Institute of Certified Bookkeepers
Making you count

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Bookkeepers helping Bookkeepers help Business

April 2015

News, views and things you need to know

Welcome to the ICB's April 2015 Newsletter.

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Other Things Happening in the World

This Month From the ICB

Products and Solutions

From the ATO

ICB Membership Statistics

ICB Supporters and Sponsors

In this month's Members Newsletter you will find the following additional information:

Important News for You

- End of Year Considerations
- Bookkeeper End of Year Project Plan
- Business Owner End of Year Project Plan

Best Practice Bookkeeping

- Payslips for Casual Employees - What is Required?
- Public Holidays

The BAS Agent World

- ATO - Complex Tax Issue Resolutions
- The Authorisation Process

Other Things Happening in the World

- Employees and Fraud - How to Handle This Situation

Products and Solutions

- Client Newsletter - April 2015 eBrief

ICB Wins Best International Association Award!

ICB has beaten off strong competition to collect the most esteemed award at the Association Excellence Awards. 56 outstanding organisations competed across a range of categories to prove that they were the best in the field of association management and member-focussed value. And ICB topped the lot.

The Awards luncheon was held at London's prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, where more than 300 representatives of the expectant finalist organisations gathered for lunch, which was followed by the eagerly awaited gala awards ceremony. The ceremony was hosted by former MP and now TV political pundit and rail traveller, Michael Portillo.

Commenting on scooping the top award, ICB Chief Executive, Garry Carter, said:

"I am absolutely delighted that ICB has won this prestigious international award. It is a fitting accolade for some pretty hard work and a whole team of dedicated people who have worked behind the scenes to make this possible. Above all, it is testament to the professionalism and stature that this community of ICB Certified Bookkeepers around the world has demonstrated and the reputation that these members have earned for themselves. It was an honour to be judged alongside leading British organisations, from the Association of Accounting Technicians and Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals to the Association of Colleges and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. It was a very proud moment".

"This is a serious and highly respected award. The 26 judges were drawn from some of the country's oldest established and most respected professional institutions".

"ICB is now a truly global organisation answering the global demand for Certified Bookkeepers. In a world that is so reliant upon small businesses, the place of the bookkeeper has never been more critical and here at ICB we pride ourselves on ensuring that ICB bookkeepers are the best that they can be."

The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre was the venue in October 2014 for the ICB Annual Bookkeepers Summit, which attracted more than 500 bookkeepers from across the UK. This magnificent, purpose-built centre is one of the few venues in the capital that can hold such a large audience. The ICB Bookkeepers Summit will return to the QEII this October when it is anticipated that this year more than 700 ICB bookkeepers will descend upon the capital.

Hello ICB Members,

**Joint ATO and ICB Webinar -
ATO Approach to Debt**

We're teaming up with your Institute to host a number of must-see, free webinars over the coming months. I'm looking forward to talking with ICB members at our first webinar on 22nd May, 2015. Registration for this webinar is now open.

REGISTER HERE

We'd like to hear your opinions and answer questions you might have.

Matthew Addison and I will talk about how we are re-inventing the ATO and our contemporary approach to collecting tax debt.

Many small businesses rely on you to advise them on their financial affairs and help manage their cash flow. We really appreciate your crucial role in helping to keep Australian small businesses viable and we think it's important we both gain your ongoing input into supporting your clients and update you on details of our new contemporary approach to collecting debt.

While most taxpayers pay their taxes on time, in recent years we've seen the amount of tax debt rise. Small Businesses in particular have a below-average payment rate and represent a significant portion of tax debt in Australia.

Since the GFC the ATO has primarily focused on supporting businesses that have been unable to pay. We have been overly cautious and hesitant to use our legal recovery powers, resulting in a growing number of businesses not paying us at all. These businesses are gaining an unfair financial advantage over others, either by trading while insolvent or by intent. For these businesses we are adopting a more timely and firmer approach, taking stronger action to prevent debt from escalating.

The community has told us they want firmer treatment of tax debtors who don't pay to ensure fairness for all taxpayers, especially small business.

In March we released our *Reinventing the ATO* blueprint. This blueprint outlines the transformation we are currently undertaking and includes our approach to debt management.

I'm really looking forward to this opportunity to listen to you and talk about our approach more broadly in terms of what you can expect from us:

- We are continuing to make it as easy as possible for small businesses to understand and pay their obligations. This includes sending reminder SMS and refreshing our web content. *What else can we do?*
- We've added more options for payment, including use of credit cards. We are helping clients to self-manage using digital services - we offer online payment facilities and payment arrangements, diary reminders via our ATO App. *What are other functions we could offer?*
- We want to work with you and your clients to understand their situation so we can design payment arrangements tailored to their needs and circumstances. We know an upfront payment will increase the chances of a successful payment arrangement.
- We engage earlier by picking up the phone to speak to your clients, not just to help them address their current debt but also building their capability to meet their future obligations.
- We address sooner those who don't engage with us and are getting an unfair financial advantage over the majority of businesses who pay on time. *Are you concerned about certain businesses avoiding paying?*

Submit any questions you would like to see addressed on the ICB Forum, click here.

