
Australian Trusted Trader: expressions of interest now open

1 July 2016

In brief

- Australian Trusted Trader (ATT) has launched, with the Australian Border Force (ABF) accepting Expressions of Interest from 10:00 am 1 July 2016.
 - Duty deferral, periodic and streamlined reporting are slated for implementation from July 2017, however, Client Service Managers are already delivering benefits for participants.
 - The ABF has flagged delays of up to two years for processing of applications given the considerable interest shown in the programme from across industry sectors.
 - Three PwC clients are soon to be accredited as interim Trusted Traders, demonstrating significant time savings in the accreditation process as a result of up-front investment.
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In detail

In our fifth TaxTalk instalment on ATT, we are pleased to announce the trade facilitation scheme is now live. This is a significant achievement for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) as the responsible policy department, and its operational arm, the ABF. Reaching this milestone is a demonstration of the hard work and collaborative efforts of both government and industry partners, particularly given that both of ATT's predecessor programmes, Authorised Economic Operator and Accredited Client Program, failed at the pilot phase.

For those uninitiated to the scheme, ATT provides preferential treatment for international traders who meet supply chain security and trade compliance standards. ATT is expected to deliver reduced supply chain costs, improved speed to market and free up working capital as well as a range of other commercial benefits for participating international businesses.

Maintaining momentum

It was clear from the recent round of ATT information sessions that the DIBP are working hard to deliver tangible benefits for participating businesses, with headliners Duty Deferral and Periodic Reporting slated for implementation from July 2017. Importantly, the DIBP has continued its co-creation approach to alternative reporting frameworks through its Streamlined Reporting Reference Group. This approach will ensure that future frameworks will deliver optimal benefit to the importing and exporting community.

Despite this, some administrative and priority service benefits have been developed and are operational. For example, the ABF Client Service Manager is providing businesses with a direct line into government policy setting. DIBP outlined an expanded role for the Client Service Manager at the recent ATT information sessions, which now involves assistance with issue resolution with customs related concerns, but also across Australian government departments and even foreign governments. This strategic benefit is one which savvy ATT participants will put to work for them, assisting to mitigate regulatory exposures where they are encountered.

Delays for some, fast lane for others

Also made clear at the recent ATT information sessions and Industry Advisory Group were concerns about significant delays due to expected demand. DIBP representatives speculated that businesses expressing interest on 1 July 2016 could be waiting as much as 18 months to achieve accreditation. This delay is a factor of growing ABF capability and capacity, along with the commitment and maturity of participating businesses.

Importantly, businesses who present with a mature understanding of ATT requirements and how well they measure against those standards have significantly shortened the accreditation process. Two PwC clients have signed interim agreements with DIBP in the last fortnight, with another is set to sign in the coming weeks. These businesses all entered the programme in stage two and three of the pilot programme and significantly short circuited the process through the preparatory work they conducted in partnership with our trade, security and supply chain experts. The kick-off to signing period will span as little as two months for these significant and complex businesses.

The takeaway

While much work remains, messaging from the DIBP suggests an ambition to make ATT a truly innovative programme. For businesses with a strategic interest in policy, ATT provides a new avenue to government through the Client Service Manager. PwC is well placed to advise on how businesses can attain accreditation using low cost, pragmatic and best practice approaches.

Let's talk

For a deeper discussion of how these issues might affect your business, please contact:

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