



Institute of Certified Bookkeepers

Making you Count

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Bookkeepers helping Bookkeepers help Business

November 2015



News, views and things you need to know.

Welcome to the ICB's November 2015 Newsletter.

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Important News for You

- Bite Back - You are not Too Expensive
- Quick Finance Within Your Accounting Software - Tread Carefully

Best Practice Bookkeeping

- Christmas Shutdowns
- Christmas Parties and FBT - How Should You Treat These Expenses?

The BAS Agent World

- Bookkeepers and BAS Agents - There is More Work Out There

Continued Professional Education

- ICB Technical Webinar - Developing Your Bookkeeping Business Series 3, Progressing Your Business

From the ICB

- November 2015 eBrief, Customisable Newsletter for your Clients

ICB Annual Survey - Tell Us What's Changed this Year!

The ICB Annual Bookkeeping Survey provides information to you about your world asking questions such as, "How many bookkeepers are actually using bank feeds?" "How many bookkeepers charge their clients for travel time?" and "How much are bookkeepers charging?"



The results are available on the ICB website ([Click here for 2014 results](#)). They are also provided to the government, the software companies as well as to the education sector to assist them to understand the reality of the bookkeeping profession. Help us to help them!

Which survey is right for you?

Contract bookkeepers providing service to multiple clients

- [Access the Bookkeepers in Business Survey](#)

Employed bookkeepers providing services to one business

- [Access the Bookkeepers in Employment Survey](#)

Results will be published in January. You do not have to be an ICB member and you do not need to log in. We anticipate the survey to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. We do not capture your email address for any subsequent marketing without your permission. Everything you say is totally confidential.

Pass the link on to any colleagues, employees or even your accountant to complete, as the more information we can get, the better.

You can access past years' results [here](#).

If you are having any problems accessing the survey, please contact us at admin@icb.org.au. We know your time is valuable, so we really appreciate your response.

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Check Status of the ATO Portal Here

The ATO have released a Portal Status dashboard specifically designed for Tax Agents. See information below.

ICB have expressed disappointment to the ATO that a BAS Agent version doesn't exist. We have been assured it is coming and we will have one by March 2016.

In the mean-time, if the Portal seems slow or broken, check out whether it is at the ATO side by checking the portal.

ATO Releases New System Showing Portal Availability

The ATO recently released the Tax Agent Portal Dashboard. The dashboard will give you real-time updates on the availability of the Tax Agent Portal. If the portal is unavailable or experiencing issues, you will know by the dashboard traffic light system. The ATO recommend you visit the dashboard before trying to login to the portal to ensure you know if the functions you're trying to access are operating efficiently. The dashboard is in its first phase of release and will be progressively improved, including additional functions.

If you want to see any additional functions in future releases or have feedback on how the dashboard can be tailored to meet your business needs, use the feedback section in the dashboard.

For more information, visit [Get real-time portal availability updates](#). To see how it works, visit [How do I use the Tax Agent Portal Dashboard](#).

Partial System Outage Refreshed about one minute ago

Portal login services: Operational

Activity statements: Degraded Performance

Client correspondence list: Partial Outage

On-demand reports: Major Outage

Note that the information only mentions Tax Agent portal - but this is applicable for BAS Agents.

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Best Practice Bookkeeping

How Quickly Should You Get Paid?

Recent research from Dun and Bradstreet has commented that Australia should be boasting that the average number of payment days has dropped to 41 something.

Sorry but I find that still reasonably unacceptable.

For you as bookkeepers, that would be very unacceptable. If you are an employee you are getting paid at a legal minimum of monthly. As a contract bookkeeper I think 30 days is the worst case, your expectation should be 14 days.

Once upon a time I would not provide any consulting work unless the business understood that I needed to be paid on the day. In today's world with instant invoicing apps and instant mobile payment apps, there is no reason to not speed up the invoicing and collection process.

Our 2014 survey showed 50% of bookkeepers work on 7 day terms and typically 40% get paid within 14 days and another 30% within 30 days.

- [ICB – Past Survey Results](#)

Further Reading

- [Smart Company – Small Businesses are Paying their Invoices Faster with Tasmania and NT the Quickest](#)
- [Dun and Bradstreet – Payment Times Plummet](#)

Complete ICB's 2015 Survey for Bookkeepers

- [Contract Bookkeepers Providing Services to Multiple Clients](#)
- [Employed Bookkeepers Providing Services to One Business](#)



Factors Businesses Think About When Considering the Cloud



Recent US research reveals a priority of factors that business people think about when considering the cloud.

When we bookkeepers are talking to businesses and assisting them to adopt the best connected technology, this list gives us a series of topics to discuss and ensure the business owner is comfortable with the cloud based service they plan to adopt.

"Cloud" is a word that is being used in a variety of different ways to sell software. When we work with business, we can discuss how internet, or cloud, is the current technology in connecting or providing software or services through the internet.

Many business owners are still nervous about keeping all their business records online - yet they do all their banking online. Many don't realise that the level of security in accounting and other software is at the same level as banks.

The research shows the factors that most concern business owners about moving to cloud applications, with security and ease of use being the top priorities.

- Security
- Ease of use
- Affordability
- Range of features
- Flexibility
- Integrations available
- Good customer support
- Peer reviews
- Speed of implementation
- Scalability



If you are assisting a business owner to implement cloud technology, make sure you discuss their particular concerns.