Cheryl-Lea Field
Deputy Commissioner

More information:

- Reinventing the ATO - Commissioner Chris Jordan speaks at the International Tax Administration Conference
- Reinventing the ATO Blueprint
- Register for the *Let's Talk* webinars
- Business Viability Assessment
- Managing your tax debt

Prepare for End of Year Now

Bookkeepers and BAS agents, we know that from now on for the next 2-3 months, it is the busiest time of year for us.

We have updated several documents that will be useful to you in preparing for end of year now.

The following resources are accessible as web pages and PDFs from the ICB website.

- EOY Considerations can be used as a tool to facilitate discussion with your clients and lists many items to consider in preparing for end of year.
- The Bookkeeper EOY Project Plan will assist you in planning exactly what tasks you need to complete for each client. This document also contains links to many other relevant EOY ICB resources.
- The Business Owner EOY Project Plan could be provided to the business owner as an overview of what they will need to consider for end of year.

ICB's End of Year Program

- EOY Face to Face One Day Members Workshops - 75% full - click here.
- EOY Webinar Series - For full details, click here
- EOY Resources, updated and reviewed - click here.
- Newsletters and Network Meeting Discussions

New Program

- Half Day Workshops for New Bookkeepers and Students - Introduction to End of Year - click here.

Making Debt Payment Easier

Contemporary Letters Making it Easier to Pay

The ATO are making their debt letters clearer and easier for your clients to meet their obligations. These improved, contemporary letters will start issuing soon.

When a taxpayer receives a letter they will understand:

- Why they are receiving the letter – it clearly states the type of overdue debt, the amount owing.
- What they need to do – your clients will know how to pay their debt, including our preferred payments methods of BPAY® and credit card. The letters show that help and support is available and provides contact details should they need to call to discuss their situation.
- What will happen if they don't pay – the letters clearly outline the consequences of what happens each day their debt remains unpaid. It shows how the debt will increase, the interest rate and our ability to start legal recovery.

Did you know BAS agents have access to the automated self-help phone service?

Your client will usually be eligible to pay their tax debt by instalments if the outstanding debt is less than $25,000 and certain other conditions are met.

A payment arrangement can be organised either by your clients themselves or by you, on behalf of your clients, by calling our automated self-help numbers and following the prompts - there is no need to talk to a tax officer.

You will need the ABN or TFN of your client, full details of the amount outstanding, and details of the proposed arrangement including first payment date, frequency of payment and the amount of each payment.

NOTE the first payment date must be at least 15 working days after your phone call to allow for processing time

Eligibility for a payment arrangement

- the outstanding debt is less than $25,000 (check the portal to establish the account balance)
- your client is unable to pay the debt off in full by the due date
- your client wants to pay the debt in instalments
- the debt can be paid off by instalments within two years
- your client has a good compliance history and adequate funds to enter into the payment arrangement *and meet any future tax obligations on time*.

Ring 13 72 26 (enter 2) to organise a payment arrangement for your clients

Best Practice Bookkeeping

Employment Contract Requirements

Does an employer have to provide a letter of employment?

A letter of employment, or employment contract, is not a legal requirement for an employer to have with every employee. It is however best practice to have such an agreement or contract in place. A contract cannot provide for less than the minimum provisions as per the National Employment Standards. Regardless of award, registered agreement or employment contract, **the NES applies to all employees**.

If there is no employment contract, the relevant payroll records must still be kept by the employer and the terms of employment must still be provided to the employee.

What is the Minimum Information Required in an Employment Contract?

- Employee's name
- Employee's award
- Employee's classification
- Basis of employment – full time, part time or casual
- Rate of pay
- Frequency of pay
- List of penalties and loading that may apply
- Number of hours to be worked in ordinary week
- Information on the types of leave they are entitled to—this is covered by the National Employment Standards
- The employer should show that the Fairwork Information Statement (including the NES), has been provided to the employee
- Tax File Declaration and Superchoice form have been provided and received back from employee
- Signature of both employer and employee, agreeing to the terms and confirming that employee has received a copy of the FairWork Information Statement.

FairWork states they will advise on the legal minimums required in a contract, however, for detailed terms an employer may need to get separate legal advice to draw up an employment contract.

A basic version of an employment agreement may be one or two pages to address the above essential information; see below for an example. In this example, a flat rate has been negotiated that covers all penalty rates the employee may be due in their part-time role. It is assumed that the client has checked with FairWork that this flat rate is equal to or better than the award rates.

Note that this is not a registered agreement. A registered agreement takes the place of an award. An employment contract may list other terms, such as a flat rate, but this will not negate the terms and principles of the award that governs the employee.

Related References

- ICB - Payroll Records and Payslips

Condensed Employment Contract

Joe Bloggs Association

Letter of Employment

Employee Name: Employee Jones
Employment Award: Special Award 2010
Employment Classification: Special Person Grade 3 level 3
Rate of Pay: $27.80 FLAT RATE

The flat rate of pay is above the standard award rate and is paid for all hours work. This rate includes all the penalty rates that would normally be paid when being paid the minimum amount including:

- After 7 and 12 Late penalty rate
- Weekend and Public Holiday penalty rates
- Overtime penalty rates
- Any allowances applicable

Type of Employment: Part Time
Pay period: Weekly
No of Hours: 27 per week

Leave Accruals

Annual Leave:	Annual leave will be accrued at 4 weeks a year calculated on your ordinary hours of work
Annual Leave Loading:	17.5% annual leave loading will be paid on top of annual leave
Sick/Carers Leave:	Accrual is 10 days per year calculated on your ordinary hours of work.
	A medical certificate may be required if more than one days sick leave is taken.
Unpaid Sick/Carers:	You are entitled to 2 days unpaid carers leave in each instance when a family member requires care due to illness, injury or unexpected emergency. This only comes into effect when no sick leave is available.

