). Symposium Convenor Associate Professor Binh Tran-Nam said ‘high calibre events like this help stimulate debate about development issues and the imperative of creating a solid tax revenue base’.

### Debt Equity Rules: ‘Drawing the Line in the Sand’
Atax’s seminar on debt equity rules held at the AGSM’s city campus on September 15 2004 attracted record registrations. The seminar defined a precise line in the sand by highlighting key debt/equity issues that are challenging tax practitioners. International comparative issues were also discussed in the seminar.

High profile speakers featured included Justice Graham Hill (*Federal Court of Australia*) and Catherine Deane (*Tax Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu*). Dr Amin Mawani (*Schulich School of Business, York University, Canada and Atax Research Fellow*) provided a North American perspective on debt equity rules, while Gordon Mackenzie from Atax identified current Australian trends in the area.

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**Annual GST and Indirect Tax Weekend Workshop, Noosa**

Atax hosted one of Australia’s leading professional forums on GST between 29 April and 1 May 2004 in Noosa. This sixteenth annual event was themed ‘Getting Down to the
Tax Facts Fiction and Reform

Neil Warren

Neil Warren's recently published book separates fact from fiction in the current tax debate and explores future directions for further tax reforms. The book is rich in information which enables the reader to understand how the Australian tax system differs from those in other countries and the pressures this imposes on the Australia tax system. This book sets out to empower readers with the information necessary to enable them to participate in an informed way in the various tax debates which rage in Australia.

This book builds on two earlier Australian Tax Research Foundation studies into these issues by the same author: the 1993 'Looming Fiscal Crisis' study and the 1998 'Tax Facts and Tax Reform'. The latter report presented an overview of the tax system in early 1998 and was influential in laying out the pathway which subsequently led to the introduction of substantial tax reform in 2000.

'Tax Facts Fiction and Reform' goes on from these two earlier studies to explore the tax reforms that have been introduced over the past six years. An overview is also provided of the current taxation system and an analysis is provided of the facts and fiction that continue to drive the call for further tax reform. The book also outlines various reform options available in response to particular tax policy concerns, especially arising from international tax trends.

This book is essential reading for all those concerned with tax, whether it is those taxes levied on individuals or on businesses.

Dr Neil Warren is Associate Professor of Economics and Associate Director (Research) at Atax. He is also the Research Director of the ATRF and an adviser to the Business Coalition for Tax Reform.

eJournal of Tax Research

ISSN 1448-2398

The eJournal of Tax Research is a 'must read' for those who are interested in research in taxation. It is a peer reviewed journal that publishes innovative, original and scholarly works on all aspects of Australian and international taxation. It is jointly edited by Atax's Michael Walpole and Binh Tran-Nam.

It publishes leading research papers and stimulates debate about national and international tax issues, from both a theoretical and practical perspective. The eJournal emphasises the multi-disciplinary nature of taxation. Papers are refereed promptly to ensure that the journal is topical and relevant. These articles cater for the needs of students, academics, tax practitioners, researchers and administrators who deal with taxation issues around the globe.

The eJournal of Tax Research is published twice a year by Atax. Thematic editions covering topical issues will also be published on a one-off basis. This journal is complimentary and is available from the Atax website.

If you would like to subscribe to this online publication, please visit: http://www.atax.unsw.edu.au/ejtr/content/subscribe.htm
Atax welcomes new teaching staff

Atax recently added Kalmen Datt, Helen Hodgson and Dr Margaret McKerchar to its teaching staff. Kalmen brings with him broad experience in tax administration and litigation which he gained in South Africa and New Zealand. He was also admitted to practice law in the United Kingdom which complements his global expertise. Kalmen has gained extensive experience in the procedures adopted by courts and other tribunals in the resolution of disputes and rules of evidence.

Helen Hodgson served in the West Australian Parliament between 1996 and 2000. She is also a qualified accountant with postgraduate degrees in taxation. She has previously lectured at Curtin University of Technology and Edith Cowan University. Helen has authored and co-authored a number of textbooks in taxation and trusts. She has also published a number of papers, including refereed papers, in Taxation in Australia, and presented papers at professional seminars regularly over the last decade.

