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## News & Info from ...



### Newsletter: Vol. 11, Issue 3 - June 2011

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#### WELCOME!

Welcome to our new subscribers!

June already and the end of financial year approaches! Are you ready? Remember if you use a BAS service provider new rules are that they must be registered and from 1 July carry insurance. See our article later in this newsletter.

May was a HUGE month with every weekend filled with local activities (Peace Festival, Warwick's 150th Birthday celebrations), Mother's Day, and OIVAC! I'm looking forward to a few weekends of doing nothing!

Plus the big launch! Did you miss it? During IVAD the launch of the [Australian Chapter of the Alliance for Virtual Businesses](#) was announced and I'm heading up a steering committee of exceptional Australian VAs and hoping to bring some exciting things to the Australian industry via that. See article below.

Looking forward to big things ahead!

Virtually yours

Lyn PB

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**Your brain is more active sleeping than it is watching TV.**

#### BLOG

**What's been happening at the blog? Latest articles:**

[Small Biz to Benefit from Budget Mailing Lists](#)  
[NBN - Deliverer or White Elephant?](#)  
[School Holidays Already?](#)  
[I'm the Boss](#)

#### A4VB Aussie Chapter Launched

If you missed the International VA Day celebrations during OIVAC in May then you missed one of the biggest announcements in the Australian VA industry in a long time: the launch of an Australian Chapter of the Alliance for Virtual Businesses. This is exciting news for the Aussie VA industry. Why? Because the Alliance for Virtual Businesses (A4VB) has been operating since 2003 with its primary mission being to advocate globally on behalf of the virtual assistance industry and to promote the growth of free enterprise between virtual assistants, entrepreneurs, small businesses, corporations, associations and other business entities. For example, the Alliance sponsored the development of the Core Competencies for VAs and most recently the very successful [Global VA Week](#) celebration. So it's more than just another member-based organisation.



#### PODCAST

**What's been happening at the Virtual Business Show podcast? Click the titles to be taken to the shows!**

[Multi-VA Practices Q and A with Ken Phillips](#)  
[Sham Contracting Business Tax Changes - Australia](#)

I'm so proud of the team of Aussie VAs who joined the committee to get the chapter off the ground and you can find out more about each of them at the [Steering Committee page](#) of the site.

The Chapter is planning some great things for the VA industry in Australia - and not to be missed is our launch party which will take place in July. We are also holding the first **comprehensive** survey of the Australian VA industry so if you're a VA be sure to keep an eye on your inbox for the link to the survey so you can be a part of this Australian-first!

Head over to our [Contact page](#) and sign up to be kept advised of what the Chapter will be doing and to ensure you don't miss out on participating in the survey!

Remember : You can subscribe to the show via RSS, iTunes, Zune, or download the podcast at the iTunes Store. You can also subscribe via email for email delivery of whenever a show is uploaded!

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You can also find us on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter](#)!

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## Head in the Clouds

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Do you have your data in the clouds? Many people are starting to use 'the cloud' for data storage with services like [Dropbox](#) but recent reports about potential security issues with the service may have you wondering if it's all such a great idea.

I won't bore you with all the tech details - suffice to say that the keys that encrypt your data on the Dropbox servers are actually held by them meaning that potentially Dropbox employees could access the key and decrypt your data. If you use Apple or Google data storage, Skype or Twitter then you're already falling under similar privacy policies so not much has changed in my mind with the revelations about the Dropbox service.

Personally I don't have too much to worry about with regard to information I'm storing in the cloud, but if you or your business are beginning to feel weak at the knees there are some things you can do according to a recent Windows Secrets article.

If you want to continue to use Dropbox you could encrypt your data first using something like TrueCrypt which runs on Windows, Mac OS and Linux but not mobile devices. SecretSync and BoxCryptor are two third party routines that work with the Dropbox API and you can use your own keys to encrypt/decrypt the data. This would mean you upload already encrypted files to Dropbox which then encrypts them for a second time - but if an employee decided to take a peek into your data they'd only find gobbledygook. Again though, these services don't work on mobile devices.



