

FITNESS INDUSTRY ANNOUNCEMENT

14 October 2014

LET'S GET OUR TAX INTO SHAPE

Fitness Australia launched **#FITnotFBT: Get our tax system into shape** which aims to create a healthy and productive workforce for all Australians.

Currently, large employers who can provide fitness training services on their premises qualify for a Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) exemption. However, if a small business, which doesn't have the space on-site wants to provide the same service via the local gym or a registered trainer in the local park they don't qualify for the exemption.

"Given that small to medium businesses account for 70% of the jobs, it seems perverse to have a tax incentive that excludes the majority of business owners from helping to create a healthier, more productive workforce. It's not fair," said Laretta Stace, CEO Fitness Australia.

#FITnotFBT: Get our tax system into shape campaign proposes to expand the FBT exemption to apply to services also offered 'off-site'.

"Expanding the FBT exemption is vitally important because 60% of Australian adults don't get enough exercise and more than 63% are overweight or obese¹."

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for mortality causing an estimated 3.2 million deaths worldwide². Conversely, physical activity is the second most important factor in disease prevention after quitting smoking³.

Furthermore, the total economic cost of physical inactivity to our economy is estimated to be \$13.8 billion⁴ and the cost of obesity is \$37.7 billion⁵ annually.

¹ Australian Health Survey: First Results, 2011-12 Australian Bureau of Statistics: 4364.0.55.001

² World Health Organisation http://www.who.int/topics/physical_activity/

³ Mathers C, Vos T, Stevenson C. 1999. *The burden of disease and injury in Australia*. AIHW Cat. No. PHE 17. Canberra: AIHW.

⁴ Medibank Private Limited, *The cost of physical inactivity*. October 2008

⁵ KPMG Econtech Report, *Economic Modeling of the Impact of Obesity and Obesity Interventions*, 26 March 2010.

“It is critical that the place where we spend most of our time, outside of our home, promotes a healthy lifestyle.”

“**#FITnotFBT** is about levelling the playing field, giving all employers, regardless of size, the tools to provide a healthy workforce.

“Government has a role to play, through providing incentives to businesses to help them implement healthy initiatives” Ms Stace said.

For more information and to support the campaign visit www.FITnotFBT.org.au

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For further information or for an interview with Ms Laretta Stace, please contact:

Res Publica, Angela Koutoulas

E: akoutoulas@respublica.com.au P: 02 8297 1514 M: 0412 388 574

About Fitness Australia:

Fitness Australia is the peak health and fitness industry association, providing a range of business support services and solutions to almost 30,000 registered exercise professionals, fitness service providers and industry suppliers Australia-wide.

Fitness Australia supports its members in the development of ‘fitness in the workplace’ programs and to link with local businesses to develop programs designed to encourage employees to be active and lead healthier lifestyles.