



Institute of Certified Bookkeepers

Making you Count

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Bookkeepers helping Bookkeepers help Business

February 2017

News, views and things you need to know.



Welcome to ICB's February 2017 Newsletter.

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ICB Membership Statistics

ICB Supporters and Sponsors

Additional Information for Members Only

In this month's [Members Newsletter](#) you will find the following additional information:

Important News for You

- ICB End of Year Workshop Dates Announced

Best Practice Bookkeeping

- Personal, Carer's and Compassionate Leave - New Resource
- Private Expenses Annual Adjustment of GST - Updated Resource
- Business Information Sheet - Modern Award Facts for Employers - New Resource
- Why You are not an Employee of Your Clients - New Resource
- SGC on Annual Leave Loading - ICB Advice Confirmed

Continued Professional Education

- ICB Technical Webinar - Inventory
- ICB Technical Webinar - Preparing for End of Year
- ICB Technical Webinar - Employment Termination Payments (ETPs) 2017

From the ICB

- February 2017 eBrief, Customisable Newsletter for your Clients

ICB Annual Conference - Bookkeeping 2017

"Bookkeeping 2017" Includes: Artificial Intelligence, Automated Intelligence and Automated Bookkeeping; Implementing Single Touch Payroll and Simpler BAS; Does Fair Work really say you might be at fault and how to draw the line; The new ATO approach and the new ATO BAS Agent's Portal; How to act reasonably according to the TPB; Health and wellbeing, especially when it is just you.

As bookkeepers, our world is perpetually developing and we are in a great spot to keep delivering the best practice assistance to business. Walk with the team from ICB and our strategic partners through how to implement strategies to be professional Certified Bookkeepers.

Interact with the presenters and ask your questions throughout the day using the ICB conference app.

9am for 9.30am start until 4pm. 5.5 hours of CPE for ICB and 4.5 for TPB purposes.

Agenda

Host: Amanda Linton, Certified Bookkeeper and Director of ICB

Keynote: Matthew Addison (Executive Director of ICB)

Includes:

- How artificial intelligence is making you look good and how it will help in the future
- Simpler BAS how to explain it, benefit from it and get GST right
- Implementing Single Touch Payroll, it starts on 1 July, 2017
- Using the brand new ATO Portal - we have the beta
- How a bookkeeper positions themselves as the expert

Presenters

ICB Team: Matthew Addison, Rick Van Dyk, Chris McComb, Amanda Linton, John Birse as well as a panel of bookkeepers.

Guest Speaker: David Bates from *Workforce Guardian*

Technical Bookkeeping: Combining legal and technical information on today's payroll issues. David Bates of Workforce Guardian and ICB Technical Resource Manager Chris McComb debate the Fair Work and payroll changes and issues. Using case studies to explain the legal basis and provide bookkeeping "how to do".

- Fair Work says payroll officers are in the firing line: Debate; how we deal with non-compliant clients. Where do we stand?
- The overseas workers and backpacker tax changes
- Cashing out annual or long service leave
- Dismissed for serious misconduct, how is it different?
- Compensation or settlement for unfair dismissal or underpaid employees

Health and Wellbeing (Amanda Linton)

- Up-to-date resources on keeping yourself well
- Hear from Amanda's own journey

Government in the Firing Line (Panel Sessions with the ATO and the TPB)

- TPB: Life stories about unregistered persons and what is a reasonable approach as a BAS Agent
- ATO: Just how committed are they to bookkeepers and how are they proving

ICB Information Session

- Awarding of Fellow memberships and recognition of 5 and 10 year members
- See the highlights and providing an opportunity for your input into ICB's next 10 years

Members Meeting

The ICB Members Meeting will be incorporated in each of the 9 locations. ICB will present an update on the bookkeeping profession and ICB's contribution to the development of the community. All meeting material (the financials, the operations report, the accomplishments and the future) will be made available prior to the conference for clarification and acceptance on the day. Members are invited to submit any items for discussion at the meeting to simone@icb.org.au.

Prices	
Full Members	\$297.00
Student Members	\$297.00
Non Members	\$396.00

Register Now

To register for Bookkeeping 2017, please click the location you wish to attend



Hobart

Hobart

Wednesday 1 March, 2017
Hotel Grand Chancellor
1 Davey Street, Hobart



Brisbane

Brisbane

Tuesday 7 March, 2017
Royal International Convention
Centre
600 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills



Cairns

Cairns

Wednesday 8 March, 2017
Shangri-La Hotel
Pierpoint Road, Cairns



Darwin

Darwin

Thursday 9 March, 2017
Rydges Palmerston
15 Maluka Drive, Palmerston



Adelaide

Adelaide

Tuesday 14 March, 2017
Adelaide Convention Centre
North Terrace, Adelaide



Canberra

Canberra

Wednesday 15 March, 2017
Hotel Realm
18 National Circuit, Barton



Perth

Thursday 16 March, 2017
Crown Perth
Great Eastern Hwy, Burswood



Melbourne

Tuesday 21 March, 2017
or
Wednesday 22 March, 2017
Melbourne Park Function Centre
Batman Avenue, Melbourne



Sydney

Monday 27 March, 2017
Sydney International Convention
Centre
321 Kent Street, Sydney

For full details regarding Bookkeeping 2017, [please click here](#).

Tea and coffee on arrival, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided.

Dietary Requirements

All special dietary requirements **must** be provided at the time of making your booking. All venues require 14 days notice and late requests are unlikely to be met.

Give us a call on 1300 856 181 if you have any questions or comments.

Partner Supporters and Sponsors including MYOB, Reckon, Xero, GovReports, Intuit QuickBooks, Workforce Guardian, Insurance Made Easy and ANZ are among others are engaged to attend the conference. The conference partners are being selected as providers of solutions that will be directly related to processes and concepts presented to you.

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ICB Conference App

ICB's Conference App has been designed to improve your engagement with the ICB team and presenters. During all sessions the ICB team have microphones to provide you the opportunity to ask the presenters directly your questions. With the App you also have the ability to ask a question which, where possible, will be passed directly to the presenter to respond. If the presenter is unable to answer your question on the day it will be captured and answered on the conference web page.

Another key feature of the App is the ability to view the day's agenda direct from your phone. This will include any last minute additions or changes so you are up to date with all of the latest information.

Get to know the presenters by viewing their sessions and their profiles under the Speakers section of the App. Put a face to the name and make yourself familiar with who you will be seeing on stage, as well as gaining access to their social media details, which is always a bonus.



From the home screen you can even access and view the day's sponsors and exhibitors so you know who will be present on the day, as well as information on each company, prior to the event.

Using the App is easy. All you need to do is download it prior to the event from your phone's App store, log in using your email address via the App or the browser and then complete your profile. Please note: your email address is not given out to anyone, it is used only as means of accessing the App.

Download the ICB 2017 Conference App from your App store

The app is accessible by downloading from your app store or a browser The can be accessed via the following app stores:



Compatible with iOS 7.0 and higher



Compatible with Android 2.3.3 and higher



Compatible with Windows Phone 8 and higher



Compatible with BlackBerry 10 and higher

Alternatively, you can access the App via a browser at the link www.icb.org.au/app

Important notes:

- Please do not register until the day of your event so that you can see via the App who is there on the day
- Uploading an image of yourself to the App will help others identify you for networking
- In the About You section, add information on the type of business you have and your location

Setting up your Profile on the Day

1. Login using your email address
2. Select profile on the top right
3. Using your smart phone take a picture of yourself or select from the Library
4. Enter the profile information you would like public
5. Save your profile

The App will provide information on the following:

- Agenda
- Polls & Feedback
- Group discussion on each of the sessions
- Presenters
- Sponsors and Exhibitors

A screenshot of the ICB 2017 Conference App profile setup screen. The screen shows a user profile for Rick Van Dyk, with fields for Job Title (General Manager), Company (ICB), Bio (A little bit about you), Website (http://example.com), Twitter (@ydyke), Facebook (http://facebook.com/example), and LinkedIn (http://linkedin.com/example). A "Save Your Profile" button is at the bottom.