Discussion Ideas

- Identify what stops the business owner from moving to the cloud.
- You could explain how each of the above factors is dealt with in the specific application the business owner is considering.
- You could discuss how the security of their browser based software security is handled by bank feeds, or other automated technology.
- You could provide the owner with information on privacy principles, reassuring them that any company operating in Australia has to abide by Australian privacy law.
- You could provide links to several different options for the application they need, allowing them to choose which one is easiest for them to use.
- Provide ICB business information sheets where relevant.

This article is based on information from GetData, an independent, primary research program operated by GetApp, an online marketplace for business apps.

References

- [GetApp.com – Top 10 Factors When Choosing Cloud Apps](#)
- [ICB – Software Feature Comparison](#)
- [ICB – Security and Privacy](#)
- [ICB – Templates, Checklists and Authorities](#)

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Imported Goods and the Proposed GST Threshold Changes

Currently there are some imports into Australia that are not part of the GST system, and one of those is "Item 26 - Goods, other than tobacco, alcohol and bulk orders, with a value less than an amount prescribed by by-law (currently at or below \$1,000)."

There is a proposed change, that is, to eliminate the threshold altogether from 1 July 2017. If this comes into effect, then theoretically GST will be payable and claimable on all imported goods. All? Not quite. The proposed change would only require certain overseas businesses to be registered in the Australian GST system - those who export to Australia more than \$75,000 worth of goods. Non-resident companies importing more than \$75,000 will be expected to collect and remit GST to the Australian Government. But will it be tracked and enforced? Who will track all the overseas entities' turnover and pursue those who need to be registered? Even if an overseas entity was registered for GST, how will it then be required to report and pay and will the ATO track non-payers? How will they penalise entities who either don't register or don't remit the GST to the ATO? Will it be a voluntary registration system? So far media releases from the Treasurer Joe Hockey on the topic are vague about the details of how the system would practically work. There are many arguments against the system and potential huge costs of administering the system. Currently it looks doubtful that it will be passed but we will keep you updated.



From the bookkeeping perspective, it will mean that potentially more overseas purchases for business purposes will have GST attached and therefore claimable on the BAS. But - will we be expected to check the ABN of overseas entities and decide whether an entity should be registered and charging GST or not?

Will there be an associated "Overseas" Australian Business Register that keeps details current so that we can rely on it? Oh dear...

For the complete list of non-taxable importations see [ATO - Non Taxable Importations](#).

Related References

- [ATO - GST and Imported Goods](#)
- [ICB - Imports and Deferred GST](#)

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Do you Receive Government Grants? Be Careful

Do any of your businesses receive Government grants or Government payments?

As from 1 July 2017 all Government departments are required to separately report all payments to all entities. This is to ensure that all recipients of government money are declaring that money in their tax returns.

In effect this will be the next extension to the TPAR system. Interestingly, but probably also fairly, it is being imposed on Government next. The data will pre-fill the tax returns for business. Data collection starts as of 1 July 2017. The report must be lodged for the 2017/18 year by 28th August 2018.

1. If you work with a Government entity, ensure you have the systems to enable efficient data collection and tagging from 1st July 2017.
2. Government entities must have electronic reporting in place for the lodgement deadline of 28th August 2018.
3. For recipients of Government payments, be prepared to have your receipts matched by the ATO; ensure appropriate reporting is in place.



This is another aspect of providing Integrated Business Systems work that can be commenced by bookkeepers prior to any real implementation or compliance action by the ATO. Let your businesses and potential clients know of these coming changes and advise them accordingly.

Further Reading

- [Taxable Government Grants and Payments](#)
- [Taxable Government Grants and Payments Data Matching Program Protocol](#)

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BAS Agents Notified of myGov Client Correspondence

BAS Agents will be Notified

BAS agents will be notified directly by email when their clients receive a notification to their myGov inbox. This is an interim solution while the ATO builds Client Correspondence List-style functionality into the BAS agent portal by March 2016.

If you are an agent for a client, you will be able to see a copy of the mail, SMS and emails that the ATO has sent your clients. You will not have access to your client's myGov Inbox – instead you will see copies via your BAS Agent Portal.

The ATO will advise you when they send your client a notification that their activity statement or instalment notice is ready to view. You can still act on their behalf; myGov does not change the relationship you have with your businesses.

Other IT Developments from the ATO

1. Payment plan functionality for income tax and activity statements for individuals and sole traders will be made available for software developers by the end of this year, and the ATO is looking into payment plans for non-individuals being provided to practice management software developers in this same time frame.
2. The aim will be to ensure that the changes do not add additional tasks that practitioners will need to accommodate outside of their normal processes but rather will operate within the normal processes.

ICB Receiving Reports

We have started to receive a number of reports about situations where the ATO have turned myGov electronic notification on and now the taxpayer totally misses lodging and paying their IAS. While not strictly a BAS Agent service, as bookkeepers we have been involved in ensuring that our businesses pay their respective tax bills.

Keep an eye out for payments that should have happened.

Set up each taxpayer on a lodgement checklist to ensure that you follow up every lodgement every quarter. The GovReports CLM / Outstanding reports / Lodgement facilities are the best system we are aware of that integrates with the ATO systems to inform you if reports have been lodged.