As part of the Fairwork National standards the following forms have been given to you at the start of your employment as well as our company information form.

- Fairwork Statement
- Superchoice form
- Tax File Declaration
- Employee Information form.

All the above forms with the exception of the Fairwork Statement are required to be completed and returned within 2 working days. If they are not returned tax will be withheld at 49% and your superannuation will be paid into our default super fund Host Plus.

Please sign below to accept these conditions and to confirm that the above forms have been received by you.

Employee Jones   (Employee)   Employer Bloggs

Dated: _____   Dated: _____

Copies to be held by both parties.

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Help Your Clients with SMSFs get SuperStream Ready

All SMSFs must be able to receive super contribution payments and information electronically, just as other super funds are required to.

ICB is hearing that many SMSFs are not yet set up to receive super guarantee contributions according to the SuperStream requirements.

A SMSF must be ready to accept employer contributions by 30th June, 2015.

SMSF Requirements

- Register for an electronic service address. This is mandatory in order to be able to accept payment information electronically.
- Provide contributing employers with the SMSF electronic service address, the ABN, and the bank details.
- Email all contributing employers providing details. ATO pro-forma email for SMSF members to provide fund details to employers.

Bookkeepers and Employers

- If you have not received the relevant details of SMSFs that employees are using, the employer has the option to use their default fund in order to meet their legal super guarantee obligation.
- If the SMSF is not ready to receive electronic payments and communications by 30 June 2015, the employer must still meet their SGC obligation.
- The employer should provide a Super Choice form to the employee, and if this is not completed within 28 days, then the employer can pay the SGC amount into their nominated default fund.
- ATO pro-forma email for employers with SMSF employees.

Exceptions

The SMSF is NOT required to be SuperStream compliant if it does not receive any employer contributions, and if it ONLY receives personal contributions from its own members and related party employers.

For example, if a couple run their own business and pay into their own SMSF, they can do this directly without using a SuperStream solution.

Note

For employers with 20 or more employees, they should already be using SuperStream—and if not, they have until 30 June to implement SuperStream solutions into their business.

For employers with 19 or fewer employees, they have until 30th June, 2016 to implement SuperStream into their business although many are using it already.

For more detail on SuperStream see ICB - SuperStream resources.

Related References

- ATO - Get Your SMSF Clients SuperStream Ready
- Register of SMSF Messaging Providers
- ATO - Frequently Asked Questions about SMSFs and SuperStream

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The BAS Agent World

Nil TPAR Online Form

Taxable payments annual report - Not required to report

From the ATO

Complete the form below if you are not in the building and construction industry or you did not pay contractors for providing building and construction services during the year.

The definition of building and construction services includes services such as architectural work (including drafting and design), certification, decorating (including painting), engineering, landscaping and construction, project management and surveying. Check our list of examples of building and construction services

1. ABN: *(Required; Do not include spaces)**

2. Business name:

3. Nil Report Year: *(Required)**
   20

4. Required to lodge an annual report next year? *(Required)**
   ○ Yes, I might engage contractors in the future
   ○ No, I am not in the building and construction industry or do not intend to engage contractors next year

5. Contact name: *(Required)**

6. Contact phone number: *(Required)**

7. Contact email address:

This form can only accept one business's information at a time. If you wish to inform us that multiple businesses are not required to lodge a Taxable payments annual report, you have to complete more than one form. If you are a registered agent with multiple clients, you might find it easier to email us at NilReportTPAR@ato.gov.au with a list of your clients and all the other details required in this form.

Find out who needs to report

The form is to be completed online, click here.

Tax Practitioner Board Advisory Forum

ICB attended the TPB Advisory Forum on 19th February, 2015 in Sydney.

Click here for the report of the forum meeting.

Continued Professional Education

ICB EOY Webinars

Let ICB's expert team guide you through the End of Year processes and requirements with our series of End of Year Webinars. All are conducted online for your convenience.

ICB Technical Webinar - Preparing for End of Year
Tips for Bookkeepers to consider as the end of financial year approaches. Review ICB's EOY checklists.
5th May, 2015
12.30pm (EST)

ICB Bookkeeping Process - End of Year
Review ICB's tip sheet and get ready for 30th June
19th May, 2015
12.30pm (EST)

ICB Technical Webinar - End of Year Payroll, Payment Summaries and Super
16th June, 2015
12.30pm (EST)

ICB Technical Webinar - End of Year Business Activity Statement (BAS)
Take an in-depth look at the End of Year with our webinar on the BAS process.
23rd June, 2015
12.30pm (EST)

ICB is running One Day EOY Workshops in 4 Locations click here for details.

Live ATO Webcast for BAS Agents

Join your peers, the Tax Practitioners Board, a Professional Association (our own ICB represented by Matthew Addison) and the ATO in a live discussion about changes that will affect you

Discuss how changes in the environment will affect digital service offerings for you and what this means to your profession.