Polls

During the presentations your presenter will ask you to participate to assist in the presentation and provide all in the room with information e.g. "How many hours do you work each week"

This information will then be shared with on the screen.

- To access the polls for each session from the Home Screen click on the Q & A button
- Select the session
- Answer the poll when instructed by the presenter

Group Discussion

For each of the sessions during the day a Group Discussion topic has been set up so that you can engage with the ICB team along with other attendees on the day.

To participate in the discussions, click on the "Group Discussion" button on the home screen and select the session being presented.

Messaging Other Attendees

On the top of the App you can see notification, from there you can see Alerts and message the ICB staff and other attendees.

Click on "Notifications", Click on "View all" to start a new conversation and see your current conversations.

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ICB Bookkeepers Survey 2016 Highlights

ICB Bookkeepers Survey 2016

- [Click here to download the PDF version of the 2016 survey results](#)

Commentary is based on 818 responses received in the ICB 2016 survey.

What does a Typical 2016 Bookkeeper look like?

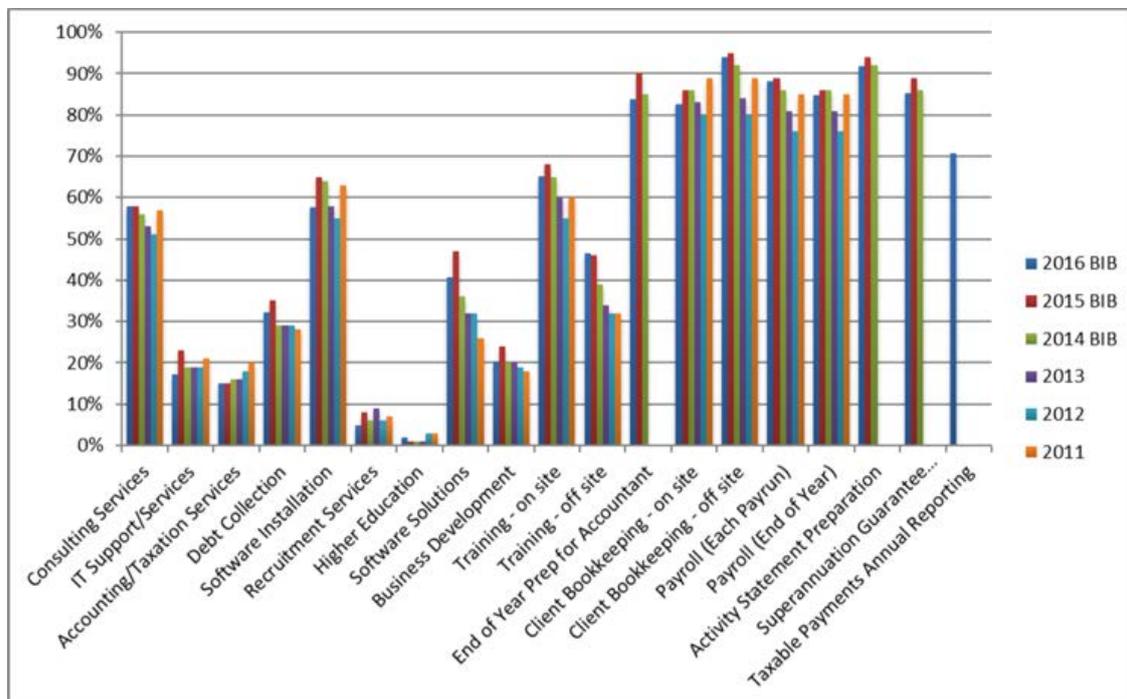
- 86% of respondents are female
- 46% are sole traders but there is an increase up to 38% for people who own a bookkeeping business
- 78% are based within 100km of a capital city
- Most are likely to hold multiple partnerships with other organisations such as MYOB, Reckon, QBO and Xero; 9% are also members of an accounting association
- 70% use Facebook and 47% use LinkedIn as their social media platforms
- The majority work 31-40 hours per week ordinarily, and most people work 5-10% more hours during BAS periods
- Has been in business for over 8 years, with many also having been in business for over 16 years
- The majority have between 5 to 20 business clients
- Most are actively looking for more clients
- 70% use the BAS or business portal
- Most help is received from ICB website, ATO website, software companies and ICB support

The Population

- 85% are ICB members
- 22-24% of the population is in each of NSW, VIC and QLD
- This year's survey results are again influenced by 11% of responses from employee bookkeepers only working for the one business, the same as 2015.
- 50% engage 1 to 3 bookkeepers as employees; 12% engage 1 to 3 bookkeepers as contractors.
- Most of the respondents would classify themselves as BAS Agents - 43% compared to the term Bookkeeper - 31%
- Working with software that either is online or has functions online
- Majority of clients allow remote access currently or as a future option
- 79% are members of a software partner program

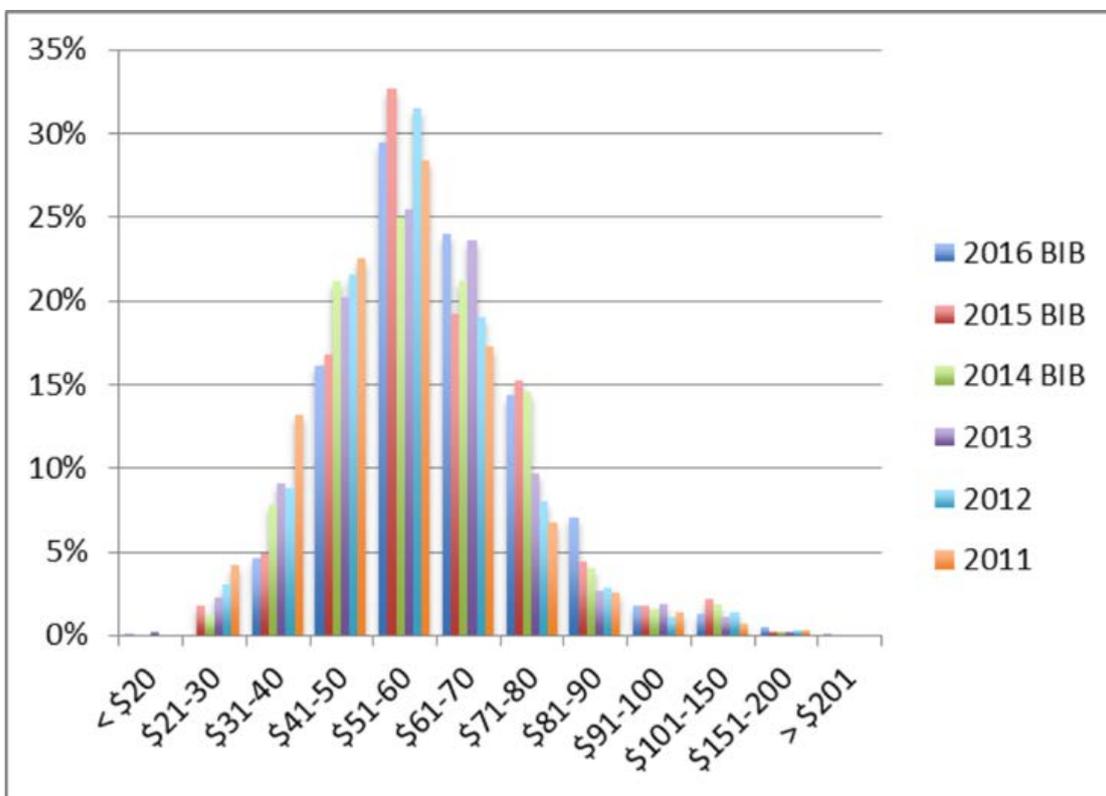
The Bookkeepers Client Base

- Engagement letters are used by 66% of bookkeepers, up from 61% last year – a continuing positive increase each year.
- The trends with what types of services are provided continues along similar paths as in previous years – most provide off-site bookkeeping, payroll, activity statements, superannuation, end of year preparation and taxable payments reporting.
- There is a roughly even division between those who advise on which awards apply to clients' employees.



