

MORE TAX RETURN OPTIONS FOR AUSTRALIANS

With tax time here, the Assistant Treasurer, Senator Nick Sherry, is encouraging Australians to take advantage of the extensive range of options to make filing their tax returns easier and more convenient.

"There are more ways than ever to file your tax return and they're aimed at making the process as easy as possible."

"Millions of Australians are already using the method that best suits their needs and lifestyle."

"Online lodgement is a lot more popular, with more than 2.2 million people using the *e-tax* service last financial year," said the Assistant Treasurer.

E-tax can be accessed for free from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website www.ato.gov.au

Making it easier for taxpayers and their agents to complete their tax returns, *e-tax* has a pre-filling service which downloads your information into *e-tax* and completes or partially completes the relevant items. These include being able to download:

- Government benefits payments
- Payment summaries
- Bank interest payments
- Dividend income details from share registries and most listed public corporations
- Medicare information
- Private health insurance details

Another program, the Tax Volunteers Program is aimed at helping low income earners get over the line in meeting their obligations.

"Many tax volunteers are retired tax agents and accountants and the work they do to help, especially vulnerable people, is commendable."

"This program is in its 21st year and demand is expected to be strong for this service in the current global economic environment," said the Assistant Treasurer.

The ATO has also enlisted the help of Centrelink to promote tax support products in their shopfronts.

"Centrelink customers are able to pick up an *e-tax* CD or access the ATO website from some Centrelink shopfronts," said the Assistant Treasurer.

There are also improvements to communications, including expanding the use of text messaging.

"You can even subscribe to an alert service when information relevant to your return becomes available on the net for your use," said the Assistant Treasurer.

Further information about all these options is available at www.ato.gov.au or by phoning the Tax Office on 13 28 61 between 8am and 6pm weekdays.

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9 July 2009