Panellists will discuss important issues and what changes will affect you, with a focus on:

- changes to practice management software
- changes and trends that professional associations are seeking
- the role of BAS agents and bookkeepers and how this will look in the future
- services and support
- the Tax Practitioners Board's view on registration requirements and continuing professional education

The panel includes:

- Darren McMahon, BAS agent
- Pam Chilman, Accounting system specialist and BAS agent
- Matthew Addison, Institute of Certified Bookkeepers
- Ian Taylor, Chair of the Tax Practitioners Board
- Colin Walker, Assistant Commissioner, ATO
- Tina Chawner, ATO Representative and host

Don't miss out. Visit Tax professionals live webcast and add the event to your calendar. There is no need to register before the day, as the webcast will be streamed live.

Save the date and ask questions about the changes you are seeing and how they affect your interactions with the ATO and your clients.

Submit your questions and comments before the live webcast by posting to the discussion board on Tax professional's community, tweet to #tpwebcast before or during the webcast, or use the live chat facility.

Webcast, Online:

- 30th April, 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Register here

The previous Webcast, run 30 March is available here.

Download the full Roadmap of Change for the Tax Professionals here.

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This Month From the ICB Continued Professional Education Webpage

Continued Professional Education

ICB Network Meetings
Nationally, Monthly

ICB End Of Year Workshops
Various Dates
Various Locations

Live ATO Webcast for BAS Agents
Webinar, Online
30th April, 2015

Reckon Accredited Partner Program
Various Locations
Various Dates

ICB Technical Webinar: Preparing for EOY
Webinar, Online
5th May, 2015

ICB Technical Webinar: End of Year Payroll, Payment Summaries and Super
Webinar, Online
16th June, 2015

Xero Fundamentals & Payroll
Classroom, Adelaide, SA
Various Dates

Xero - Payroll and BAS
Classroom, Balcatta, WA
Various Dates

Xero - Essentials and Beyond
Classroom, Balcatta, WA
Various Dates

Xero - Fundamentals
Classroom, Adelaide, SA
Various Dates

Xero Expert Training
Classroom, Adelaide, SA
Various Dates

ATO Open Forums
Various Locations
Various Dates

Foundations of Payroll
Various Locations
Various Dates

Introduction to End of Year Process and Procedures
Various Locations
Various Dates

ATO SuperStream Webinars
Webinar, Online
Various Dates

ICB Technical Webinar: The Bookkeeping Process - EOY
Webinar, Online
19th May, 2015

ICB Technical Webinar: EOY Business Activity Statement
Webinar, Online
23rd June, 2015

ICB Interviews the ATO Debt Team
Webinar, Online
22nd May, 2015

Intermediate Excel 2010
Classroom, Balcatta, WA
Various Dates

Webinar: MYOB News Channel
Webinar, Online
Various Dates

GST & BAS
Classroom, Perth, WA
Various Dates

Certificate in MYOB Bookkeeping
Classroom, Perth, WA
Various Dates

Intuit QuickBooks Online - Learn how to use QuickBooks Online Efficiently
Webinar, Online
Various Dates

SMART Bills
Webinar, Online
Various Dates

Online: SuperStream using MYOB
Webinar, Online
Various Dates

Payroll Updates
Classroom, Perth, WA
19th June, 2015

Terminations
Various Locations
Various Dates

 Question For You to Discuss This Month??

This month's question for you all to debate at your network meeting is:

My client has employees in a real estate business. They are paid base wages and commission. Sometimes they also receive an extra payment for sales made in a certain timeframe.

These extra payments can be from both the client's bank account OR from the customer directly. How do I treat these extra payments?

Let us know your thoughts and solutions by posting comments on the Q & A Space.

 Let us know your thoughts here

Last month we asked you:

You have received an invoice from a supplier that provides an ABN and includes GST in the price. This supplier has also issued you with a schedule of prices that include GST. He has instructed you to pay the GST on his behalf directly to the ATO.

What should you do?

ICB's Response:

First check the ABN and business name registration on ABN Lookup. More than likely the supplier is not registered for GST or has given you an unrelated ABN, and is trying to pocket the GST amount through rather disingenuous means!

If it turns out that the supplier IS in fact registered for GST, then you could pay the ATO directly—but only if you see ATO paperwork that includes convincing evidence that indicates you are actually paying into the Integrated Client Account, for that entity's ABN.

But you have to ask…why would a business agree to do this for a supplier? Perhaps the supplier is an important and trusted one and is struggling with cashflow and asks you to do this as a favour—okay—assuming you see the above mentioned paperwork.

The responsibility for lodging a BAS and paying the ATO rests squarely with each entity. You would want to be convinced that the supplier is actually doing the right thing with their BAS. You would not be agreeing to pay GST to the ATO on behalf of an unknown supplier, nor would you agree to this even for a known supplier if there was not convincing evidence and good reason. This will increase your administration costs—are you willing to incur this expense for another entity's legal obligation?

Regardless of evidence or reasons provided, the business owner is under no obligation whatsoever to pay the ATO on behalf of another entity.

Be suspicious!

ICB - Checking Tax Invoices and Suppliers

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Upcoming Network Meetings

Join a network meeting this month, not just to share, but to also network and keep informed.

