

Thomas Abourizk

From: Louise Brown <Louise.Brown@ato.gov.au> on behalf of Jacqui Curtis <Jacqui.Curtis@ato.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 6 December 2018 3:43 PM
To: Gary Johns
Subject: ACNC signature block [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Good afternoon Gary,

Further to verbal discussions you have had with my team, in relation to your email below, I am writing to ensure you are aware of the ATO's position in relation to the use of signature block acknowledgements by ATO employees currently working at the ACNC.

While I acknowledge that you have the discretion to direct ACNC employees when they are *'performing services for the [ACNC] Commissioner'* under the ACNC Act, our view is that staff assigned to the ACNC are still ATO employees who are covered by the ATO's Enterprise Agreement, and for whom the ATO Commissioner retains overall responsibility as their Agency Head under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The ATO's strong preference is that ATO employees assigned to the ACNC retain the choice to use ATO-approved acknowledgements in their corporate signature block. In the case of acknowledgement of traditional owners, we are comfortable using the ATO approved wording:

"We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and elders past and present"

This is specified in our corporate policy regarding the use of signature blocks where *'external and internal emails must adhere to our corporate style. Personalising signature blocks is no more appropriate than personalising business cards or using personal stationery for ATO correspondence'*. Furthermore, acknowledgement is commonly used across the broader APS and aims to promote the inclusion of indigenous culture and traditions in our workplaces and work habits rather than the exclusion of others. The ATO is proud of putting the client and citizens at the centre of all we say and do and we are equally proud of our workforce reflecting the diversity of the community we serve.

We ask that you reconsider your position on signature blocks, and that you adopt our policy on this matter. Our preference is that you put in place arrangements for consistency in the application of this policy with ATO employees who are currently placed in the ACNC.

For your consideration, happy to discuss.

Kind regards

Jacqui Curtis, FAHRI
Chief Operating Officer
Australian Taxation Office
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