References

- [ATO and the myGov Inbox](#)
- [ATO - Finding your Client's Correspondence](#)
- [GovReports - CLM](#)

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TPB Annual Declaration for BAS Agents

The Tax Practitioners Board has announced their new Annual Declaration for BAS (and Tax) Agents. It is a simple notification form of your details to the TPB. You must fill it in (when they ask you to) but do not panic. The form will ensure that you have advised the TPB of your details:

- your contact details
- your PII policy
- that you are complying with your CPE requirements
- that you are lodging and paying all your tax forms
- that you meet the fit and proper person requirements

Further details announced by the TPB are available on [their website](#). The TPB will email you when you are required to fill out the Annual Declaration. It will be due on the anniversary of your renewal.

Be Warned

We are aware of "interesting" marketing by at least one organisation that is seeking to take advantage of this new requirement of the TPB. This organisation is selling a four hour assessment for \$175 to "assist you". **It is not necessary.**

The TPB's CPE requirement is:

1. if you were a registered agent as of 31 December 2013 and then you make a renewal application between 30 June 2013 and 30 June 2016, you will only need to have read and understood the information in the CPE policy,
2. If you have registered since 31 December 2013 then you need to do 45 hours of CPE every 3 years.

The Annual Declaration simply asks you to confirm that you are complying.

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The TPB Wants to Know About Unregistered Agents

Unregistered Agents

The TPB currently have 120 complaints about unregistered agents. The problem is that the TPB needs evidence which will stand up in Federal Court. The first step the TPB can take is a cease and desist letter; it can take 12 months to get a case to the Federal Court. It is not a matter of cost, but the severity of the circumstances and strength of evidence. We need to get a message out to employers.

We all want to see unregistered agents pursued when appropriate; the TPB want businesses to let them know of any unregistered agents they may know of. The TPB says it is difficult to get results from these cases, as there are only two actions: a cease and desist letter or legal action that results in going to the Federal Court.

The TPB needs evidence that fees have been paid. Anonymous complaints are hard to follow up without evidence. Ian Taylor said he is looking at cases where action has not been taken and providing adequate feedback to the complainant, to show the process is not futile.

Notify the TPB about an unregistered agent: [TPB Complaint Form](#). This form can be submitted anonymously if you wish, but this will limit the kind of action the TPB can take. Where possible, notify the TPB in conjunction with the business owner and provide evidence of the complaint.



TPB, Please Get the Software Companies to Tell Us

TPB Consultative Forum, November 2015
Represented by John Birse

Cloud Computing

ICB expressed the view that it would be helpful to agents if the TPB would make a request for the software developers to provide a set of disclosures that the agent could then give to their clients.

Agents are required to understand and make certain disclosures to comply with all obligations of the code. Some of that information is known and provided by the Software companies about the way they do their particular software. It could be similar to the engagement letters currently being suggested by TPB. Particularly we would like to see information from the software developers on:

- Where the data is stored.
- The level of access the software developer staff have to the client's data.
- The level of encryption of the data.
- If it is not encrypted, software developers need to disclose that they have full access.
- How the data access will be transferred or removed from a previous agent.
- The "remuneration" in cash or kind (e.g., provision of free or discounted software) that the software company has in place for recognised partners using or selling their products.

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Continued Professional Education

This Month From the ICB Continued Professional Education Webpage

ICB Events and Webinars	Classroom	Online
ICB 2016 Conference Nationally, March 2016	Reckon Accounts Certificate for Bookkeepers Various Locations Various Dates	FBT and Entertainment - ATO Webinar Online 2nd December, 2015
ICB's Developing Your Bookkeeping Business Series 3 - Progressing Your Business Online 15th December, 2015	ATO Open Forums Various Locations Various Dates	Reckon One Training Webinars Online Various Dates
ICB Network Meetings Nationally, Monthly	Reckon Accounts Certificate for Bookkeepers Various Locations Various Dates	Xero Certification Online Various Dates
ICB Student Webinar - November 2015 Online 25th November, 2015	BAS and Company Reporting using Reckon Accounts Various Locations Various Dates	Payroll Specialist Training Online Various Dates
	Paying your Employees using Reckon Accounts Various Locations Various Dates	Reckon Worktools Webinar Series Online Various Dates



Foundations of Payroll

Various Locations
Various Dates

Reckon Accounts - Advanced Certificate

Various Locations
Various Dates

Xero Advanced BAS, Reporting, Payroll, Fixed Assets

Classroom, Clovelly Park, SA
Various Dates

Terminations

Various Locations
Various Dates

Xero Mastering the Basics

Classroom, Clovelly Park, SA
Various Dates

Xero Intermediate Payroll and BAS

Classroom, Balcatta, WA
Various Dates

Excel - Format and Produce Spreadsheets

Classroom, Balcatta, WA
Various Dates

Xero Practice Manager Setup for your Bookkeeping Business Success

Classroom, Highett, Vic
8th and 16th December, 2015



Reckon Accounts Webinars

Online
Various Dates

MYOB - Bank Link

Online
8th December, 2015

MYOB AccountRight - Maximising Speed

Online
Various Dates

Professional Practice for Tax Practitioners

Online
14th December, 2015

Xero SuperStream

Online
Various Dates

GovReports Transition Webinar

Online
Various Dates



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Question For You to Discuss This Month - NFP and FBT

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

My client is a Not for Profit entity with Deductible Gift Recipient status. A new employee has some meal entertainment receipts which fall within the current Fringe Benefits Tax year, but pre-date the commencement of employment with the organisation.