All ICB Network Facilitators volunteer their time to assist ICB in keeping you up to date and informed and without the help of these fantastic people these valuable meetings would not happen.

If you are unable to attend your local meeting due to time restraints or there isn't a meeting in your area, why not join us via webinar on the 2nd week of each month.

Webinars			
Online 8th May, 2015 - 12pm (EST)	Online 11th May, 2015 - 5pm (EST)		
Queensland			
Brisbane North 12th May, 2015	Brisbane South 19th May, 2015	Bundaberg 19th May, 2015	Burpengary 13th May, 2015
Cairns 8th May, 2015	Dalby TBA	Gold Coast - AM 12th May, 2015	Gold Coast - PM 14th May, 2015
Hervey Bay 26th May, 2015	Ipswich 12th May, 2015	Logan 20th May, 2015	Moreton Bay 11th May, 2015
North Sunshine Coast 8th May, 2015	South Sunshine Coast 14th May, 2015	Toowoomba 15th May, 2015	Townsville 8th May, 2015
New South Wales			
Ballina 12th June, 2015	Balmain 18th May, 2015	Bathurst 19th May, 2015	Belligen 11th May, 2015
Blue Mountains 27th May, 2015	Brookvale 15th June, 2015	Central Coast 27th May, 2015	Dubbo 18th June, 2015
Hornsby 14th May, 2015	Moorebank 13th May, 2015	Orange 18th June, 2015	Newcastle 18th May, 2015
Port Macquarie 12th May, 2015	Randwick - Bondi 12th May, 2015	Shoalhaven 25th May, 2015	Sutherland 20th May, 2015
ACT			
Canberra - Phillip 12th May, 2015	Canberra - Northside 20th May, 2015		
Victoria			
Bulleen 12th May, 2015	Burwood 6th May, 2015	Chadstone 11th May, 2015	Cobram 7th May, 2015
Docklands 7th May, 2015	Echuca 21st May, 2015	Frankston 14th May, 2015	Geelong 5th May, 2015
Lilydale 28th April, 2015	Macedon Ranges 16th June, 2015	Mordialloc 12th May, 2015	Mt Waverley 5th May, 2015
Narre Warren TBA	Point Cook 8th May, 2015	Sale 14th May, 2015	Yarra Valley 8th May, 2015
Western Australia			
Balcatta 15th May, 2015	Broome 13th May, 2015	Bunbury 2nd June, 2015	Busselton 22nd May, 2015
Cockburn Central 20th May, 2015	Joondalup 19th May, 2015	Kalgoorlie 18th June, 2015	Melville 13th May, 2015
Noranda 13th May, 2015			

South Australia			
Henley Beach 15th May, 2015	Mt Barker 19th May, 2015	Para Hills 13th May, 2015	South Adelaide 7th May, 2015
Unley 21st May, 2015			
Tasmania			**Northern Territory**
Hobart 29th May, 2015	Launceston TBA		Darwin 18th May, 2015

These meeting are conducted in a relaxed and informal environment to promote discussion amongst those attending the meetings.

No meeting in your area?

We are always on the lookout for facilitators to run meetings in their local area so if you are interested please contact Rick Van Dyk at rick@icb.org.au

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Other Things Happening in the World

What is a Dashboard?

DIGITAL FIRST

This information has been reproduced with the permission of Digital First.

Digital First sums up a philosophy that suits the challenge facing business owners trying to keep up with the pace of technological and social change. In the same way that websites are often designed "mobile first", so businesses should be built "digital first".

The invention of the iPhone kicked off one of the great advances in technology – the rise of design. Smartphones were once horribly complicated interfaces that only engineers could use. The first iPhone could be unlocked and operated by a toddler, and its interface has barely changed in seven years.

Nowadays good design is almost mandatory for modern software designed to run over the internet and operated through a browser. One of the design staples is the dashboard, a powerful tool that boils down the essence of the program to a couple of key charts, lists and numbers.

What is a Dashboard?

A dashboard is a summary page of the key metrics and performance indicators within that program. Dashboards are often used as the home screen for online business software as it gives the user a snapshot of the most important data.

The goal of the dashboard is to make the program understandable to the person using it, says Garry Dukes from Ocius Digital, a technology consultancy. "You shouldn't have to explain what each thing is."

Dashboards are extremely effective for programs with a lot of data, such as accounting programs. An accounting program can hold thousands of transactions and dozens of reports, so it's extremely useful to have the most relevant and regularly updated information shown on the home screen.

This can include the total amount of money in the bank (account balances), lists of the money going into and out of the business (invoices payable and receivable), a chart showing how well you manage the process of collecting and spending cash (your cash flow), a graph showing the number of sales targeted for the month versus sales made, and a list of key spending accounts so you can monitor for blow-outs and keep costs under control.

Below are examples from leading online accounting software including Intuit QuickBooks, MYOB Essentials, Reckon One, Saasu and Xero.

Dashboards are receiving more attention from software companies, all of which updated their designs in 2014. Even slight changes to bolder colours with more striking contracts can improve usability.

Some have opened up about their design process and the importance of user experience. Design thinking is reinventing business software. The theory is simple – users will use more features and receive greater business benefit from a well-designed program.

The more visually appealing a program is from the get-go the more a user will use it. This is particularly important for accountants or bookkeepers training clients on how to use their accounting program effectively.

