

Tax Time 2020

There goes another year, and that means it is time to start gathering the records for your income tax return preparation. To ensure speedy preparation of your income tax return, try to make sure that you have documents supporting the income you earned (employment & investments). It is **VITAL TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE RECEIPTS OR INVOICES FOR ALL CLAIMS YOU WISH TO MAKE AS A TAX DEDUCTION.**

Income Tax Rates

Listed below are the tax rates for the 2019/20 financial year. There have been no changes from 2018/19.

Tax rates for 2018/19 year Income range (\$)	Tax rate %
0 – 18,200	0
18,201 – 37,000	19
37,001 – 90,000	32.5
87,001 – 180,000	37
180,000+	45

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Medicare Levy thresholds

For the year ending June 2020, the Medicare levy surcharge (additional 1%) will apply to singles earning over \$90,000 and \$180,000 for those who are members of a family.

The surcharge increases to 1.25% if your earnings are over \$105,000 for singles, and \$210,000 for families.

The surcharge increases to 1.5% if your earnings are over \$140,000 for singles, and \$280,000 for families.

These thresholds apply to taxpayers who **do not** have private health insurance that includes hospital cover.

The Medicare Levy low-income thresholds for the 2019/20 year are \$22,398 for individuals and \$47,242 for families. These thresholds increase by \$4,339 per dependent child/student.

The low-income threshold for Senior Australian and Pension Offset (SAPTO) claimants is \$50,119.



Safe Tax

We are again offering our safe tax audit fee protection cover. This small tax-deductible cost covers **all** types of audits that taxpayers can be subjected to, and provides you with the **peace of mind** that it will not cost you any extra in accounting fees to have us manage your audit.

History shows that the cost to prepare the required audit documentation can range anywhere from \$600 to \$2,000, and this may be more depending on the complexity and type of audit involved.

It is to your advantage to take up Safe Tax as soon as possible. Cover begins from the date of payment through to 30th June 2020. Please contact Trish at our office if you wish to take up safe tax or ask your accountant when your income tax return is prepared.

In addition to this, there are also a number of measures which you can take to minimise the risks and costs in the event of an audit including:

- Keeping all work-related expense receipts in a secure place for five years.
- Remember to inform us if you own shares which have dividends that are reinvested under a dividend re-investment plan. These dividends are taxable as income.
- If you are claiming work related travel up to 5000 kilometres, keep a written record of trips which you have undertaken during the year to substantiate your claim.



Family Assistance claims

Families that chose to wait until the end of the financial year to claim their FTB entitlement or Child Care Benefit will **need to have your 2019 return lodged by the 30/6/2020** so that you can claim any Centrelink entitlements in time.

Private Health Insurance (PHI) rebate means tested

You need to advise your PHI organisation of your estimated income for 2020-21 year so that the correct rebate amount is paid by the Government over the next twelve months.

Once the ITR is lodged, if the ATO see that you have overestimated your income, you will receive a refund for the overpaid premium amount via your notice of assessment (NOA).

If you have underestimated your income (and therefore received more of a PHI rebate than you should have) you are liable to pay the excess to the Commonwealth via your tax refunds and it will show on your NOA of funds paid for underpaid premiums.

Carry forward concessional contributions allowed from 1 July 2019

From 2018/2019, individuals who contributed less than \$25,000 in concessional contributions can accumulate the unused amounts for use in future years. This means that the first year of the increased cap will start **for this financial year**.

Example: if you made concessional contributions of \$10,000 in the 2018/2019 year, \$15,000 of unused contributions will be brought forward to the 2019/2020 year, allowing you to contribute up to \$40,000.

***Note** – Individuals must have a super balance **less than \$500,000** at the end of the previous financial year to be eligible. Any unused amounts will expire after 5 years.

Superannuation Co-Contribution

The superannuation co-contribution has continued in the 2019-20 year with the maximum government co-contribution being \$0.50 for every \$1 personally contributed. The maximum co-contribution of \$500 is available to taxpayers who earn less than \$38,564 and contribute \$1,000. Above this income amount, the maximum co-contribution will be reduced by 3.333 cents for each dollar of income earned and to phase out completely when income reaches \$53,564.

Concessional superannuation (tax deductible) contributions cap

For the 2019/20 year, the concessional contributions cap is \$25,000 regardless of age.

Legislation has also passed which allows any individual under age 75 to claim a tax deduction for personal superannuation contributions made to their fund, up to a limit of \$25,000. If you are over 65 years of age you need to have worked 40 hours in any thirty-day period during the year.