Benchmarking your Performance and Your Business

- Most are charging between \$51 to \$60 per hour for bookkeeping
- In this survey, most respondents are also charging the same rate for BAS services
- There are more people than last year charging a higher rate of \$101 to \$150 per hour for troubleshooting and consulting services
- Most clients' work is still performed for an hourly rate with more people now using a combination of hourly rate and fixed fees; 10% use only fixed fee billing.
- Most people provide 7 day payment terms
- 95% report word of mouth still being the best way new clients connect, from both existing clients and accounting firms
- 57% would like to see a better financial return in their business, while 35% are satisfied.



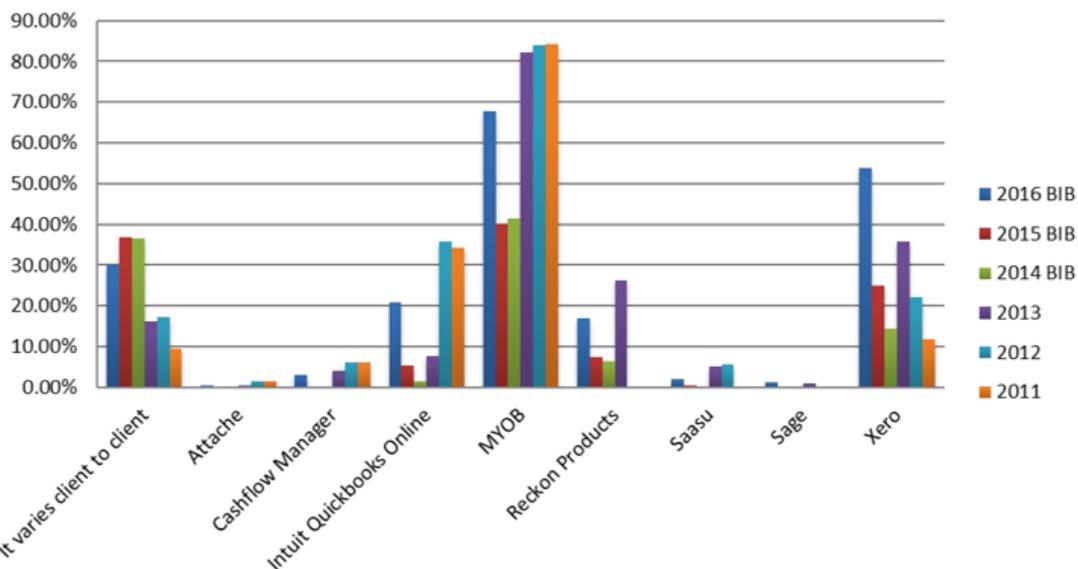
The Online Journey Continues

- 89% of businesses will allow their data online now, up from 84% last year.
- 56% now use totally browser based accounting solutions, up from 45% last year.
- 40% of people now use some kind of digital signature, another positive increase in the trend, up from 19% last year.
- More people plan to do more work remotely this year
- 88% use the BAS Agent portal to lodge a BAS, but there is an increase in the number of people also using other options – 49% use GovReports and Xero is on the increase with 30% reported.
- 53% use the portal to lodge the Payment Summary Annual Report, and 27% use GovReports.
- Notably, the majority of people still mail in the paper Tax File Number declaration, but lodgements from Xero are 38%.
- 59% report that they would voluntarily enter the Single Touch Payroll system in 2017, even though 37% say they don't like the idea.
- 79% access client's data remotely.
- 20% of people now use the ATO app, up from 16% last year.

Which Software

- MYOB still leads the way, but Xero for clients continues to increase; more people now use Xero for their own bookkeeping.
- Overall, software received a rating of 53% for "satisfied" and 37% "very satisfied".

What software do you use with your clients?



For the full survey results, [see here](#). The published results will also be provided to all ICB members.

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Best Practice Bookkeeping

Automation Supports Billing by the Hour - New Resource

A series of thoughts that challenge the way we value what we do.

We are being brought better technology and better tools to assist us doing our work. These tools speed up our productivity.

- We are becoming experts in the use of the best tools available.
- We make decisions about which tools to use.
- We use our enhanced expertise to assist the business to be more effective.
- We can do at least two or three times the amount of work that we used to be able to do.

We use improved process tools in conjunction with our intuition and skill in analysing and validating the information that systems generate, to produce better and more complete results, rapidly.

Proposition: An hour of our time is worth two or three times what it used to be.

We are traditionally comfortable with comparing the value of a job to the next job, one set of client work to another, project vs project and task vs task; using time as the basis.

Who is Winning as we Become More Effective?

If we had tracked the time, (or maybe you can go back to previous time records and compare how long a BAS took four years ago vs how long that same client takes to do their BAS now), then maybe we can value how much our productivity and effectiveness has improved.

So how do we value what we do?

How can we measure what we do?

How can we measure that we actually make a good return on what we do?

Our improved effectiveness means we should charge more.

A business owner values the result

- We position our result
- We position our expert use of the tools
- We sell our expertise

Maybe you package up your service offering to be a combination of providing the tools and using them i.e., “Packaged Services” or maybe you term this “Value Based Pricing”

Our culture values people's skills and typically increases the rate paid to them as experience and skill improves.

The guy with the better digger who will get the bigger job done quicker, charges more than the guy with the older, smaller version.

Conclusion

Enhanced skills, better tools, improved integration between tools and skill leads to greater charge rates.

A thought is that could be your hourly rate.

A thought is that could be the price you charge for the “Value” Service you provide.

Recommendations

1. Use the best tools to provide cutting edge effective solutions
2. Revalue what you do and how you bill it

References

- [ICB - Charge Rates and Fixed Fees](#)
- [ICB - Charge Rate Calculator - Sole Trader, Employee, Contractor](#)
- [ICB - Quoting and Packaging for Different Services](#)

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BAS Agent World

Fuel Tax Credits Indexation Rate Change

Fuel tax credit rates change regularly. They also vary depending on when you acquire the fuel, what fuel you use and the activity you use it for.

Fuel tax credit rates are indexed twice a year, in February and August, in line with the consumer price index (CPI). The CPI is released towards the end of January and July. Fuel tax credit rates will be updated as soon as they become available.

For the rates from 1 February to 30 June 2017, [see here](#).

Rates may also change for fuel used in a heavy vehicle for travelling on public roads. This is due to changes to the road user charge which is reviewed annually.



Simplified Fuel Tax Credits

If you claim less than \$10,000 in fuel tax credits in a year, there are simpler ways to record and calculate your claim.

Related References

- [ICB - Fuel Tax Credits](#)
- [ATO - Simplified Fuel Tax Credits](#)
- [ATO - Fuel Tax Credits Business Rates](#)

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ATO Promotes "Use a BAS Agent"

Getting the Right Advice on GST, Tax and Super

96% of Australian small businesses rely on a Tax or BAS Agent to help manage their tax and super affairs. We work together with the tax profession to assist those small businesses.



Benefits of using a registered agent

Using a registered agent provides you with:

- consumer protection through professional indemnity insurance
- extended tax and BAS lodgment due dates
- experienced and qualified agents, who comply with a professional code of conduct.

Did you know?

- Only registered agents can charge a fee for providing tax or BAS services.
- Tax or BAS Agents need to be registered with the Tax Practitioners Board (TPB).
- If you use a bookkeeper to prepare your BAS, they must be registered with the TPB unless they are your employee or work for a registered agent.