"If you're demonstrating a program to a client you can show them the home screen, see the key information and jump in and examine the cash flow," Dukes says.

Dashboards are moving from fixed screens to customisable templates. Reckon One is the first to let you choose the types of information you can display from a library of widgets. Others are promising a similar approach and going even further towards business intelligence, where a dashboard might show your business' performance compared to industry benchmarks.

Are there Customisable Dashboards for Accounting?

The dashboards in accounting programs tend to be fairly basic and for the time being most aren't customisable. A number of dashboard programs are available for business owners wanting to set a more detailed set of key performance indicators (KPIs) or reporting metrics, or perhaps use several dashboards for different roles in a business.

Dashboards such as Crunchboards, Fathom and Spotlight Dashboards connect to your accounting software and turn your financial data into business intelligence reports. They have pre-designed graph, image and number templates that can create scorecards, management reports, sales dashboards, financial and non-financial KPIs, and so on.

These dashboard programs perform several types of analysis such as KPI, profitability analysis, cash flow, trends and printable PDF reports for board meetings.

Here are some examples.

Fathom's profitability analysis dashboard.

A sales KPI scorecard from Spotlight.

The set-up screen for Crunchboards.
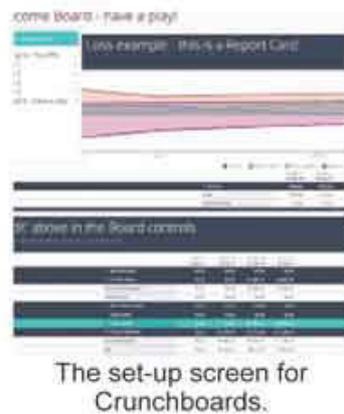
Are there Dashboards for Multiple Apps?

There are also standalone dashboards which can pull information from a number of programs. These multi-source dashboards are really useful for business owners or managers who want a snapshot of the key metrics for running operations from a variety of applications.

For example, a retailer's dashboard might include a list showing stock levels of the five best-selling products from their inventory program, today's sales vs average number of sales from their point-of-sale system and accounts-payable invoices waiting to be paid from their accounting program.

This is especially true of smaller businesses that use a collection of programs in conjunction with their accounting program rather than a single enterprise resource planning (ERP) suite.

Dashboards are not just for business owners. Managers can use them to manage jobs in a professional services business or for sales to monitor lead conversions.

Examples of multi-source dashboards include Ducksboard, Geckoboard and 9Spokes.

How Do You Choose a Dashboard?

Whether you're looking for a single-source or multi-source dashboard program, there are certain aspects worth considering, Dukes says.

1. **Connections**. Online programs can connect to each other so they can pass data either in one or both directions. This eliminates the hassle of exporting and importing data manually. Although this is not a large task it is a huge factor in why programs are often abandoned due to lack of use. Automatically updating information is critical, so make sure the dashboard connects directly to the application/s you need it to. You will often see the term API, or application programming interface, referred to in this context. It is just the name for the connectors in each program that determine the type of data that can pass between the two.
2. **Frequency**. Sometimes two online programs will say they connect automatically through an API but they might only update the data once a day. That's less useful than a connection that refreshes the data every hour or (best case) in real time. Of course, you might not need your invoices payable updated in real time, so evaluate the frequency based on your needs.
3. **Visual Appeal**. The dashboard has to look good. This is not just for aesthetic reasons. You are more likely to miss something if an important metric is not suitably visible or highlighted.

4. **Drill Down**. Dashboards should give you access to the data behind a graph or number and do it quickly, Dukes says. "You should be able to click on a bank account graph and examine the numbers behind the curve."

So that's a basic introduction to dashboards.

[Written by Sholto Macpherson from Digital First](#)

MYOB and SuperStream

SuperStream Resources to Share with your Clients

SuperStream represents a monumental shift in the way businesses pay their employees' super contribution. As we edge closer to the first compulsory date (full compliance for businesses with 20+ employees from 1st July 2015), it's timely to ensure your clients are up-to-date on their requirements.

The following resources might help you in educating those clients who are still uncertain about what they need to do.

[MYOB SuperStream Guides](#) - In this ZIP folder, there are two brochures:

- **Easy guide to superannuation** - An 18-page guide to the ins and outs of super to help your clients stay on top of their workplace obligations.
- **SuperStream ready in 4 steps** - an easy-to-read guide that provides an overview of super and an introduction to complying with SuperStream.

[MYOB SuperStream website](#) - This is MYOB's dedicated site for SuperStream compliance. It's especially helpful for those clients that are already using MYOB AccountRight.

[Paying super is super easy (VIDEO)](#) - A video that explains Pay Superannuation - a free service included as part of an AccountRight subscription.

Speaking of MYOB software, it may help you to know that businesses still using AccountRight v19 will have a SuperStream-compliant service available in the coming months. Note that users will need to have MYOB Cover to be eligible for the free service.

MYOB Essentials will be updated automatically to have a SuperStream compliant service, too.

Fancy some further reading? MYOB's Sally Higgs reckons [there are four reasons why businesses will LOVE SuperStream](#)!

Standard Business Reporting Status Update

What's Happening With SBR – An Update

Information received and discussed at the recent SBR Business Advisory forum attended by ICB.