If you have a salary sacrifice agreement with your employer make sure that you will not go over your appropriate cap in the 2019/20 year otherwise excess contributions will be included in your assessable income and taxed at your marginal tax rate.



Non-concessional (non- tax deductible) super contributions.

Taxpayers can make up to \$100,000 in non-concessional contribution to their superfund in 2019/20 year.

They can also access the 3 year \$300,000 bring forward cap up until 30 June 2020.

BEFORE YOU MAKE A CONTRIBUTION CONTACT US TO VERIFY YOUR ELIGIBILITY.

2019/2020 ATO crackdown items

Work-related expenses

Do you claim other work-related expenses such as telephone, stationery, internet and home office costs? BEWARE - the Australian Taxation Office focus area for the coming financial year will be other work-related expenses!

Legitimate other work-related expenses can include home office, union fees, mobile phone and internet, tools, meals and equipment, but they are only deductible if they meet the ATO's three golden rules.

- **Firstly**, you must have paid for it and not been reimbursed.
- **Secondly**, it must be directly related to earning your income and not a private expense, and,
- **Thirdly**, you must have records to prove it.

Do you have your records at the ready for a potential ATO audit? For example, if you have claimed mobile phone usage, do you have one itemised bill with the outgoing private and outgoing work-related calls clearly and distinctly marked and tallied? The ATO will ask for this level of detail if you are audited, so it is now more important than ever to keep all your receipts and log the business use for items such as your phone, internet & home office as proof of how it relates to your work.

Rental property expenses

The ATO will be doubling the number of full audits undertaken in respect of rental properties, following an error rate of almost 90% in audits recently conducted. The expenses that they will be targeting are:

- 1) Interest deductions being claimed incorrectly.** For example, where loan moneys were used partly for rental and private purposes (e.g., interest being claimed on moneys drawn down from a re-draw facility to buy a private car or to pay for a holiday)
- 2) The incorrect classification of capital works (or improvements) as deductible repairs.** For example, replacing a timber window frame with an aluminium frame or replacing an existing draped shower screen with a new fixed glass shower screen (these would need to be claimed over a number of years and are not immediately deductible).

Workplace clothing deductions

Over the past five years, claims for uniform and laundry deductions have increased by around 20%. This has made the ATO sit up and take notice. The ATO have stated that too many taxpayers' beliefs around how to claim clothing deductions are wrong and remind them that you can only claim deductions for occupation-specific clothing.

There are a clear set of guidelines for employees regarding claiming clothing:

- You must have spent the money yourself and can't have been reimbursed,
- The claim must be directly related to earning your income,
- You need a record to prove it.

There is no doubt that uniform and laundry claims are on the ATO's radar, so let's clear up what you can and can't claim.

What Precisely Can You Claim?

To claim a tax deduction for wearable items of clothing they need to be protective clothing or a registered uniform. Essentially, it must be something you would not wear outside of work.

You Must Have Evidence

The ATO has made it clear that if requested, you should be able to provide supporting evidence on:

- How your laundry expenses were calculated
- Why you need to wear specific clothing to work
- How you calculated your final claim figure

Dress Codes and Colour Requirements

Even if your employer asks you to wear clothes that meet a specific dress code, or colour requirement, you can't claim a deduction. This is because they are still classified as everyday clothing. It comes back to the point we mentioned earlier; you can only claim for items that you would not wear outside of work.

Individuals cannot make claims for everyday clothing even if it's a cultural expectation or specifically requested by their employer, that they appear a certain way at work. This means suits, business attire and formal wear are not tax deductible.

Also, if a business requires employees to wear that business' own products or brand, the employees still cannot claim a tax deduction.

If You Received an Allowance

Finally, if your employer or your own business provides an allowance for clothing or laundry, or has already paid for clothes as a business expense, those claims are also not deductible. If you received an allowance for part of the clothing or cleaning from an employer, "you need to show the amount of the allowance on your tax return", the ATO advises.

If you're unsure about the tax deductibility of your work-related clothing, we invite you to contact us to discuss the rules and regulations.



Home office expenses

Where part of your home is used for income earning activities, you may be eligible to claim home office expenses. Individuals who have a home office can claim running expenses for that office.

To claim this, there is a standard rate of **52 cents per hour** of usage. This rate is designed to cover the basic home office operating expenses of electricity, gas and depreciation of office furniture.

To make a claim you need to keep a record average hours per week spent working from home for three months of the year.