To check if an agent is registered, just enter their details in the TPB register or look for the registered practitioner symbol.

Next step:

- Check if your agent is registered: [Search the TPB register](#).

Find out more from the ATO regarding [Finding and using a tax practitioner](#).

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This Month From the ICB Continued Professional Education Webpage

ICB Events and Webinars	Classroom	Online
<p>ICB Conference - Bookkeeping 2017 Multi-locations, Multi-dates</p>	<p>Learn Calxa in a Day Multi-Locations Multi-Dates</p>	<p>Effortless Bookkeeping with Receipt Bank Online Multi-Dates</p>
<p>ICB Technical Webinar - Inventory Webinar, 30th March, 2017</p>	<p>Reckon One Certification Multi-Locations Multi-Dates</p>	<p>Excel Training Courses Online Multi-Dates</p>
<p>ICB Technical Webinar - Preparing for End of Year Webinar, 4th April, 2017</p>	<p>ATO Open Forums Multi-Locations Multi-Dates</p>	<p>MYOB Training Courses Online Multi-Dates</p>
<p>Docklands Special Meeting - HR Masterclass Docklands, VIC, 21st April, 2017</p>		<p>Xero Training Courses Online Multi-Dates</p>
<p>ICB Technical Webinar - Employment Termination Payments (ETPs) 2017 Webinar, 2nd May, 2017</p>		
<p>Hornsby Special Meeting - HR Masterclass Hornsby, NSW, 6th May, 2017</p>		
		

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How to Subscribe to ICB Network Meetings

For the February network meetings we sent invites out to all members within a 50km radius of the postcode of each meeting venue. You may have received one or several invites, which you normally would not receive and which you may not necessarily have subscribed to.

Our reason for this was to try to promote meetings to our members. When a new meeting starts up in an area, not all members will be aware of this, so we wanted to let members know of all the meetings in their area.

For some meetings this process worked well, and resulted in new attendees. For other meetings, they experienced an unusually high number of no-shows.

Important Points

1. If you register for a meeting and you are unable to attend, please advise that you will not be attending, as soon as you know you cannot make it. Our facilitators cater for these meetings based on the number advised on the registration sheet. If people do not turn up, the cost of needless catering can be quite significant. Also, for some meetings there are registration limits because of the size of the venue; by not cancelling, you are taking up a place that could have been filled by someone on a waiting list.
2. If you received invites to meetings that you do not wish to attend in future, you do not need to do anything. Your subscription will remain as it was prior to the February invites.
3. If you received invites to new meetings that you wish to attend in future, you now need to subscribe to these meetings.

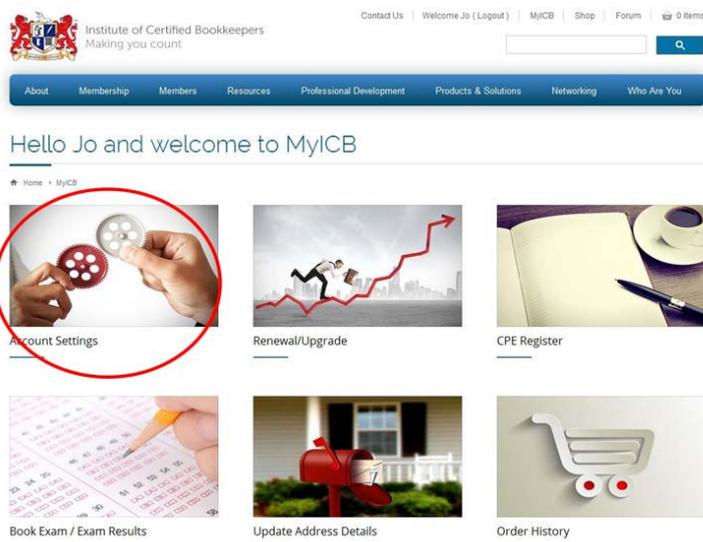
How to Subscribe to ICB Network Meetings

There are over 70 network meetings operating around Australia. They are a good way to keep up to date with current industry information, but more importantly a great opportunity to network with other bookkeepers and exchange ideas and information with your peers.

1. Log into the ICB website, go to MyICB.



2. Select Account settings



3. Click on “My Email Preferences”

4. Tick the box against the network meeting(s) you wish to receive invites for. You may subscribe to as many network meetings as you like in your area.

5. Non-members can register to the ICB website and then subscribe to meetings via the above process; the fee is \$22 per meeting payable online.

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Question For You to Discuss This Month - The Case of the Vanishing Client

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

My client vanished into thin air 15 months ago. We have been emailing and phoning with no responses. We have a stack of client files and documents at our office but no address. What can we legally do with the records?



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

Last Month we Asked You:

My client has an employee who has resigned and is owed quite a lot of long service leave payout. My client cannot afford to pay the full amount now. What can he do? When should the full amount be paid?

ICB's Response:

The “final pay” of an employee is what the employer owes an employee once they have terminated employment.

There is nothing in the *Fair Work Act 2009* that covers when an employee should receive their final pay, however, the relevant award or agreement will give information about the final pay. According to Fair Work, generally speaking, the final pay must be made on the last day of work or the next scheduled pay day.

Best Practice According to TAPS

- If the employee is leaving of their own accord and they have given proper notice, then their payment should be processed on the last working day.
- If the employer is terminating, then payment should also be made on the last working day, regardless of notice period.
- If the termination is instant dismissal because of serious misconduct the payment should be made within three working days.
- Termination payments should not be held until the next pay run unless there is specific provision in the award or unless the employee has agreed to this in writing.

Some awards or agreements make provision for the employee receiving further payment if they are required to wait for their payment. For example, if the agreement allows payment to be made within two working days of termination date, and the employer fails to make payment within that time, the employee is then entitled to being paid ordinary rates of pay at eight hours per day they are required to wait.

You should check the award or agreement for this employee and get legal advice on delaying payment. They may be able to advise the employer about a suitable payment arrangement for this situation.

References

- [Fair Work - Final Pay](#)
- [ICB - Termination Pays](#)
- [ICB - Employer Obligations](#)

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Upcoming Network Meetings

Join a network meeting, 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.

Webinars				
Online - 12pm 7th April, 2017	Online - 5pm 10th April, 2017			
ACT				
Canberra - Northside 19th April, 2017	Canberra - Phillip TBA			
New South Wales				
Albury 31st March, 2017	Ballina 14th April, 2017	Balmain 20th March, 2017	Bathurst 16th May, 2017	Bellingen TBA
Blue Mountains 13th March, 2017	Brookvale 3rd April, 2017	Central Coast TBA	Dubbo 3rd April, 2017	Hawkesbury Region 28th February, 2017
Hills Region (Rouse Hill) 15th March, 2017	Hornsby 9th March, 2017	Lower North Shore 20th March, 2017	Newcastle 13th March, 2017	Newport 4th April, 2017
Orange TBA	Port Macquarie TBA	Randwick - Bondi 8th March, 2017	Shoalhaven 3rd April, 2017	Southern Highlands 13th March, 2017
Sutherland 15th March, 2017	Wollongong TBA			
Queensland				
Atherton Tablelands 15th March, 2017	Brisbane North 14th March, 2017	Brisbane South 21st March, 2017	Bundaberg TBA	Burpengary 22nd March, 2017
Cairns TBA	Dalby 23rd March, 2017	Gold Coast - AM 11th April, 2017	Gold Coast - PM 11th April, 2017	Hervey Bay 11th April, 2017
Ipswich 14th March, 2017	Logan 15th March, 2017	Moreton Bay 13th March, 2017	Nth Sunshine Coast 10th March, 2017	Paddington 16th March, 2017
Port Douglas 17th March, 2017	Sth Sunshine Coase 9th March, 2017	Toowoomba 17th March, 2017	Townsville 10th March, 2017	

