

Tax Practitioner Stewardship Group – Tax Time 2021

Key messages 31 August 2021

The weekly Tax Practitioner Stewardship Group Tax time meeting was held on 31 August 2021.

Key messages from the discussion are listed below to assist members to communicate key messages to colleagues, clients and association members.

Attendance

Proxies and additional guests for the meeting are noted below:

- Bill Leung – CPA Australia
- Sarah Vawser – ATO

Service delivery

The ATO advised that we have are half-way through the Tax time 2021 period and continues to track well. To date:

- 2.3 million calls have been received.
- The Average Wait Time (AWT) for calls on the general queue is less than 5 minutes.
- 5 million refunds have issued with a total value of \$13 billion.

The ATO advised that the agent deferral request phone service is now operational. The phone service allows registered agents to apply for a lodgment deferral for up to five clients. Further information will be in the *Tax professionals newsletter* on 1 September 2021.

Members were requested to provide feedback on their experience of the new phone service to the TPSG [mailbox](#). The information will assist in confirming the service is effective and identify opportunities for improvement.

ATO systems

Performance across all ATO channels continues to be stable. No issues or exceptions to report.

A member reported that one of their team members had received a prompt through myGovID to strengthen their credentials, however other team members had not received the prompt.

The ATO confirmed that it had commenced concurrent BETA testing of both applying for a TFN online and strengthening of the myGovID identity functionality.

Users who already have a myGovID will be able to strengthen their credential through adding the verification of photo identification against held information by government departments e.g. passport photo.

Users who do not yet have a TFN they will need to establish a myGovID to a strong level to gain access to the online TFN service and receive a TFN online

The process is currently restricted to online TFN applications for Australian citizens with a valid Australian passport in this testing phase.

Access the link for further information about the [online TFN application BETA](#).

The ATO advised that the alert/requests will be received by those people who have automated updates selected for the myGovID application, whilst those who manually update will not yet receive the message. In approximately one week the ATO will ensure all users are required to update their myGovID application, allowing users to see the new functionality.

Discussion regarding the difference between myGov and myGovID was held, resulting in the ATO committing to providing the information and links post meeting, see below.

There is a multi-faceted, overarching communication approach to mitigate confusion between myGov and myGovID.

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Over the last two years, myGovID communication campaigns have been implemented to assist in reducing confusion between myGov and myGovID. Most recently, a paid advertising campaign was delivered (7 June 2021 - 30 June 2021) to increase awareness that users can now use the myGovID app to log into myGov.

- The [myGovID home page](#) predominately displays the difference between the services.
- A [specific myGovID webpage](#) has been created which explains the differences, how to connect myGovID to myGov, and includes a promotional video.

The differences between myGov and myGovID are included at appropriate touchpoints as well.

Communications

Communication focused on support for clients and practices continues, including the following topics scheduled for this week's *Tax professionals newsletter*.

- The introduction of a new phone service which agents can use to request lodgment deferrals for up to five clients.
- A reminder about the need to lodge prior year returns by 31 October to receive a lodgment program due date for these clients.

Future activities also include:

- a series of videos focused on the loss carry back tax offset will be released shortly.

As well as answering any lingering questions from tax professionals about this measure, the videos have been designed to be easily shared with clients to help explain aspects of eligibility, calculating and reporting the offset.

- a three-part video series on temporary full expensing will be released soon. The videos explain the eligibility requirements and how to claim the tax incentive for your clients.

Small business

No update or issues to note.

Debt and lodgment

There are no changes the previously reported position with regard to firmer action campaigns, we continue to monitor and adjust accordingly for lock down impacted areas.

The ATO noted there has been an increase in requests for lodgment deferral and payment plans and are ensuring we have adequate resourcing to respond and provide support.

ATO outbound correspondence

ATO Assistant Commissioner of Outbound Capability, Sarah Vawser, provide an overview of the intent, known constraints and work being progressed to improve the experience and effectiveness of outbound communications such as lodgment reminders.

Members were encouraged to send examples of outbound communication irritants, issues or suggestions to the TPSG [mailbox](#) so that they can be considered. The ATO affirmed the commitment to making changes to improve the experience where it is in a position to do so.

Sarah confirmed that PAYGI reminder letters would be updated to include the full name of the client or business. As this requires systems change, this is likely to be implemented in October

Once the information has been received and analysed a further discussion will be arranged with members.

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NSW government stimulus update

A confidential discussion and update on NSW government stimulus processing and guidance material was held with Service NSW. Some useful links were referenced and are provided below:

- [Arrange a phone call](#) from a concierge.
- Find daily updates on [grant processing times](#) (published before 9am AEST each day for the previous day).

Member discussion

- A member raised an issue regarding the requirement to be registered for GST in order to receive some stimulus grants and queried whether the ATO had a process to expedite the registration for impacted clients.

The ATO can now advise that there were no delays in processing GST registration requests and advised members to send any issues or example where this is not the experience to the TPSG [mailbox](#).

- A member advised there was concern that some clients may be impacted in the future by stimulus payments they believed to be 'tax-free'.

The ATO advised that the list of grants and payments declared Non-Assessable Non-Exempt (NANE) are added to the list and published to the [website](#) shortly after the legislative instruments declaring them NANE have passed.

The ATO further advised that communications addressing this issue would be drafted and disseminated in due course, in recognition of the previous conversation where a request for the ATO to consider reducing its communications in order to give practitioners space to focus on assisting their clients.

- A member provided a suggestion to improve specific areas of the current temporary full expensing guidance, particularly as it relates to over-franking and the impact of making these stimulus payments NANE.

The ATO noted the suggestion and look to ensure its guidance considered the issue where possible.

- A member noted it would be useful if the ATO provided some of the lodgment statistics or trends that the ATO are experiencing in relation to BAS, as it would provide insight into how the tax professional community are performing.

The ATO noted the suggestion and committed to looking at how we might be able to do this.

Useful resources and links

- [COVID-19 landing page](#)
- [Occupation and industry guides](#)
- [Tax time 2021 toolkit](#)
- [Records you need to keep](#) guide.

Next meeting date

The next Tax Practitioner Stewardship Group Tax time 2021 meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 September 2021.