Can they claim receipts for meal-entertainment that fall within the current FBT year, but pre-date the start of employment with the organisation? The employee believes this is allowable.



[Let us know your thoughts here.](#)

Last month we asked you:

I have a client who is the director of his own company and he is an employee. He is not interested in paying his own super. Do the same laws apply to a director? I am unsure of my obligation as a BAS agent in this situation. Do I have to report this to the ATO or anyone? I have already given the client information on superannuation and directors potentially being personally liable for unpaid super.

ICB's Response:

All you need to do is provide the director with information, which it sounds like you have already done. If he doesn't want to pay it, there is nothing you can do, nor do you need to report him in any way to the ATO or any other entity. Make a note in your work papers that you have informed the client of his obligations then move on. However, you may like to advise him that the same laws apply to him as to any other employee, and that he is taking a risk in not paying his own super.

If the ATO does catch up with him down the track, he will need to pay the super guarantee charge and penalties the same as he would for any other employee. Super is a legal obligation of an employer to all eligible employees—he does not have any exemption to this rule.

From the Super Guarantee Ruling:

Directors' fees

40. All fees paid to a company director are earnings in respect of the director's ordinary hours of work.

From TAPS: "There are no circumstances when a director getting a cash amount as an employee could not get super, just like no other employee can decide not to have super paid for them. If the director was paid only fringe benefits then super would not apply, but then maybe the organisation would have to pay FBT". (If this was the case, then you would be guided by the Tax Agent as FBT is not a bookkeeper or BAS Agent area).

Director's fees paid to a company director are considered to be ordinary time earnings and therefore super would apply.

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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 11th December, 2015 12pm	Online 14th December, 2015 5pm		
Queensland			
Brisbane North 8th December, 2015	Brisbane South 8th December, 2015	Bundaberg 16th February, 2016	Burpengary 17th February, 2016
Cairns 11th December, 2015	Dalby 26th November, 2015	Gold Coast - AM 8th December, 2015	Gold Coast - PM 8th December, 2015
Hervey Bay 15th December, 2015	Ipswich 8th December, 2015	Logan 16th December, 2015	Moreton Bay TBA
North Sunshine Coast 11th December, 2015	South Sunshine Coast 10th December, 2015	Toowoomba 11th December, 2015	Townsville 11th December, 2015
New South Wales			
Ballina 11th December, 2015	Balmain 18th January, 2016	Bathurst 16th February, 2016	Bellingen 14th December, 2015
Blue Mountains TBA	Brookvale 7th December, 2015	Central Coast 25th November, 2015	Dubbo 3rd December, 2015
Hornsby 10th December, 2015	Moorebank 9th December, 2015	Newcastle TBA	Newport 15th February, 2016
Orange 17th March, 2016	Port Macquarie 8th December, 2015	Randwick - Bondi 8th December, 2015	Shoalhaven 30th November, 2015
Southern Highlands TBA	Sutherland 16th December, 2015	Wollongong 16th December, 2015	
ACT			
Canberra - Northside 16th December, 2015	Canberra - Phillip 8th December, 2015		
Victoria			
Bulleen 8th December, 2015	Burwood 3rd February, 2016	Chadstone 14th December, 2015	Docklands 10th February, 2016
Echuca 26th November, 2015	Frankston 10th December, 2015	Geelong 8th December, 2015	Lilydale 27th November, 2015
Macedon Ranges 15th December, 2015	Mordialloc 8th December, 2015	Mt Waverley 8th December, 2015	Northern Suburbs 8th December, 2015
Point Cook 11th December, 2015	Sale 10th December, 2015	Yarra Valley 11th December, 2015	
Western Australia			
Broome 25th November, 2015	Bunbury 3rd December, 2015	Busselton 27th November, 2015	Cockburn Central 27th January, 2016
Joondalup TBA	Kalgoorlie 17th December, 2015	Melville TBA	Noranda 10th February, 2016
Welshpool TBA	Perth Bookkeepers Christmas Gathering 9th December, 2015		

South Australia			
Adelaide West TBA	Mt Barker 15th December, 2015	Para Hills 20th January, 2016	South Adelaide 3rd December, 2015
Unley 10th December, 2015			
Tasmania			Northern Territory
Hobart 18th December, 2015			Darwin 14th December, 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



ICB Network Meetings are proudly supported by MYOB

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Other Things Happening in the World

FairWork Workplace Basics Take the Quiz

Know the Basics? Take the Test

FairWork are pleased to announce the launch of their new education resource - the [Workplace Basics](#) quiz.



Workplace Basics is a new online, interactive quiz that helps employers and employees check their knowledge of workplace rights and their compliance with workplace obligations.

What does it do?

Workplace basics is comprised of 7 modules of multiple-choice questions on core topics including:

- pay and awards
- leave
- record-keeping, and
- termination.

The questions are designed to address key information you need to know in each topic area and are modelled on real world scenarios to ensure that the information is relevant to the experiences faced by small businesses on a day-to-day basis.