Margaret McKerchar was, until recently, an Associate Professor at Sydney University. She brings to Atax her excellent research credentials combined with extensive and successful teaching experience.

Honours for Atax Director

2004 has proved to be a good year for Atax Director, Chris Evans. In June, he received the CPA Australia President’s Award for his ‘significant contribution to the profession, particularly in relation to policy development and research in the field of taxation’. He also took over as General Editor of Australian Tax Review, Australia’s foremost technical refereed journal in that same month. Later in the year, he received the 2004 UNSW Staff Development Award for his ‘outstanding contribution to staff development’ within the organisation. And the year was capped off with the announcement in November that he has been promoted to full Professor with effect from 1 January 2005.

Atax storms ahead in satisfaction ratings

Atax leads the field of faculties and units at UNSW with the highest student satisfaction ratings recorded in the 2003 Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). The overall satisfaction ratings of Atax coursework students studying undergraduate and postgraduate degrees were an impressive 89% and 85% respectively. Atax is strongly committed to continually improving student course experience and outcomes. Associate Professor Michael Walpole, Associate Director of Teaching said ‘It’s very satisfying to know that our hard work and commitment to help students achieve their academic and professional goals have been recognised’.

ATO compliance program: growing in strength

Atax continues to strengthen its business partnership with the ATO through the provision of quality training expertise. Over 610 senior auditors have been or are scheduled to be trained in applied accounting and auditing skills, since the training program commenced in 2003. This thirteen day training program forms a large component of the Diploma of Government which is offered to ATO employees. The Atax program is integrated with professional assessment in the workplace.

A Computer Assisted Verification (CAV) workshop was introduced as a new elective in 2004. It is offered as a three-day workshop to train auditors in CAV techniques. ‘Over 370 tax office staff have now been trained in CAV and this training initiative was so well received that it may be repeated as a ‘stand alone’ program or within the Compliance Officers’ Applied Audit and Accounting Program’, said Jacqui McManus, Program Convenor.

Atax scans the globe for its prestigious scholarship winner

Wollela Abehode, an outstanding Atax PhD candidate from Ethiopia, has been offered a prestigious Dean’s scholarship from the Faculty of Law. She will be researching the compliance and social costs of VAT in Ethiopia over the three years of her scholarship. Wollela is currently a lecturer in accounting at Addis Ababa University.

Wollela will be Atax’s first ever full-time PhD candidate when she takes up her study in mid March 2005. She will be supervised by Dr Binh Tran-Nam and joins a growing number of part-time PhD students enrolled with Atax.

Visiting Fellows add weight to global tax debate

Dutchman Dr Peter van der Hoek and Dr Amin Mawani from Canada were Atax’s 2004 Visiting Fellows. They played a crucial role in the delivery of Atax’s academic and professional development program in 2004.

Dr van der Hoek is a Professor of Economics at Erasmus University. He delivered a presentation at Atax’s highly successful Tax Symposium (’Tax Reforms in Transition Countries: Sharing the Experience’) on 18 August. He also presented a paper on the enlargement and taxation of the European Union at an Atax research seminar on 27 August 2004. Dr Amin Mawani (Associate Professor, Schulich School of Business, York) spent five weeks in Sydney this year. He delivered a research seminar on executive stock options at Atax on 10 September 2004. Dr Mawani also contributed to the debt equity tax rules debate by stamping a North American perspective on these issues at an evening seminar held at the Sydney CBD campus on 20 September.
Nolan Sharkey hits the silk road

Atax Lecturer Nolan Sharkey will visit China and Singapore as part of his doctoral studies between February and July next year. Nolan will continue his research into Chinese tax reform and investment regulation. He will be located at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and Xiamen University in the Fujian Province of China. His high calibre research will feed into the continual enhancement of the course entitled 'Taxation and Investment Regulation in China'. This will be the first course that will be run by Atax on the Kensington campus in a ‘face to face’ mode of delivery. The course attracts students from across a number of study disciplines.