SBR – Celebrating Our Success

- The original scope for SBR was limited to focusing on financial reporting from businesses to the following agencies:
  - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
  - Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA)
  - Australian Securities & Investment Commission (ASIC)
  - Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
  - Offices of State Revenue (OSR)

- With the ATO set to implement its new SBR based Electronic Lodgement System (ELS) on 1 July 2015 we are set to start to receive large volumes of lodgements through the SBR channels.
- This is on top of:
  - APRA already fully adopting SBR for all forms
  - ASIC moving towards full adoption
  - SROs having open SBR gateways to receive payroll tax reporting
  - ABS now re-engaged with the SBR programme and actively looking to implement

- So, all of the key agencies in the Treasury portfolio have either implemented or are rapidly implementing SBR more broadly
- Noting though, the take-up rates to date, in hindsight, have not been as high as first thought in the original 2007 SBR business case
- In concert with this implementation by the ATO, Software developers are making available to tax agents / accountants / bookkeepers updated practice management software that is SBR enabled to lodge via the new ELS system
- We are also seeing an increase in software developers testing to build more SBR enabled offerings into their products

Software Developer Levels of engagement	June 2010	June 2011	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014	Feb 2015
Commenced testing	12	26	33	66	91	95

- So, we will shortly start seeing the take-up rates start to climb as these new government gateways are opened and the SBR enabled software is made available to agents and businesses
- Further, we are experiencing increases in lodgement of already enabled SBR forms through the gateway – as at 28 February 2015 year to date is over 550,000 compared to 395,000 full year 2013/14 – this brings the total lodgements since implementation of SBR to over 1.1 million

An added highlight to date – Super Reform

- The Super Reform program is now reaping some significant benefits for the industry
- Whilst this program was not part of the original scope for SBR, SBR was identified as an effective means to move Super transactions through the system – both business to government and business to business
- Just on the Supertick service alone, the industry has acknowledged initial savings of $48 million per annum (based on 1.2 million transactions); but this is now more likely in the region of $150 million per annum (transactions are now around 4.2 million)

SuperTICK success

SuperTICK verifies member information using SBR...

SuperTICK is a fully automated electronic service which replaced time consuming, manual paper-based proof of identity processes.

The SuperTICK service uses SBR to validate member details by matching with ATO-held information.

The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia (ASFA) estimated SuperTICK savings of around $40 - $50 per transaction.

In 2013, ASFA announced estimated savings of **$48 million** per annum, based on 1.2 million rollovers requiring manual verification

1.5 million SuperTICK transactions, less 20% for other purposes x $40 per transaction **=$48m**

Projected forward to today, based on 350,000 SuperTICK transactions per month, estimated savings are **$134 million** per annum

4.2 million SuperTICK transactions, less 20% for other purposes x $40 per transaction **=$134m**

SBR Board Meeting Update – Future Focus

- The intent of the SBR programme was always to expand to areas beyond the financial reporting scope of the original business case
- Following on from some excellent engagement and work through the SBR Steering Group and SBR Board earlier in the year we presented key recommendations to the SBR Board meeting at the end of October 2014
- These focussed on what now needs to be done to drive the broader adoption of SBR across government and into business. All recommendations were endorsed by the Board.
- The recommendations were:
    o Government to publicly announce commitment to SBR
    o Require SBR for new policy proposals and the redevelopment of ICT systems for business to government systems
    o Develop and provide a gateway conversion package to government agencies to reduce the cost and complexity of SBR-enabling their systems
    o Realise the potential of SBR – review the definitional taxonomy to identify more candidates for rationalisation and harmonisation
    o New whole of government policy for e-invoicing, e-grants and financial reporting using SBR
    o Expand SBR services to include ABS, Education, Health, and large business reporting
    o Enable SBR services for agriculture and trade
- Needless to say, we are on the cusp of the government making some very significant announcements around digital transformation that will impact across the whole Australian economy – SBR is a key enabler of this
- This, again, shows great success in moving the program toward a true whole of government SBR; as forecast in the original business case
    o On 23 January 2015 the Prime Minister and Minister Turnbull jointly announced the formation of the Digital Transformation Office (DTO)

Emerging e-Government – Digital Transformation Office

- Public Servants from across government have been seconded into this office to consider and progress the end-to-end design of digital solutions to better serve the needs of citizens and business
- The endorsed recommendations from the October SBR board meeting have been provided to the DTO
- The SBR program is very much engaged with the DTO to progress these.

Further Reading

- SBR Key Messages - March 2015

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This Month From the ICB

Questions from Conference

For those of you who were unable to attend the conference, the manual can be purchased for $66.00 (postage and GST included) here.

Questions that were asked of the 2015 Annual Conference team have been captured here.

All resources published in the manual are available to view here.

 What's New This Month

Recent Resources, New and Updated

- Export of Goods and Services – Bookkeeping for Overseas Entities
- Payroll Records and Payslips
- Workforce Guardian Factsheets
- March 2015 Members Newsletter Podcast

News Items

- Intuit QuickBooks Online Information Session
- ICB's LinkedIn Company Page Hits 4,000 Followers
- ICB Wins Best International Association Award!
- ATO Portal Maintenance Scheduled Downtimes
- Getting Ready to be a Great Bookkeeper
- What's on for ICB Student Members?
- Reckon Accredited Partner Program
- Lodgement Deferral Request
- March 2015 Newsletter Podcast
- Open Forum to Professional Associations
- No more Superchoice for Temporary Workers

ICB Q & A Space News

Find out the full details here. Quite a conversation has developed around Recording Bank Transfers in MYOB, what would you do?