South Australia				
Adelaide West 17th March 2017	Mt Barker 21st March, 2017	Para Hills 15th March 2017	South Adelaide 6th April, 2017	Unley 9th March, 2017
Victoria				
Brunswick 18th April, 2017	Bulleen 14th March, 2017	Burwood 1st March, 2017	Chadstone 6th March, 2017	Cobram 2nd March, 2017
Craigieburn 14th March, 2017	Docklands 14th April, 2017	Echuca 30th March, 2017	Frankston 2nd March, 2017	Geelong 14th March, 2017
Lilydale 31st March, 2017	Macedon Ranges 2nd March, 2017	Mordialloc 14th March, 2017	Mt Waverley 7th March, 2017	Narre Warren 14th March, 2017
Point Cook 10th March, 2017	Sale 9th March, 2017	Warragul 16th March, 2017	Yarra Valley 10th March, 2017	
Western Australia				
Broome TBA	Bunbury TBA	Busselton 24th March, 2017	Cockburn Central 15th March, 2017	Geraldton 3rd March, 2017
Joondalup TBA	Kalgoorlie 20th April, 2017	Melville 8th March, 2017	Noranda 8th March, 2017	Northam 27th March, 2017
Welshpool 21st March, 2017				
Tasmania			Northern Territory	
Hobart 7th April, 2017	Launceston 16th March, 2017		Darwin 13th March, 2017	

These meetings 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 Carmel Wright at carmel@icb.org.au



ICB Network Meetings are proudly supported by MYOB

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Other Things Happening in the World

ICB USA Sets the Tone of Professionalism

What Defines a Professional Bookkeeper?

Author: Jan Haugo, CEO ICB USA



Bookkeepers are not known in our industry to be professionals; however, per the definition, an office worker is a professional. Looking at the key ingredients of what makes a professional, I decided to perform a comparison to give a bit of perspective on the trends of professionalism in the bookkeeping industry.

First, look and see where the bookkeeping profession will need to transition:

Profession	Doctor	Lawyer	CPA	ICB Bookkeeper	Bookkeeper (Not Certified)
Education	X	X	X	X	Maybe
Certification	X	X	X	X	No
Internship	X	X	X	X	No
License to Practice	X	X	X	X	No
Insurance	X	X	X	X	Not usually
Code of Ethics	X	X	X	X	No
Continuing Education	X	X	X	X	No
Monitoring Body	X	X	X	X	No
Professional Membership Organization	X	X	X	X	No

The essence of a true professional is not only having all the above items but being able to hold yourself to a set of standards. When you refer to yourself as a professional, you are indicating to your clients and yourself that you have attained a level of achievement, continual educational, and industry standards of quality.

Most bookkeepers fail to recognise themselves as a “professional” because they have not self-identified with a profession. The accounting profession has not acknowledged the bookkeeper as a professional, and thus the lack of validation perpetuates a self-devaluing image.

As you can see, there are similarities in a profession. The past has not held bookkeepers to any of these standards regarding becoming “professionals.”

A professional membership organisation is a key component in helping lift the visibility and the standards of the professionals. Examples of professional organisations that raise the standards in the profession are the AICPA for CPAs, American Bar Association for lawyers, and ICBUSA for bookkeepers.

A common misperception is that social groups, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, are a replacement for the professional organisation. These communities are lacking the professional requirements that help to define the profession.

Client Perspective

The perspective is that most clients don't care if the bookkeeper is certified or not. The ability for a customer to identify with a professional or not is critical.

General perception is that the bookkeeping industry does not offer standards. The client is not aware of the standards, and thus not offered a choice when they hire a bookkeeper.

The bookkeepers need to inform the clients on why they should pick a professional as a bookkeeper, allowing the customer to make a choice on using a professional versus a nonprofessional.

Gaining certification in bookkeeping will help support your skills as an individual who met the standards of the industry. Given the choice to use a doctor that is licensed and monitored versus an unlicensed physician, I would guess that most individuals would choose a licensed doctor.

Mindset Shift

The time to make yourself indispensable is now while you can gain ground on the early adopters. Decide to differentiate yourself as a bookkeeper who is a certified professional. Look to an organisation that wants to support you and grow your community.

Choosing to be a professional in a community now before the technology storm hits helps to increase the likelihood that you will continue to grow. There are many credentials out there to signify that you understand technology.

But in the above grid, the core of the professional is the industry education. Technology will continue to shift, but the underpinning basics of your core profession separate the strong from the weak. Accounting principles have not changed for more than 500 years and are the basis for all CPAs, accountants, and now bookkeepers. To be the strongest professional you can be, you will need the education in accounting, the continual technology education, and the certification.

Being a professional not only requires the above items described but is also a change in mindset. Shifting from the idea that there are no resources or voice available for bookkeepers to engaging within the bookkeeping professional organization is a necessity.

I will leave you with one final definition: "Professional" is participating for gain or for livelihood in an activity that is often engaged by amateurs, via Merriam-Webster Dictionary. I attend many conferences and most of the bookkeepers I engage with are **not** amateurs but professionals.

Change your mindset, change your voice, and begin showing your actual credentials. You are a professional; a bookkeeping professional. Act like it, show it, and believe in yourself!

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Inside Small Business - Choose Your Words Carefully

Too many companies fail to make their website relevant through using all-about-me, jargon-laden content that turns away potential customers.



Perhaps the most difficult thing about creating great web content is understanding that it's not about you.

"We are a young, dynamic and rapidly expanding business focused on delivering solution-based strategies and initiatives for our blah blah blah..."

Sound familiar? I found that statement on a real website - not hard really, given the Internet is swarming with such content. If you're honest, it may even read a little like the opening line of your own home page...

As a copywriter, I spend a fair amount of time persuading clients to abandon this sort of all-about-me jargon-laden content. While they feel that this approach captures the "essence" of their business, in reality it succeeds in only two things – keeping their legal team happy, and driving away customers.

Why does this approach fail so miserably?

It has an Over-Inflated Ego

People are stressed, busy and incredibly selective these days. They are not interested in reading about you and how wonderful your business is - they want to know what you can do for them. How can you solve their most urgent problem? How can they trust you? Why should they choose you over other businesses offering a similar service?

One of the most powerful things you can do when communicating with potential customers is to make them feel understood. How? By using the same words they do to describe what they need and want. Dig deeper. Pull out the key phrases they use to search for similar products and services online. Find out what they're saying in forums and product reviews. What excites them? What is relevant to them right now? What has prompted your current customers to buy in the past?

Spend a little time getting to know your customers' personalities, attitudes, values, interests, lifestyles and behaviours. Find common themes in their motivations, needs and desires. You can use your findings to create content that resonates and creates a reaction.

It's Meaningless

Terms like "initiatives", "dynamic" and "solution-based" mean what, exactly? These are vague words with various meanings across different industries. They do not address your potential customers' emotions, needs or desires.

People respond better when you keep the language simple, interesting and relevant. Remember, you are not in a boardroom talking with fellow industry nerds - you are trying to attract the attention of people who have a need for your products and services. So make it easy for them. Explain what you are offering and why they should take you up on it – as clearly and succinctly as you can.

It's Ordinary

Trillions of businesses in the world are all competing with one another. If your message doesn't stand out, potential customers will soon bypass you.

What is your unique selling proposition (USP)? What makes you so different? How will people remember you? Think of some of the greats. Most often, they make a simple promise that captures what they do and why you should choose them...

Domino's Pizza: "Piping hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less, or it's free."

Fedex: "When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight."

John West: "It's the fish that John West rejects that makes John West the best."

Establish your greatest selling point. Is it a goal, an award, an achievement, your expertise, a guarantee, a special offer, a feature or your level of service? Your USP will become one of the key components in your marketing strategy - the difference that defines you. Make sure it's a good one.

It's All Talk

It's easy telling the world how wonderful your business is, but it's far more convincing to show them. Photographers don't tell people what fabulous pictures they take, they show them their portfolio. Anyone can claim to be the best at what they do, but it's far more credible when they prove it. Better yet, let others prove it for you...