The 'Cedric Sandford Medal' awarded to Adrian Sawyer

The inaugural presentation of 'The Cedric Sandford Medal' was made to Adrian Sawyer from the University of Canterbury at a special ceremony at Atax on 1 July. Sir Anthony Mason presented this medal, for the best paper presented at the 6th International Conference on Tax Administration. Sir Anthony said ‘I found Sawyer’s suggestion that an international tax organisation might be an appropriate forum for administering binding rulings and advance pricing agreements an intriguing one’.

The ‘Cedric Sandford Medal’ is awarded at the International Tax Administration Conference in memory of the late Emeritus Professor Cedric Sandford, who died in 2004. Cedric had regularly visited Australia and was closely involved in the series of Tax Administration conferences run by Atax from 1996 to 2002. He had also been a great friend of Atax and worked with the Atax compliance cost research teams over the last 10 years.

Prizes night

On 10 March 2004, Atax celebrated the outstanding achievements of students at the Faculty of Law Prizes ceremony in UNSW’s Scientia. Professor Leon Trakman, Dean of the Faculty of Law, hosted the evening. The keynote address was delivered by The Hon. Justice Ronald Sackville, Federal Court Judge. Atax students from Darwin, Launceston, Adelaide, Brisbane and across NSW celebrated their success and met our generous donors who supported these awards. These awards introduce our graduates to potential recruiters and increase the profile of these organisations. Atax Senior Lecturer John Raneri said, ‘I would like to congratulate our high achieving students for their success and extend a warm thank you to our generous supporters.’

If your organisation is interested in contributing an annual prize at this high profile event, please contact Anna Bartholomaeus or Tim Bruce on (02) 9385 9320/9355.

KPMG partnership

Matthew Wallace, Program Convenor for the Master of Taxation, recently announced that graduates of KPMG’s Tax Principles and Tax Practice Program (TPTP) would be awarded advanced standing or credits towards the Master of Taxation/International Taxation. Matthew praised the KPMG Tax Business School’s teaching program. Atax is firmly committed to developing solid industry partnerships and to the recognition of high calibre professional development programs that advance taxation knowledge such as KPMG’s TPTP.

Vietnamese recognition

Vietnam’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Dy Nien, awarded Associate Professor Binh Tran-Nam a Certificate of Commendation in early 2004. He was recognised for his contributions to the research into the economic reforms and international integration of Vietnam. Associate Professor Tran-Nam is a joint editor of three books in Vietnamese and was a co-editor of ‘The Vietnamese Economy: Awakening the Dormant Dragon’ which was published by Routledge in 2003.

Innovative Teaching and Educational Technology Fellowship (ITET) 5

Atax Lecturer Shirley Carlon has been awarded a prestigious ITET 5 fellowship to redesign the Intermediate Financial Accounting course. Assisted by Glen Jeffreys, Educational Designer E Learning, she is transforming the course by stimulating online interaction and collaboration between students. Her project involves developing online quizzes, self-tests, online discussion topics, and developing an Atax delivery model for WebCT Vista and other emerging technologies. The educational benefits to our students will be maximised as they strengthen their capacity to work as a team - a core requirement of practitioners in the tax profession.

Atax Lecturer co-authors the Australian Master Superannuation Guide

In 2004, Atax Lecturer Shirley Murphy was busy writing updates about the numerous changes to superannuation and to taxation as it relates to the workplace. The 8th edition of the Australian Master Superannuation Guide (Shirley has been co-author since the inception of the Guide in 1997) was published in August - a number of changes were pushed through Parliament in late-June. Writing articles for practitioners about superannuation changes has also been a focus of her writing this year, as well as Shirley’s usual major input on the 15th edition of CCH’s Australian Taxation Law, which she co-authors with fellow tax teachers Rob Woellner, Stephen Barkocz and Chris Evans.
Prospectus

The Atax Prospectus provides an overview of each of the programs on offer, the courses available for study and the delivery modes for each, together with entry requirements.

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