As you progress through the content, you'll receive immediate feedback on your responses. At the end of each module, you can view a customised list of resources and information to help you address any specific knowledge gaps. You can also email the resource links to yourself so you can review them at a later time. Upon completion, you can also download a certificate for your records.

Where can I find it?

The quiz is available in the 'How we will help' section of the [FairWork website](#) under the 'Online training' tab. Or you can access the [quiz directly here](#). Online training courses are also available for you and/or clients [here](#).

Note: You can count the time spent on these quizzes as CPE for ICB, (although not relevant for TPB).

Workforce Guardian has reviewed the quiz and David Bates is **not** a fan! [You can view David's scathing review here](#).

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Not for Profit Access to Discounted Software

Not for Profits - Saving Money

It seems that every week a new NFP is asking iAssist for a quote on new hardware and / or software. In many cases they are looking for a second or third quote to compare pricing with their regular supplier. I love this opportunity, I listen to the scope of what they require, take notes and when they are ready I say something like..... 'So we can supply you with the hardware and you will get your software from Connecting Up, that will save you thousands'. At this point in time the client will say one of two things - 'Great' or 'What?' The client rarely says great.

'Why didn't my normal IT guy / consultant tell me about this?' Most NFPs are unaware that they can purchase a range of software at largely reduced prices, these include:

- Microsoft Windows
- Microsoft Office
- MYOB
- Calxa
- Anti-Virus
- Drafting Software
- And much, much more



So, for example, Microsoft Office for business retails for approximately \$265 each, Connecting Up is approximately \$28 (depending on membership). If you are a NFP and do not have an account with Connecting Up, I suggest that you get started. If you are a service provider like an MYOB Certified Consultant or a Xero Pro Adviser, I recommend that you jump on the site and start recommending it to your NFPs. You will come out smelling like roses. (**Please note:** Not all NFPs qualify). [Click here for more information](#).

Jason Spence
Director / Microsoft Certified Professional



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Inspector-General of Taxation Review into ATO Employers Compliance Activity

You are invited to provide a submission on your experiences relating to the Australian Taxation Office's management of employer obligations compliance activities. These submissions will be used as part of a review into [employer compliance burdens and the ATO's management of these compliance activities](#).



ICB initial submission [available here](#).

Any thoughts or ideas please email us at admin@icb.org.au

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How to Stay Secure Online for Bookkeepers and Accountants

How to Stay Secure Online for Bookkeepers and Accountants

Extracted from an article by Fiso BAS & Bookkeeping Solutions. Fiso BAS & Bookkeeping Solutions have been in business for 20 years and they share their step by step approach to minimising the dangers of working online.



1. Install a good anti-virus software on your computer.
2. Make sure you have a firewall installed and running at all times.
3. Perform a PC audit regularly.
4. Use browser extensions for secure internet browsing.
5. Only download trusted files from the web.
6. Set the highest level of spam and malware filters on all your email communications.
7. Install anti-spyware software.
8. Install a security app on your mobile phone.

For more detail and recommendations on apps and programs to use, see the full article [here](#).

References

- [Fiso – How to Stay Secure Online for Bookkeepers and Accountants](#)
- [ICB – Security and Privacy](#)

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ICB Conference 2016: A Life in the Day of a Bookkeeper



Agenda - ICB Conference 2016 - A Life in the Day of a Bookkeeper

ICB brings to you the significant issues, (and their solutions), in the world of a bookkeeper today. We look at what a bookkeeper could actually be doing in their life as a bookkeeper each day.

The agenda, (to be confirmed), is shaping into a series of solution “packages”, “kits” and “services” that you, the bookkeeper, could pick up and run with the day after the conference. Content will be presented to you in conjunction with the comprehensive manual, supported by additional web-based resources.

Executive Director Keynote Speech – What is happening in your world and how to keep on top of it.

Keynote Includes:

- An update on Single Touch Payroll
- An introduction to the new eInvoicing initiative from Government
- What is the ATO doing through myGov, ATO online, the portals and what does it mean for us?
- SuperStream – today’s real story

Solving Bookkeeping Issues:

- All things directors: loans, super, payroll tax, dividends
- Issues around selling and buying a business – employees’ entitlements, ABN, structure, debtors and creditors of the old and the new entity
- Debit loan accounts – why you can’t just post to director’s loans or drawings
- Improving the collection process of a business: ICB system of service for you to take to businesses

Practice Management

- How to manage your practice – things to have in place to manage a one person or several person practice
- Digital signatures, portals and dashboards: Where is it at and where are they going? What to use and what to expect?
- A practical look at what it means to offer fixed fees, value based or service based packages. Forget the concepts; this is how you would do it!