- Have customers tell their positive stories through testimonials and reviews.
- Showcase your awards, qualifications and recommendations.
- Demonstrate your thought leadership and expertise through insightful, original blog posts.
- Create case studies that tell success stories.

It Fails to Reassure

As well as having needs and desires, potential customers have doubts and concerns. If your content fails to address them, they'll grow into issues that deter them from taking the next step.

To address these concerns, you need to know what they are. Maybe potential customers are worried about handing over credit-card details for a free trial, or they don't have the time to fill out long, detailed registration forms. If you understand their doubts, you can create responses to counteract them.

- Are people nervous about buying online from you because they can't see or feel the real product? Offer an easy, user-friendly returns policy.
- Are people visiting your website keen to secure the most competitive price? Offer a 'lowest price match'.
- Do your potential customers have trust issues? Include video testimonials from your customers.

Creating interest is just the first step. Most people need reassurance and mollycoddling to get them over the line.

Finally, become what your customers need you to be. It is easy to become swept up in ideologies of what you think your business should be, but if you're not tuned into what people need and want, how will you be able to connect? Put yourself in their shoes – what would convince you to react positively to your business offering?

By Gemma Hawdon, SEO copywriter, Melbourne

This article first appeared in Issue 15 of the [Inside Small Business](#) quarterly magazine, see ICB's [Products and Solutions](#) webpage for a discounted subscription to Inside Small Business.

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ASBEFO Inquiry into Payment Times

Early Finding Highlights Pitfalls of Late Payments

An inquiry investigating payment times and practices in Australia is in full swing with preliminary findings confirming that big businesses and some governments are taking longer than ever to pay small businesses.



Early results from the Inquiry – which is being conducted by the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBEFO) in partnership with state-based Small Business Commissioners (SBCs), the Council of Small Business Australia (COSBOA), the Australian Institute of Credit Management (AICM) and the Institute of Public Accountants (IPA) – has found almost 50 per cent of small businesses experience late payments on at least half of the bills owed to them.

The Inquiry has also found the practice of late payments is getting worse, with around 60 per cent of small businesses reporting an increase in the trend over the past 12 months. Almost 70 per cent report that the practice has reduced business profitability, with many business owners acknowledging it has a serious impact on their mental health given the added stress and anxiety late payments – and the associated cash-flow problems – can trigger.

Based on the Inquiry survey data, it's becoming quite clear that big businesses – particularly large multi-nationals – are exploiting the power imbalance that exists in their relationship with small business people who simply aren't in a position to argue for better payment terms – or to demand immediate payment – for fear of destroying their relationship with the larger company.

The Inquiry has also found the practice is not limited to one sector, with the impact of extended and late payments rippling through the entire economy.

Small businesses have until the end of February to have their say. Those who would like to contribute to the Inquiry can do so by completing a survey which can be found at: www.asbfeo.gov.au.

An Inquiry Issues Paper is also available on the website. Those wishing to provide feedback on the Issues Paper can do so by emailing: inquiries@asbfeo.gov.au or by contacting the SBC in their state.

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ATO Under Scrutiny - The Plan

IGT Work Program 2017

The Inspector-General of Taxation (IGT) work program sets out the areas of tax administration that will be reviewed with the aim of identifying improvements for the benefit of all Australians. As in prior years, the 2017 work program has been developed following extensive consultation with taxpayers, tax professionals and their representative bodies as well as government agencies such as the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), the Tax Practitioners Board (TPB) and the Treasury. The Minister for Revenue and Financial Services and some Parliamentary Committees were also invited to provide input.

In addition to the above consultation, the 2017 work program has also drawn on themes arising from the complaints handling service which the IGT has been providing since 1 May 2015. The primary purpose of this service is the provision of specialist assistance to taxpayers and independent investigation of their complaints about the ATO or the TPB. In addition, it provides real time insights into emerging tax administration issues affecting the community. Future work programs may increasingly rely on such insights.

The combination of public consultation and complaints handling data has led to a work program which reflects the issues of greatest community concern or significance in achieving a fairer, more efficient and transparent tax administration system. The IGT intends to commence at least three reviews in the 2017 calendar year.

Reviews to Commence in 2017

Goods and Services Tax Refunds

Since 2012, the ATO's discretion to withhold Goods and Services Tax (GST) refunds for verification has been governed by section 8AAZLGA of the [Taxation Administration Act 1953](#). The provision allows the ATO to retain a refund until it is no longer reasonable to require verification. Complaints data and submissions to the work program have indicated that the ATO's administration of this provision may, in some instances, result in inappropriate and unfair delays in GST refunds being issued. This review will examine the ATO's administrative approaches, the impact on taxpayers and the need for any administrative or policy improvements.

Pay As You Go Instalments System

The Pay As You Go Instalments (PAYGI) system requires taxpayers with business and/or investment income to make regular payments towards their expected income tax liability. Submissions and complaints received suggest that the system is generating confusion and misunderstanding for certain taxpayers who are required to make these payments. The interactions between the PAYGI and income tax systems as well as the related correspondence will be explored to identify potential opportunities for improvement.

Future of the Tax Profession

The IGT is conducting this review in response to a request from the Commissioner of Taxation (Commissioner).¹ The IGT has, in recent years, examined the state of the ATO's services and support for tax practitioners.² This review will be forward-looking and will examine the future role of tax professionals in the tax system particularly in light of increased use of digital technology and ATO service delivery initiatives. In doing so, the IGT will also examine concerns raised by tax practitioners with the IGT on issues affecting their industry. The IGT will consult extensively with the tax profession, the ATO and the TPB to identify opportunities to improve the tax system as a whole.



Additional Reviews

The IGT has also identified four additional reviews which may also commence in the 2017 calendar year depending on time and resourcing considerations as well as competing priorities which may emerge such as the need for the IGT to respond to risks identified through the complaints handling service, Ministerial directions or Parliamentary requests for the IGT to undertake certain investigations.

Influencing Willing Participation in the Tax and Superannuation Systems

The Commissioner has also requested that the IGT undertake a review to identify strategies and opportunities for the ATO to work with others to encourage willing participation in the tax and superannuation systems. The review would focus particularly on youth and school programs as well as strategies to engage with new arrivals to Australia. New entrants into the tax system are often amongst the most vulnerable and strategies to support and encourage their early participation and compliance will likely yield significant benefits for them and the community.

ATO Advice and Guidance

Stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the ATO's approach to providing advice and guidance. In particular, they have noted fewer public rulings being issued and the ATO's use of practical compliance guidelines and website materials both of which provide less certainty for taxpayers. The ATO's use of Taxpayer Alerts was also identified as another area of concern, especially when and how these will be issued and the uncertainty they create when there is no subsequent ATO guidance or action. In relation to private rulings, the concerns related to timeliness, the ATO's unwillingness to rule on certain issues and, in some instances, issuing 'letters of comfort', which do not provide the same level of certainty. The ATO has informed the IGT that it has more recently undertaken an internal review of its public advice and guidance processes. The IGT will monitor these issues and if concerns persist, a review in this area may be conducted.

Fraud or Evasion Opinions

Stakeholders have raised concerns with the ATO's use of fraud or evasion opinions based on which the ATO may examine and amend assessments outside of standard periods of review (typically 4 years). Significant compliance and evidentiary burdens may be imposed on taxpayers wishing to dispute such amended assessments because of the considerable time that may have elapsed since those assessments were initially made. Complaints and concerns raised with the IGT have claimed that the ATO's processes for forming fraud or evasion opinions are not sufficiently robust and may lead to unfair outcomes. The review would examine the ATO's administrative processes, evidence gathering and engagement with taxpayers. The IGT has been advised that the ATO is currently undertaking an internal review of its use of fraud or evasion opinions across all business lines. The IGT will consider any improvements resulting from such a review and determine whether to commence his own investigation.

