



Individuals Stewardship Group – key messages – 26 March 2020

Deputy Commissioner Alison Lendon welcomed members to talk about support for the community in light of COVID-19 and the bushfires.

COVID19

The COVID-19 situation is changing constantly and the government is taking steps to help the community, particularly through its economic response.

The ATO is doing all it can to help the community and provide essential information about tax and superannuation changes that have now become law following the passage of the Government's Economic Support Package through the Parliament. These measures include:

- giving individuals early access to their superannuation
- providing cash flow assistance for employers
- increasing the instant asset write-off, making more businesses eligible
- backing business investment by accelerating depreciation deductions.

Information about all our support, including frequently asked questions (which are updated regularly) are available on our website - [COVID-19 link](#).

Our advice is that if people are impacted by COVID-19 and require immediate assistance to contact the ATO on our Emergency Support Infoline 1800 806 218.

Services Australia are redeploying staff to support people claiming government payments for those affected by COVID-19 announced by the Government on Sunday 23 March 2020. People can lodge an 'intent to claim' form online and their benefit will be backdated to that date. People who already receive benefits do not need to reapply. Further information, including eligibility and what documentation may be required, is available on Services Australia's website - [Affected by coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Link](#)

Additional Information:

- Employees working from home deductions fact sheet - [link](#)
- Government's stimulus package information and factsheets – visit Treasury's [Economic Response to the Coronavirus - Supporting Individuals and Households](#)
- News advice and updates across all Government departments – visit australia.gov.au
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission - <https://moneysmart.gov.au/>

Bushfire assistance

The ATO's message to people affected by the bushfires is that we understand their priority is for their families and community and we will help them sort their tax affairs when they are ready to do so.

People affected by the bushfires automatically received a deferral of any lodgments or payments until 28 May 2020 for those in identified impacted postcodes. People who need more time are encouraged to call us on 1800 806 218 or speak with their registered tax professional.



We are also working closely with the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, State based Small Business Commissioners, local councils and other community organisations to provide support to affected communities.

We want people affected by the bushfires, and also the droughts and floods to know that we are not forgetting about them given the current COVID-19 situation.

Additional information is on our website - [link](#)

Early release of super

The Government has announced a new measure about early release of superannuation for COVID-19. Individuals affected by COVID-19 can access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation in 2019-20 and up to a further \$10,000 in 2020-21. Individuals will not need to pay tax on amounts released and the money they withdraw will not affect Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs payments. More information is available on our website - [early release of super link](#)

People are being encouraged to wait until late April to apply while the ATO sets up the system to accept applications to support this measure. This is likely to be an application form through their myGov account and for those that cannot do so online, they will be able to call us. Information will be provided on our website as soon as application forms are available.

The measure does not affect existing superannuation measures to access super on compassionate grounds or access to superannuation due to severe financial hardship.

Payment arrangements

Payment plans are a way of helping people who are in financial distress or need support to manage short term cash flow issues. The ATO takes a holistic approach to understand the taxpayers' individual circumstances to tailor a plan that suits them and does not add stress.

In respect to the current COVID-19 situation we are encouraging people to contact us as early as possible to discuss their situation, as we have a range of payment options to support them through this period.

Payment plans can be established online or by calling 1800 806 218. People can also ask questions in another language between Monday to Friday between 8am to 5pm by calling the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 13 14 50 and ask them to call the ATO on 1800 806 218. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can phone our Indigenous Helpline on 13 10 30.