Developing Your Skill Sets

- FairWork - Techniques and Resources to Help Clients Meet their Minimum Legal Obligations (David Bates from Workforce Guardian)
- Materiality - a bookkeeper's approach to making "Materiality" judgements - when should we worry about the little amounts

Bookkeepers' Debate

- What to do about clients not paying
- Dealing with difficult clients
- I don't want to do fixed fees
- Accountants taking my work

The Professional World of the Bookkeeper

- What has happened this year?
- What is likely to happen next year?
- What the ICB 2015 survey said about you and to you

Pricing

Membership Level	Price
Full Members (<i>Early Bird Price until Wednesday 20th January, 2016</i>)	\$253.00
Full Members (<i>From Thursday 21st January, 2016</i>)	\$297.00
Students / Educators (<i>Registrations open Thursday 21st January, 2016</i>)	\$297.00
Non Member (<i>Registrations open Thursday 21st January, 2016</i>)	\$396.00

Registration

Locations



Hobart

Tuesday 1 March, 2016
Wrest Point Hobart
410 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart



Melbourne

Wednesday 2 March, 2016
Melbourne Park Function Centre
Batman Avenue, Melbourne



Adelaide

Thursday 3 March, 2016
Adelaide Convention Centre
North Terrace, Adelaide



Sydney

Friday 4 March, 2016
Sofitel Sydney Wentworth
61-101 Phillip Street, Sydney



Canberra

Wednesday 9 March, 2016
Hyatt Hotel Canberra
120 Commonwealth Avenue, Canberra



Perth

Thursday 10 March, 2016
Hyatt Regency Perth
99 Adelaide Terrace, Perth



Brisbane

Tuesday 22 March, 2016
Royal International Convention Centre
600 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills



Cairns

Wednesday 23 March, 2016
Pullman Cairns International
17 Abbott Street, Cairns



Darwin

Thursday 24 March, 2016
Doubletree by Hilton
The Esplanade, Darwin

Presenters

TBA.

Timing

- 9.00 am registration for a 9.30 am session start
- Tea and coffee on arrival
- Morning, afternoon tea and lunch will be provided
- Conference concludes at approximately 4:00 pm

Special Dietary Requirements

At the time of booking your place for the conference, we ask that you also note any special dietary requirements you might have. Prior to the actual conference, we do need to provide the venue with any special requirements so they can be catered for. We cannot guarantee your special requirements will be fulfilled within 7 days prior to event.

Registration Cancellations Policy

ICB Members

- Cancellations received more than 14 days from the day of the event - **Refund of \$125 and manual will be posted**
- Cancellations received within 14 days of the event - **No refund**. Access to all conference resources online post Conference. If hard copy of the Manual required, can purchase online and it will be posted
- Notification of cancellation must be confirmed via email and received prior to the event

Non ICB Members

- Cancellations received more than 14 days from the day of the event - **Refund of \$125 applies**
- Cancellations received within 14 days of the event - **No refund**
- Notification of cancellation must be confirmed via email and received prior to the event

Members Meeting

The ICB Members meeting will be held in each of the 9 locations. It will be commencing at approximately 3pm and will be a presentation on:

- Finances
- Operations Report
- Accomplishments
- The Future of ICB
- and any other items that may arise from now to then followed by your acceptance and endorsement.

Members are invited to submit any items for discussion at the meeting via email to simone@icb.org.au.

Please note: You will receive 5.5 hours of CPE for ICB and 4.5 hours of CPE for TPB purposes.

For further details, [click here](#).

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ICB Welcomes Sage as a Strategic Partner

ICB is pleased to announce that Sage has become a strategic partner with ICB Australia and to celebrate, Sage are inviting all bookkeepers to the following events:



Lawn Bowls, BBQ and drinks

Fancy a round of barefoot bowls and a good old fashioned BBQ and bubbles with your bookkeeping colleagues? We'd love to challenge you to a game of barefoot bowls and promise to keep the bubbles and beers flowing.

Lawn Bowls, BBQ and drinks

When:	Monday 30 November
Where:	Middle Park Bowling, Canterbury Road, Middle Park
Time:	5:00 - 8:00pm
RSVP	danielle.wise@sage.com or call (08) 9245 0626 by Friday 20 November for more details

Champagne Breakfast

Join us and celebrate! Join us for bubbles and a scrumptious breakfast before you start your day, and celebrate the festive season with fellow bookkeepers overlooking Darling Harbour. We look forward to celebrating the end of 2015 with you all.

Champagne Breakfast

When:	Friday 4 December
Where:	Signorelli Gastronomia, Ground Floor of Accenture/Google Building, Trouton Place, Pymont (opposite Metcalfe Park)
Time:	7:30am - 9:00am
RSVP	danielle.wise@sage.com or call (08) 9245 0626 by Friday 27 November to secure your spot!

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What's New This Month?

Recent Resources, New and Updated

- [Christmas Related Matters](#)
- [November 2015 Bookkeeping eBrief for your Clients](#)
- [End of Year Payment Summary Guide](#)
- [October 2015 Members Newsletter Podcast](#)

News Items

- [How to Stay Secure Online](#)
- [TPB Wants to Know](#)
- [Does ATO Compare Payroll to BAS?](#)
- [How Quickly Should You Get Paid?](#)
- [Annual Declaration for BAS Agents - Don't Panic](#)
- [GovReports - Customised Email Configuration](#)
- [ATO Employer Obligations Compliance Activities](#)
- [October 2015 Members Newsletter Podcast](#)
- [Single Touch Payroll Update - September 2015](#)
- [131 Agents Prosecuted by the ATO](#)
- [Xero Password Reset](#)

ICB Q & A Space News

Superannuation is a hot topic on the ICB Q and A Space this month with a query regarding a 1st year apprentice in the Hospitality Industry. There are so many variables here and ICB do suggest you contact Workforce Guardian for guidance, [you can follow the conversation here](#). Would I Audit or Review an Association? Well? Would you? **Should you?** ICB have some great advice and resources to guide you in this area [and you can find out more here](#).