Research and Development

Stakeholders have raised concerns about the ATO's approach to Research & Development (R&D) Tax Incentive claims. The major concerns relate to the interactions between the ATO and AusIndustry and, in particular, the eligibility of R&D activities being questioned during ATO compliance activities where the taxpayer believed that AusIndustry had, at least, tacitly approved such eligibility in the past. The IGT notes that there has been a recent review of the R&D Tax Incentive which was completed in 2016.³ Moreover, in considering these issues, the IGT would only be empowered to examine the relevant actions of the ATO and not that of AusIndustry. Accordingly, to the extent that concerns persist, the IGT may either consider the issue within the constraints of his jurisdiction or, alternatively, may engage with other agencies, such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman, to examine the issue holistically.

Notable Areas not Included on the 2017 Work Program

Submissions to the work program as well as complaints cases have also surfaced a number of other potential review topics. For the reasons set out below, the IGT will not conduct reviews into these areas as part of this work program:

- Debt collection and superannuation guarantee – Although these areas form a large portion of complaints made to the IGT and have been raised in submissions to the work program, the IGT has recently conducted broad-based reviews into them⁴ and there are other relevant reviews⁵ on foot. Accordingly, the IGT does not believe further broad reviews in these areas are presently warranted. However, the IGT will continue to monitor the relevant issues through its complaints handling service and, where appropriate, may undertake targeted reviews into discrete areas generating the highest levels of concern.
- Settlements and litigation – The IGT has undertaken a number of reviews over the years on these areas⁶ and continues to maintain a watching brief on issues which may emerge. A further review by the IGT at this point in time is unlikely to yield different insights or outcomes. The IGT also notes that the ANAO has listed Negotiated Settlements as a potential review.⁷
- Transfer pricing – The IGT undertook a wide-ranging review into the ATO's approach to transfer pricing in 2014.⁸ Moreover, the main concerns raised seem to relate to measures that are announced but not yet legislated (e.g., diverted profits tax (DPT)) or those that have recently been enacted (e.g., Multinational Anti-Avoidance Law (MAAL)). In both cases, it seems appropriate to allow the ATO some time to consult and implement its administrative approach before any IGT review is conducted.
- Compliance approach to large businesses – Concerns have been raised about the ATO's compliance approach to large business which have canvassed a range of issues including compliance costs resulting from various initiatives such as 'justified trust', reportable tax positions, key taxpayer engagements and annual compliance agreements as well as measures relating to combating Base Erosion and Profit Shifting. The IGT has previously examined the ATO's approach to large businesses⁹ and as the issues raised in this area relate largely to newly implemented or announced initiatives, the IGT believes that further time should be allowed to pass before their effectiveness is reviewed.
- Digital by default and electronic engagement with taxpayers – The IGT continues to receive concerns from taxpayers who experience difficulties in interacting digitally with the ATO and has sought to assist these taxpayers through the complaints handling service. The IGT also notes that the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue is inquiring into how taxpayers engage with the tax systems¹⁰ and the ANAO is currently finalising its report into the effectiveness of the myGov platform.¹¹ Furthermore, some of the concerns may be addressed in other IGT reviews such as the above-mentioned review into the future of the tax profession.

Inspector General of Taxation
31 January 2017

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This Month From the ICB

What's New this Month from ICB

New and updated resources for February 2017

- [February 2017 Network Meeting Webinar](#)
- [January 2016 Members Newsletter Podcast](#)

[Click here to view the latest news for the month.](#)



ICB Q & A Space - 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.

February 2017 eBrief Newsletter for Your Business



The February 2017 Bookkeeping eBrief is now available for you to download.

- [February 2017 Bookkeeping eBrief Newsletter - PDF](#)

[Back copies are available here.](#)

"The best bookkeepers using the best resources".

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Products and Solutions

Xero Roadshow Report - February 2017

Trent McInnes, CEO of Xero Australia, opened the day; 8,600 people are registered for the roadshow events across 24 locations. 30-40% at each location will be attending their first Xero event. ICB attended the Melbourne event on Tuesday 7th February at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Partner Highlights for 2016

The current mission is to rewire the global economy by connecting millions of business owners to banks, advisors and each other. Currently \$76b is owed to small businesses. It is a big challenge for small business to get paid on time. It is estimated that if this amount of money was freed up by being in the hands of the business owners who it is owed to, that more jobs would be created and the economy would benefit in general. Xero partners are in the position of being able to have 'advisory based conversations' which will assist business owners to make more money and therefore work on their business rather than in their business.

- 92% of Xero business subscribers are connected to an advisor.
- 40% are using an add-on app such as point of sale, timesheets or job management.
- There are now over 380,000 subscriptions in Australia.
- Over 862,000 subscriptions in over 180 countries internationally.
- Over 750,000 lodgements have been made through Xero Tax since July 2016.
- Redesigned the add-on app marketplace to make it easier for business owners to find what they are looking for.
- 100% of bank feeds are daily; connected to 68 banks currently with greater coverage, depth and detail available in the feed.
- Partner program is now in its third iteration with a new advisor directory, enriched education, a change in how partner points are allocated and champion badge distinctions for those who demonstrate sustained growth and Xero certification.
- All new Xero Headquarters released.
- Xero store for merchandise.
- 20,000 businesses visit the advisor directory every month and can now search by industry specialisation and location.
- Geosensing homepage.

- Profile pages - reminder to keep these up to date, succinctly written and relevant to your advisor practice. Get help from your account manager if you need it.
- Xero is embarking on a new campaign to encourage even more business owners to connect with an advisor.
- Chat bot Hey Xero is up and running, and actively connecting business owners with advisors.

Grow Your Practice program for advisors is now available on demand, so you may learn at your own pace. The program has evolved based on feedback from previous participants.

Product Highlights for 2016

- **New report centre and layout editor:** New reports allow for layout editing and greater flexibility for customisation. You can now add tracking categories, notes and formulas. Accounts can be grouped together for reporting purposes; there is also the ability to create 'header' accounts. Groups can be shown as a summary or with detailed accounts. The reports can be customised at a client level or a practice level. An advisor can create their own templates that may be used for any or all clients.
- **Uncoded statement line report:** A fast and easy way of communicating to clients to request information about bank statement lines.
- **Bpay:** Xero is partnering with DEFT to offer "pay now" option from Bpay that is fully integrated within the software.
- **Fixed Assets:** Although this has been talked about for some time, it is now here and active. You can create multiple asset pools if needed, enter opening balances, add assets to the register, choose the method of depreciation, add warranty information and also include a business / personal split if required. Depreciation is calculated at the end of each financial year. If an asset is disposed of, Xero will calculate depreciation up to the disposal day.
- **Xero Mobile:** Android will soon include quotes to invoicing function; IOS will include invoicing, ability to see multiple accounts for advisors. There is also the ability to include multiple addresses for contacts.
- **Clone organisation details:** an existing organisation's chart of accounts, bank rules, tax rates and tracking categories may be copied across to a new organisation to speed up the setup.
- **Ongoing government compliance:** Xero are continuing to work closely with government on Single Touch Payroll and Simpler BAS, and will be released ahead of ATO implementation date.
- **Other highlights:**
 - Ability to accept Apple Pay.
 - W1 and W2 fields can now be auto filled in the activity statement - update pay items in payroll settings to show on activity statement.
 - Assurance dashboard - if you are not already checking it, get into the habit of doing this regularly.
 - Xero Me mobile app for employees on Android or iOS - invite them to use My Payroll, then they can download the app.
 - E-sign in Xero Tax - quickly and easily send documents for authorisation and signing
 - Two factor authentication - this has been available for over a year yet still many advisors do not have this feature activated - if you are an advisor with access to multiple client files, you **must** turn this feature on for maximum security.