If you're just too annoyed with Dropbox to continue, an alternative service is provided by [SpiderOak](#) - also free offering a similar service to Dropbox but they don't store the encryption keys. You create the password on your own computer and are completely responsible for it and its safekeeping. It works on Windows, Mac OS, and Linux but again not on mobile devices.

So it all comes down to how worried you are about who might be able to see your data. Large law firms continue to use Dropbox and other cloud-based computing so until they run screaming for the hills I figure the rest of us are okay.

## New BAS and Tax Agent Rules

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Do you provide BAS services for clients? Are you ready for the new changes that are coming into effect re insurance?

Readers of the blog and newsletter will remember when I posted about changes to the rules requiring anyone providing [BAS services for a fee or reward to be registered](#) to operate. That rule came into effect 1 March 2010.

Late last year the [Tax Practitioners Board announced](#) that from 1 July 2011, anyone providing BAS services will need to have a minimum \$250,000 professional indemnity insurance.

Are you ready for the new rules?

I've been discussing the issue with one of my clients - insurance broker David Beard from Coastsure and he told me some exciting news! If you provide these services and have a turnover of less than \$75,000 they can provide the required insurance coverage for just \$393.

Get more information at [www.taxagentinsurance.com.au](http://www.taxagentinsurance.com.au)

(The premium for turnovers higher than \$75,000 vary as the 'limit of indemnity' that the business has to carry increases to \$500,000 for turnovers up to \$150,000 and so on. If your business falls within this category you can [contact David](#) for a competitive quote.)

## Award Win!

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Saturday 4 June was the annual [Heritage Building Society and Warwick Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards](#). Like most small business operators I'm not much for 'awards', preferring to spend my time working in and on my business than on award submissions. And having been on judging panels for industry awards for many years I also recognise how difficult it is being a judge and having to choose just one winner from a multitude of excellent submissions!

But when I found out my daughter had nominated me for the Home Business category, and given I started my business because of her over 11 years ago, how could I not affirm the belief she had in me and put in a submission?

I was however, incredibly surprised just prior to the awards to be notified I was a finalist and on the night to hear that I had actually been selected as the winning business!



My thanks goes to the judging panel, for recognising that a solopreneur, non-employing business *is* actually a business despite popular belief, and not a hobby, and my congratulations to the other category nominees. My thanks to the [Warwick Chamber](#) and Heritage Building society and also the category sponsor [radio station 4WK](#).

I also acknowledge the support of my husband, David. As most people in small business will know, without the support of your partner/spouse you are never going to make a success of the venture, and he has been an amazing support the last 11+ years and a terrific sounding board. And most of all, my thanks to my daughter, who was the motivator for starting the practice back in 2000 - enabling me to spend more time with her and avoiding the necessity of full-time daycare - and for her belief in me. When I told her not to worry about nominating me because no one in town would know who I was anyway she gave me one of her typical 'all-knowing' looks and said "No mummy, I WILL nominate you. You work very hard and you deserve to win". Taking her to the awards night was definitely a highlight.

### Business Book Launch and Networking

If you're in Brisbane on 14 June you'll want to get to this book launch and networking event!

Dr Lois P Frankel, contributing author to local book '*Women on Top - against the odds*' will be Guest Speaker at the book's launch in Brisbane on Tuesday 14 June at 6.30pm, speaking about "What it takes to be a woman on top today". Dr Lois Frankel is an internationally recognised business coach, speaker and author of the best-selling books '*Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office*' and '*See Jane Lead*'. Guests receive a complimentary copy of Dr Frankel's latest book, '*Nice Girls Just Don't Get It*'. '*Women on Top*' is the work of Terri M Cooper of Real Estate Mastery, and Sally Healey of Jigsaw Consulting Group. Tickets are available online. [www.womenontop.com.au/book-launch](http://www.womenontop.com.au/book-launch)

I was pleased to have been involved in some of the transcription for the book and the stories make for some interesting reading!

### Cafe Press Store



Okay - so just as a bit of fun we've [opened a store](#) at CafePress where you can purchase

eSOS items! T-shirts, coffee mugs, coasters, bags and notebooks! If you like the support we give and want to spread the word, this is a unique way to do so!

If you want your own CafePress store [click here to set one up](#) - or we can do it for you. **Just ask.**

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