Starting your own bookkeeping business? Well done, and while the road ahead may seem daunting at first ICB can certainly help set you on the right path. [You can read ICB's response to a members query regarding this issue here](#). Do not forget that ICB has a wealth of knowledge and experience all bundled up in one place to help you on your way. Click here for information regarding [Your Bookkeeping Business](#).

You can check out all 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

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November 2015 eBrief Newsletter for Your Business

eBrief



The November 2015 Bookkeeping eBRIEF is now available for you to download.

- [November 2015 Bookkeeping eBRIEF Newsletter](#)

[Back copies are available here.](#)

"The best bookkeepers using the best resources".

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Products and Solutions

Planning for Seasonal Ups and Downs

As the summer silly season quickly approaches, it may be prudent to take stock on what impact this may have on business cashflow. For many businesses in the manufacturing and trade industries, the Christmas / New Year period may be a time where they go back to a skeleton staff, or may in fact close for a period of time. For other clients in tourism or agriculture, it may be a peak period of activity. Either way, the summer season poses some challenges with regards to cashflow.



Is The Business Winding Down or Gearing Up?

For those businesses that are having a well earned break, or are scaling back to minimal staff, this will have some obvious impacts on cashflow. What will the impact be of reduced or no sales over the Christmas / New Year period be? Will there be enough money in the bank in mid-December to cover all of the expenses over January that will continue to occur, such as staff wages (annual leave), property rent, loan repayments and possibly increased drawings?

For those businesses that are leading up to a peak period, they may well have the same problem, but at the opposite end of the timeframe. For many seasonal businesses such as tourism, new staff may have to be employed, additional stock may have to be bought, an increase in marketing and advertising expenses may need to be considered. In this case, the business may have some short term cashflow pressure at the beginning of the period, as it may take some time for the revenue to catch up to the additional expenses that have been incurred.

Contemplate the Future by Analysing the Past

In either scenario, a good understanding of the current cashflow position, and some short-term modelling over the next three to six months is a good starting point.

A logical place to start is to look at what has happened in previous years. This will identify the trends and impacts on various ledger accounts, which can then be used as a base line for your forecast.

Then, consider if the income or expenses recorded last year will be considerably higher or lower than the previous year. For example, you may elect to increase income for this period by 10% on the prior year, based on an increased revenue base or market share. Or, you may elect to increase overhead expenses, based on a CPI rate of 3%. This may be a very simplistic approach, but it may be enough in some cases.

Fine Tune and Consider Changes

It pays though, to not just take a blanket approach. Other obvious changes may also be able to be identified relatively easily. If staff numbers have decreased or increased from the prior year, then this can easily be modelled out accordingly, based on expected periodic wage payments. This then has an obvious flow-on effect to things such as SGC expenses, which should be adjusted as well.

Other examples may be a product line increase that may require more stock to be purchased leading up to the peak season. Or maybe there has been a change in occupancy expenses if the business has moved premises over the last year. Have their financing and interest expenses changed due to additional or reduced borrowings from the previous year? These are all important questions to ask in order to fine tune the short term profit and loss budget.

Don't Forget the Balance Sheet

The short term profit and loss budget will only address part of the cashflow equation. Balance sheet movements also need to be considered. Once again, prior year movements over the same period can be used as a starting point, but consideration needs to be given based on changes that may have occurred over the previous twelve months. Has the business entered into chattel mortgage or hire purchases agreements? Is there a debt owed to the ATO for outstanding GST or SGC liabilities, maybe even a periodic repayment schedule? Are there expected to be more drawings taken out of the business because the owners have plans for an overseas family holiday?

Summary

In many instances, these can be the things that cause cashflow pain over the summer months and take businesses by surprise. The profit forecast may be better than the prior year, but failing to take into account increased demands on cash reserves, the impact on the cash position can be significant. Utilising tools such as [Calxa](#) which seamlessly integrates with mainstream accounting packages will enable businesses to quickly populate 3-way forecasts to get the true picture. Here is [a webinar recording](#) that explains this in more detail.

Reviewing and planning for this now will not only put businesses on the front foot, but it will ensure there are no nasty surprises waiting around the corner. A meeting with the bank manager now to establish a short-term overdraft facility may be a consideration to ensure that the day to day operations of the business are not affected.

Or, it may just mean that the overseas family holiday is postponed until next year. Either way, being informed and prepared will ensure that the summer silly season is survived by one and all.

Calxa have an active Partner Program consisting of bookkeepers and accounting professionals. With more than 130 partners in Australia and abroad, Calxa supports them with one-on-one mentoring to ensure that they have the confidence and tools to provide additional and relevant client services. If you would like to enquire about their Partner Program, contact Calxa's Partner Relations Manager at tellmemore@calxa.com. Check out the [ICB Website](#) for more information and to get the special ICB member discount on Calxa products.

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TransferMate - Great Rates for International Payments

Could Your Clients Be Getting Better Exchange Rates on Their International Payments?