Working from home during COVID-19

If you were required by your employer to work from home during the COVID-19 shutdown, the ATO has introduced a **temporary shortcut method** allowing employees to calculate working from home expenses (with minimal record keeping requirements) at a higher rate than the standard 52 cents per hour rate.

Provided you have genuinely been required to work from home and have incurred additional running expenses as a result, you can claim a deduction of **80 cents per hour when working from home between 1 March to 30 June 2020**.

The temporary shortcut method includes additional costs such as internet, phone and computer consumables. If you generally make a claim for phone and internet costs in your tax return, you will not be able to claim these if you choose to use the 80 cents per hour rate.

We will work out the highest deduction method for you when we complete your tax return.

HELP (HECS) repayment rates

The following repayment income and rates for the Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) apply for the 2019/20 income year:

Taxpayer's repayment income	Applicable repayment %
\$45,881 - \$52,973	1%
\$52,974 - \$56,151	2%
\$56,152 - \$59,521	2.5%
\$59,522 - \$63,092	3%
\$63,093 - \$66,877	3.5%
\$66,878 - \$70,890	4%
\$70,891 - \$75,144	4.5%
\$75,145 - \$79,652	5%
\$79,653 - \$84,432	5.5%
\$84,433 - \$89,498	6%
\$89,499 - \$94,868	6.5%
\$94,869 - \$100,560	7%
\$100,561 - \$106,593	7.5%
\$106,594 - \$112,989	8%
\$112,990 - \$119,769	8.5%
\$119,770 - \$126,955	9%
\$126,956 - \$134,572	9.5%
Above \$134,573	10%

There is no requirement to repay any of your HELP debt until your income exceeds \$45,881 for the 2019/20 year.

The ATO are no longer issuing paper HELP debt statements, if you wish to receive such statements you need to contact the ATO.

WHERE TO FIND US

170 Johnson Street Maffra Victoria 3860

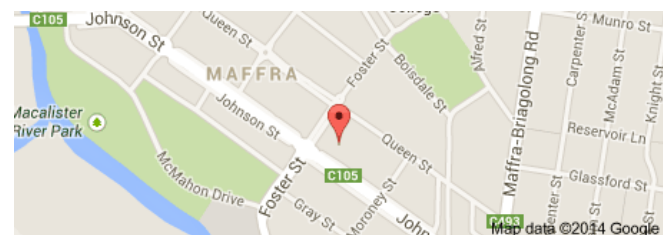
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2020 INCOME TAX RETURN CHECKLIST

Before coming to your interview this year please take the time to look over the list below of information which you may need to bring to your appointment.

Tick if applicable and bring to appointment:

Income:

- PAYG Payment Summaries (group certificates) These should be reported to the ATO by your employer
- Centrelink year end income summary statement – Centrelink no longer sends these in the mail & these details are should be reported to ATO by Centrelink
- Interest received
- Dividends from shares / investments held (*including any dividends which have been reinvested*)
- Trust and investment distributions (*please ensure you have the “Annual Taxation Statement” provided by the fund – some of these will not be provided until Aug/Sept*)
- Rental income received
- Lump sum and termination payments (*provide all documents including an ETP payment summary from the employer or fund*)
- Foreign source income and details of any tax credits (*employment and pension*)

Expenses:

- Motor vehicle travel (*details of the kilometres travelled for the cents per kilometre method, or details of all motor vehicle expenses for the log book method*)
- Other travel costs (*parking fees, Citylink costs etc.*)
- Clothing / uniform purchases, cleaning and sun protection costs
- Donations of \$2 and over
- Income protection insurance letter from insurer setting out premiums paid for the year
- Self-education expenses (*this may include costs such as: course fees, union fees, printing and stationery, parking, transport fees, journals and publications, books, internet, repairs to equipment and motor vehicle travel*)
- Any other work-related expenses (*this may include costs such as: union fees, telephone / mobile phone, tools and equipment, home office, internet, printing and stationery, journals and publications, conferences and seminars, subscriptions, professional memberships and practising certificates*)
- Rental property expenses (*this may include costs such as: advertising, body corporate fees, cleaning, council rates, gardening, insurance, interest on loans, legal fees, pest control, agent fees and commissions, repairs and maintenance, stationery and postage, water charges and bank fees*)

Other:

- Private health insurance statement
- Spouse details (*if applicable – name, date of birth and taxable income for the year*)
- Capital gains details for real estate, shares, managed funds and other investment purchases or sales (*purchase cost and date as well as sale price and date for disposals*)
- Personal superannuation contributions letter for your spouse or yourself (*if you are claiming as a tax deduction*)
- Medicare exemption certificate