

# Tax time



This month, our writer *Karen Bleakley* talks about getting to grips with tax returns...

**I**n Australia, most people need to complete a tax return – it doesn't matter if you are employed or self-employed. It can feel daunting if you have never done one before.

The tax year in Australia runs from 1 July – 30 June. If you are lodging the return yourself, you need to do it by 31 October. If you use a tax agent to lodge your return, you can usually submit it later but you need to speak to your agent first.

Lots of people here do their own tax returns online, just like in the UK. In the UK, I had an accountant as I was self-employed, so when we arrived here I found someone to do our tax returns because I prefer to hand it over to someone else. There are lots of adverts everywhere at tax time so it's easy to find



Karen keeps track of her finances online

covers his income and expenses for his permanent job.

As a sole trader working from home, I can claim a proportion of my internet, landline and mobile phone for my

cover shifts and he needs to reply to work messages at home, he can also claim a small proportion of his mobile phone and our internet account towards his expenses as well.

**“ Through the year, regardless of your job, you need to keep all of your work-related receipts... ”**

someone to submit it on your behalf but it's always better if you can get recommendations from someone.

Through the year, regardless of your job, you need to keep all of your work-related receipts. Whether you type them onto a spreadsheet at the end of every month, or you keep them in a folder and collate it all when you are ready to do your return, it doesn't matter so long as you don't lose any of it. There are also apps where you can take photos of receipts and it stores them digitally which some people find easier.

I have a computer spreadsheet that covers all of my business income and expenditure, and one for my husband that

business use. I can include expenses like computers, laptops, printers, stationery, cameras, office furniture, software, subscriptions, magazines for research, hotels that relate to business trips – anything that is related to running my business.

My husband can claim for any tools he buys for work and any safety clothes he needs. He can also claim a fee for washing his uniform, and for sunscreen and sunglasses each year as he often works outside. Some jobs allow you to claim for mileage too if the tools or equipment you need to take to work exceed a certain size and weight that makes public transport impossible. As he is often called in to

A good tax agent will be able to advise you so you don't miss anything out.

Many people receive tax rebates here. How much you receive (or whether you receive anything) depends on how many work related expenses you rack up through the year.

Doing an annual tax return when you have a permanent job can feel a bit frustrating. However, if you get a lump sum of cash back straight after submitting, you might feel that it is worth the effort in the end! 🍷

■ **Karen Bleakley helps families take the stress out of moving to Australia at [www.SmartStepstoAustralia.com](http://www.SmartStepstoAustralia.com).**

Image: Karen Bleakley