For too long, banks have held the key to foreign exchange, often providing poor exchange rates and significantly high transfer fees. With Australia's small and medium enterprises now increasingly expanding into the international markets, removing barriers to achieving growth and economies of scale that cannot be achieved from domestic markets alone, is becoming a must.

Through our knowledge and consideration of this, along with our unwavering commitment to continue to support our ICB members Australia-wide, we have partnered with one of the world's largest and award winning foreign exchange providers, **TransferMate Global Payments**. This partnership creates an exciting new additional service for all ICB members to take advantage of.

The competitive nature of TransferMate can be seen through a recent comparison made against 3 of the top 4 banks within Australia. On a \$5,000 USD payment, TransferMate came out on top with a huge saving of \$300 over the nearest bank quote*. So it's not hard to see the annual savings a client can potentially accrue and why a recommendation from our ICB members will undoubtedly be welcomed with open arms.

When a client is recommended to TransferMate Global Payments by an ICB member, that client will receive the following benefits:

- Exceptional exchange rates, exclusive to ICB.
- No international payments fee for 6 months.
- Option for direct integration with Xero, MYOB, QuickBooks, SAP and Sage.
- Express payment delivery, 1 - 2 days for all major currencies.
- Exchange rate locker - option to freeze a preferred rate to reduce market exposure.
- Customer care, available 24 hours Monday to Friday.
- Free to sign up - no running cost, no subscription, no contract.

With a wealth of experience on all matters concerning international payments, as well as one of the largest global footprints for regulatory licenses of all foreign exchange providers, you can rest assured in the knowledge that TransferMate Global Payments is a great new addition to the Products & Solutions now available to the ICB family.

To learn more about how you can refer TransferMate to your clients please contact the TransferMate team on +61 2 9037 2735. Alternatively, you can email ICB@transfermate.com or visit the [TransferMate listing within the Products and Solutions page of our website](#).

*Rate Comparison 29 May 2015

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From the ATO

The ATO Will be Nice About Debt

The ATO is focused on making it as easy as possible for taxpayers to understand and pay their obligations on time. While the majority of people voluntarily pay on time or soon after, there are a small number who don't pay at all.

"We (the ATO) are intervening earlier to prevent debts from escalating beyond people's control and connecting with people to ensure they stick to repayment arrangements and prevent things getting worse. The focus is on business viability and ability to meet future obligations."

The ATO recognises that even viable, well-run businesses may occasionally experience short term cash flow issues that prevent them paying on time. The ATO will work with small business to develop payment plans to support viable small businesses experiencing financial difficulties. In 2014-15, the ATO granted 500,000 payment plans for small businesses.

The ATO sends SMS reminders to people with poor payment histories. In 2014-15, this resulted in payments of over \$800 million from taxpayers who have historically paid late or not at all.

Over the last year the ATO has increased its focus on taking more timely action against those businesses that are unwilling to work with us or whose debts are impaired. Not only do these businesses gain an unfair financial advantage over competitors who are meeting their payment obligations, they can also cause financial distress to their suppliers, customers and employees.

Related References

- [ICB – ATO Payments and Debt Management](#)
- [ATO – Our Debt Collection Partners](#)

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What have the ATO Achieved in 2015?

The ATO continues to be focused on developing tools and services to support a digital future.

- Email alerts (in addition to existing SMS alerts)
- Client correspondence list via myGov account and registered agent portals
- Changes to website including simplified layout and improved navigation
- Introduction of atoTV videos
- Better support and information for tax professionals
- Complex issue resolution service for tax professionals

Full details of the ATO achievements to date can be [downloaded here](#).

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Great Feedback on ATO Community Consultation Event from ICB Members

From the recent ATO Community Consultation session in Busselton WA:

I just wanted to give feedback to ICB on this event. After receiving advice of this event, I emailed bookkeepers from my networking group and made the trip from Perth myself. Well, 6 of us attended.

It turned out to be an excellent event with small business owners there as well. Most were very appreciative of the ATO attending this regional area. An ATO representative was at every table. After a brief talk from one of the ATO reps, we were able to ask questions and network with other businesses and the ATO reps. Being able to talk with a couple of senior ATO reps (one tagged as a Superstream guru and the other the Portal guru) was great. I left well informed and with a better understanding, particular with regard to where they're headed with the portal.

All in all, time well spent and as ICB members we were so pleased that we made the effort to attend.

If you would like to attend a similar event in your area, [see this link](#).

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Portal Maintenance - Scheduled Downtimes

See [this link for scheduled times](#) for the full guide to system maintenance and issues. The portals will be unavailable at the following times for scheduled system maintenance.

Scheduled Start Time	Scheduled End Time
Saturday 5th December 9.00pm AEDST	Sunday 6th December 9.00am AEDST

For more details regarding portal maintenance [visit this link](#).

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ICB Membership Statistics as at 31st October, 2015

5,282

3,156 Members maintain Fellow, Member, Associate, Affiliate and Educator membership.

ICB also has 21 Accredited Training Provider Members and 2,105 Student Members.

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ICB Supporters and Sponsors



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Please note that, in between newsletter issues, articles maybe published straight to the *Latest News* section of the website.

The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers complies with the Spam Act 2003 and we have a documented [Spam Policy](#) on our website. You can unsubscribe from ICB newsletters and updates [here](#).

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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