



Message to tax professionals

Help is available

As we head into a busy time of year, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of many to get lodgments in for their clients over the past few weeks. We know that many tax practitioners have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and natural disaster events over the past 18 months, and as a result may continue to struggle to keep on top of their clients' lodgment obligations. I know that the impact of COVID-19 has been felt most keenly in Victoria with the multiple lockdowns, and this continues even as the economy recovers. I also acknowledge the impact that may occur with the lockdowns elsewhere, for example, just announced restrictions in NSW. That is why we stand ready to help and we are committed to finding a solution that works for you. I would also like to reinforce that help is always available to you, at any time

If you are finding that managing your clients' lodgment obligations is difficult, we have a range of practical support options to assist you. Once you contact us, we will individually tailor the support available to meet your specific needs.

If your whole practice has been affected by issues such as ill-health, the loss of a key staff member, COVID-19, or you are generally overwhelmed, we can work with you on a supported lodgment program. The **supported lodgment program** is our premium program designed to help agents and practices of all sizes when you need additional time to lodge a large proportion of your clients' obligations and are unable to lodge a normal deferral request.

Once you contact our supported lodgment team, we will co-design a tailored lodgment plan for you that takes into consideration the challenges you may be experiencing. For example, you may only need a 3-week extension for a number of your clients, or you might require a staggered extension for your clients' lodgment obligations over the next few months. Please do reach out, and reach out early, so we can help you get your lodgment program back on track. There are also a range of options to help your clients to get back on track where they may be falling behind on their debt obligations.

How to access the supported lodgment program

You can request assistance of the supported lodgment program through Online services for agents via Practice mail.

To do this:

1. Select 'Debt and lodgment' from the Topic dropdown list,
2. Select 'Supported lodgment program' from the Subject dropdown list,
3. Select 'I am enquiring on behalf of practice' from the Enquiry type dropdown list
4. Type the request in the Message free text field
5. Complete the Contact details, tick the declaration box and click on the Send button

For more information about our supported lodgment program, visit ato.gov.au/lodgmentprogramhelp. You can also view our other support services available at ato.gov.au/TPSupport

While I recognise these challenges, it is important that you and your clients continue to lodge activity statements and tax returns where possible, and meet as many of the upcoming obligations as you can. This gives both you and your clients certainty of their tax affairs. We can help ease the pressure by working with you to tailor a solution that works for you.

Thank you for supporting your clients and for your contribution to the integrity and efficient operation of the tax and super systems. Together we can continue to provide an excellent service to the Australian community.

Kind regards,

Hoa Wood

Deputy Commissioner

Individuals and Intermediaries

Australian Taxation Office