Tools for You

Xero is improving its features all the time, yet many people are still using Xero the same way they did when they first started using it some years ago. They encourage advisors to keep up-to-date with the changes so that you are using the technology to its optimum functioning. Check out Find & Recode, Assurance Dashboard, partner products to manage clients and workflow, (i.e., Workpapers, Xero Tax and Practice manager) and Xero HQ. These products are all part of the whole Xero ecosystem that offers total management solutions for practice management.



Xero HQ

Xero HQ can be used for both Xero and non Xero clients. This shows a client list, activity feed, explorer, reporting, staff and practice details.

Xero HQ can be customised to your own needs and preferences, for example, turn off activity statement notifications for those clients whose BAS you do not prepare. Use it to check reconciliations and allocations, payroll reminders and overdue tasks. Set your own bank alerts according to what is relevant for each client, by number of transactions or periodically.

The client list can be viewed by subscription type, company structure or groups.

If you have a subscription to Practice Manager, Workpapers or Xero Tax, you can access these from the Xero HQ page, as well as your My Xero advisor listing.

What's Next?

- Banking in Xero HQ Explorer - will be able to see which client uses which bank.
- Practice overview - will be able to see advisor points, plans, staff and so on.
- Staff in HQ - will be able to create groups, see certification, which staff have access to which organisations.
- Xero Tax - new user interface is being developed, which will be faster.
- Tax & Super Australia - the tax legislation guide will be integrated into Xero Tax, so you can look up information or instructions while completing a form or statement.

Summary

Overall the roadshow was an informative day. Although there was some repetition of material today that we have heard at other events, this is not a bad thing, as we know that many Xero users and advisors are not using it to its maximum potential. Sometimes we need exposure to a new concept or product several times before we take it up. Because there was about 40% of the audience on average that have never been to a Xero event before, they will not have heard the material before and need to hear about everything. Xero's own data shows that the take-up of the new features has not been as fast as they had assumed it would be. Make time to educate yourself about the features that will improve either your use of the software and/or your own practice management.

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Receipt Bank and ICB in Conversation

Here at Receipt Bank we're proud to work closely with The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers during such an exciting time in the profession. I recently caught up with Matthew Addison to share what's in store this year...



Matthew: So, Sophie let's start with Receipt Bank's tagline "Effortless Bookkeeping" what does this mean?

Sophie: Our aim is simple, we want to make life easier for our bookkeepers. We know there are many varied tasks during their day and by reducing the time spent on many of the manual processes like collecting invoices and receipts, data entry, coding and document storage we're helping to increase their productivity. Efficiency and productivity are words that come up a lot at Receipt Bank HQ. We believe a bookkeeper's time is valuable and the expertise they bring are best used providing services and advice that help their clients grow.

Matthew: Automating the data entry is a good place to start. Where is Receipt Bank taking us?

Sophie: We often hear our bookkeepers spend a lot of time chasing their clients for paperwork, particularly at the end of the month or at the end of the BAS period. (Plus they don't really enjoy this chasing!) So, we've developed a range of features to make this process easier. Technology is enabling a different approach. Now that more of the data extraction can be automated, the bookkeeping process can provide more real value.

Matthew: Your mobile phone app developments seem to be helping

Sophie: Every day we see how Smartphones have become far more than a communication tool. 41% of Smartphone owners use their mobile to keep on top of their financials whilst they're on the go. By equipping clients with our mobile app, bookkeepers are helping their clients to submit expenses in real-time. In fact, we see our clients who use the mobile app submit their expenses 8 days quicker than those who don't. This makes a big difference to our bookkeepers at month end!

We also know getting clients into the habit of using the app is important. So we'll now automatically send helpful push notifications for you. These messages throughout the month will prompt clients to submit their receipts. When questions crop up about these expenses our bookkeepers will also be able to comment and write notes which go straight to the client. So messaging between our bookkeepers and their clients becomes more effortless.

Matthew: This is a developing journey of a different way to think and a different way to capture information.. What advice would you give our bookkeepers?

Sophie: It's got to be super simple! Anything you can do to reduce this administrative burden and save your clients time is highly sought after - for you and for them. For example, Receipt Bank can now send your clients an SMS message inviting them to download the mobile app. (It also automatically logs them in, so no need for long emails with login details!) This is a great first experience for your clients and an easy way to onboard them to your new process.

Matthew: And last but not least, you've recently announced a new integration?

Sophie: Yes! We now integrate with MYOB AccountRight Live. This partnership has been highly anticipated and we're really excited to bring this solution to our bookkeepers. Can't wait to share more at the ICB Roadshows in March - see you there!

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From the ATO

AUSkey Scam Alert

Message from the ATO: Check your Access Manager Permissions

We have detected criminal activity where identity thieves have fraudulently obtained AUSKeys linked to businesses. They have used these to access the portals, lodge activity statements and change account details for refunds.

We were able to take preventative action quickly. These AUSKeys have been cancelled and we are working with the affected businesses to protect their online security and monitor activity on their accounts.

To help protect your practice from identity theft, we recommend you take the following steps:

- use Access Manager regularly to check people's level of access to the portals is appropriate
- cancel AUSKeys (in AUSkey Manager) for people who no longer work for you
- immediately disable or remove a person's account if you have any concerns about their activities
- ensure that each person who deals with us online on behalf of your practice has their own AUSkey
- keep passwords secure – they must not be shared
- report any unknown or suspicious AUSKeys by phoning 1300 287 539 between 8.00am and 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.



Related References

- [Using Access Manager](#)
- [Top Cyber Security Tips for Businesses](#)
- [Your Identity Security - Get Help](#)

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AUSkeys on Firefox

If you use Mozilla Firefox as your browser, you need make changes to your browser to continue to use your AUSKey. If you don't make these changes you won't be able to access the portals or other government services using your AUSKey.

From 7 March 2017, the latest version of Mozilla Firefox (version 52) will not support AUSKey. A browser extension is now available for Windows users to access services that require an AUSKey in preparation for the Firefox upgrade. Mac users will need to change browsers, for example Google Chrome, with the Chrome browser extension.



What You Need To Do

If you use Firefox as your preferred browser, you must make changes before 7 March 2017.

For Windows users:

- to continue to use your AUSKey with Firefox, download the browser extension at [Download software for AUSKey](#). Or login to the Tax or BAS agent portal from a Firefox browser and follow the prompts.
- to change browsers, see [AUSKey compatibility](#) for a list of browsers you can use with Windows.

For Mac users - you will need to change browsers. There is currently no Firefox browser extension fix for Mac users. See [AUSKey compatibility](#) for a list of browsers you can use with Mac.

If you need help or experience issues installing the Firefox extension contact the [AUSKey Technical Helpdesk](#).

Related References

- [AUSKey for Chrome and Firefox browsers](#)
- [Troubleshooting for tax practitioners](#)

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Keep Your Client List up to Date

Sometimes the ATO needs to discuss activity statement errors or issues with a client's authorised contacts. To ensure they know which clients you are representing, you should make sure your client list is up to date. You can use the [BAS Agent Portal](#) or [Tax Agent Portal](#) to manage your client lists.

Related Resources

- [ICB - How to use the BAS Agent Portal](#)
- [ATO - Obtaining Client Lists](#)
- [ATO - Managing your Client List](#)

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Upcoming Portal Maintenance

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.

Regular Planned System Maintenance

Saturday 4th March, 2017 9.00pm AEDST	Sunday 5th March, 2017 9.00am AEDST
Saturday 1st April, 2017 8.00pm AEDST	Sunday 2nd April, 2017 8.00am AEDST

For more details regarding BAS Agent portal maintenance, [click here](#).

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ICB Membership Statistics as at 31st January, 2017

6,117

3,601 members maintain Fellow, Member, Associate, Affiliate and Educator membership.

ICB also has 18 Accredited Training Provider Members and 2,498 Student Members.

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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 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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