You can check out the latest threads here.

Feel free to ask your questions regarding any issue you may be having or if you require clarification, we are here to help.

 The Latest Updates lists all the topics in order of replies

Products and Solutions

Products and Solutions for Your Business

Available on the ICB website is a range of Products and Solutions to assist in you in your bookkeeping business.

You will find a range of solutions to assist you including:

- Accounting Software
- For All Businesses
- For Bookkeepers in Practice
- Expert Solutions such as:
  - Insurance
  - HR / Employment
  - Payroll
- Member Developed Solutions
- Books and Manuals

Click here to view the ICB Products and Solutions webpage.

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From the ATO

BASAAG Report

ICB attended the BAS Agent Association Group meeting last month.

For the full report click here.

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ATO Portal Maintenance Scheduled Downtimes

The portals will be unavailable at the following times for scheduled system maintenance.

Scheduled Start Time	Scheduled End Time
Saturday 2 May 8.00pm EST	Sunday 3 May 8.00am EST
Saturday 13 June 8.00pm EST	Sunday 14 June 8.00am EST

Click here for future dates.

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ATO Spam Emails

Many scammers pretend to be from the ATO and some scams and hoaxes are very sophisticated and convincing.

Always be wary of SMS and emails claiming to be from the ATO.

Things to check:

- An email from the ATO will always be addressed to you personally.
- Check the address of the sender—it should from ato.gov.au, not any other variation of this.
- The ATO will never request personal details from you via email—anything that asks for bank details, PIN, name address or similar will be spam.
- If the email states that you owe the ATO money, it is spam. The ATO will always communicate this kind of information via letter and/or communications to your registered agent. They have a specific process that must be followed for their debt collection before they can threaten legal action. If you receive an email about legal action, without any other communications from the ATO about the matter, it is likely to be a hoax.
- If the email promises you a refund, it is spam. Refunds are only calculated after you have lodged a tax return and this will always be communicated via letter and/or registered agent. Refunds will always be paid by either cheque or into a previously nominated bank account. The ATO does not require you to verify or complete anything in order to receive your refund.

If you have a myGov account you can log in and check communications there. Any email sent from the ATO should also be listed in your account.

References

- [ATO Information on Phone, Mobile, Fax and Other Scams](#)
- [Tips for Recognising and Avoiding Tax Scams](#)

Switch Paper BAS Back on

One-off Electronic Lodgements and Revisions

A single electronic lodgement will result in a change to how the next activity statement is issued for your clients. You and your clients will need to consider this when deciding how to lodge the activity statement.

For example, if an electronic lodgement method is used in order to receive the benefits of electronic lodgement concessions, (i.e., an extension of the due date), then either you or your client will be required to take steps to reinstate paper activity statements, if the client cannot transition to ongoing electronic lodgement.

If you used the BAS portal, SBR or ECI to lodge the activity statement, either you or your client will need to contact the ATO directly, to ask that the paper activity statement be turned back on. You will need to ring them--clients ring 13 28 66 and agents ring 13 72 86, Fast Key Code 1-4-1.

If you used ELS to lodge the activity statement, the client's activity statement delivery preference should be changed back to paper by one of the following methods: using the 'Your clients' menu in the BAS agent portal or by completing the ELS client update transaction.

Paper statements are often used by clients to remind them of their BAS lodgements. An alternative is to use the [ATO small business tax calendar](#).

You can see the ATO webpage on planned generation dates for activity statements and add these dates to your existing calendar, details available here.

References

- ATO - Changes to Managing Electronic Activity Statements
- ATO - Online Services

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We like the ATO Call Centre

The ATO have published a report on their Call Centre Satisfaction Survey for 2013-2014.

Overall, people are happy with the call centre services and performance.

- 91% cited the helpfulness and empathy of ATO service representatives as the predominant reason for their satisfaction.
- 78% of calls are resolved at the first call.
- 86% of people felt the call met or exceeded their expectations.
- 66% of people found dealing with the ATO "easy".

For the full report click here.

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ICB Membership Statistics as at 31st March, 2015

4,810

2,823 Members maintain Fellow, Member, Associate, Affiliate and Educator membership.

ICB also has 23 Accredited Training Provider members, 1,955 Student Members and 9 Subscriber Members.

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ICB Supporters and Sponsors

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Please note that, in between newsletter issues, articles may be published straight to the *Latest News* section of the website. Please check the headlines which can be found in the top right of the website homepage, to ensure you stay up-to-date.

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ICB's Newsletter contains news articles, links and regular sections that we feel will be of interest. If there is anything that you would like to see, whether a regular feature or a one-off, please let us know. Email your ideas to admin@icb.org.au

The monthly Newsletter for members of the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers.

A selection of those articles listed are accessible by ICB Members **ONLY** - ICB Members, you will need to be logged onto the ICB website to view all the articles in full.

The newsletter of ICB is designed as information and resources for Bookkeepers with clients and also bookkeepers in employment.

The content of the newsletter maybe relevant in part or in whole to other publications or other purposes.

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