

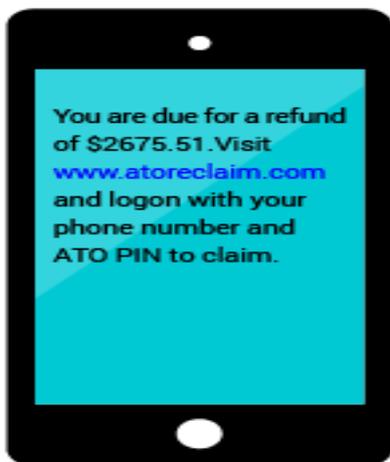
Your Tax Matters Newsletter

July 2019

Tax Department Scam Alert

May 2019 SMS scam - tax refund notification

Scammers are texting people, asking them to click on a link and provide personal identifying information to receive a tax refund. The image below is one example format this scam can take. If you click on the link it will take you to a fake 'Tax Refund' form in order to steal your personal information.



The ATO does not have an online 'Tax Refund' form and they will never send an email or SMS asking you to access online services via a hyperlink.

April 2019 phone scam – imitating ATO phone numbers

The Australian tax office is getting an increased number of reports of scammers contacting members of the public pretending to be from the ATO and claiming that there are outstanding tax debts and threatening people with arrest if the debt is not paid immediately.

Scammers are using technology to make it look like the calls originate from a legitimate ATO phone number. This number may appear on caller ID, be left on voice mail messages for call backs, or directed by *69 for call back functionality. Scammers do this to make the calls seem more valid when they call people a second time. Most frequently the numbers appearing are 6216, 1111 and 1800 467 033, but numbers for individual ATO staff members have been used as well.

It is very important that you never call a scammer back on the number they have provided.

While these scam calls may appear to be from the ATO with a spoofed caller ID, it is important to remember that a legitimate caller from the ATO will never:

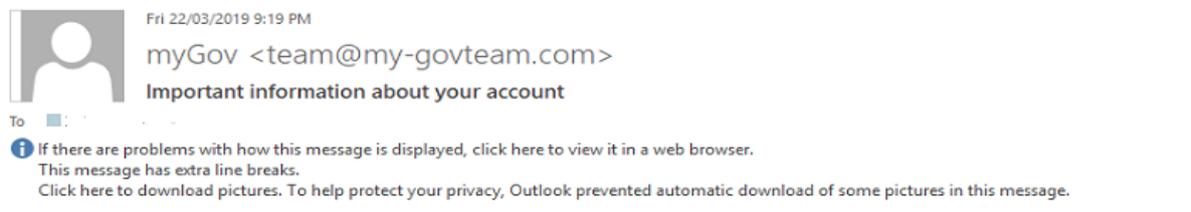
- threaten you with arrest

- demand immediate payment, particularly through unusual means such as bitcoin, pre-paid credit cards or gift cards
- refuse to allow you to speak with a trusted advisor or your regular tax agent
- or present a phone number on caller ID.

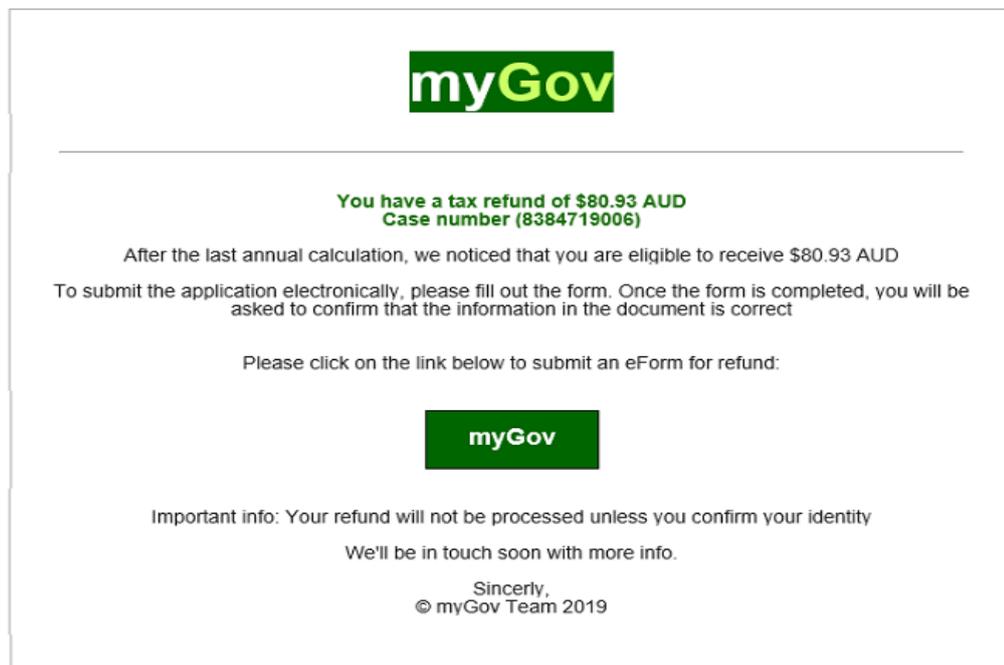
If you are in doubt about contact from someone claiming to be from the ATO, you can phone us on 1800 008 540, 8.00am–6.00pm Monday to Friday to check.

March 2019 Email scam – myGov tax refund notification

Scammers are emailing people from a fake myGov email address, asking them to fill out an application to receive a tax refund. The image below is one example format this scam can take. Do not click anywhere in the email as it contains a malicious link and will direct you to a fake ‘Tax Refund’ form in order to steal your personal information.



[Can't See This Message? View in a browser](#)



[If you feel you received it by mistake or wish to unsubscribe, click here](#)

REMEMBER: If you are in any doubt about an ATO call hang up and phone ATO on 1800 008 540 to check if the call was legitimate or report a scam.

Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)

The HELP Program assists eligible students with their student contribution or tuition fees from:

- university and other higher education providers
- approved vocational education and training (VET) providers.

There are different types of HELP loans available, depending on the student's circumstances. If you have obtained one of these loans, you will have a HELP debt.

You will be required to start making compulsory repayments against your study or training support loan when your repayment income exceeds the minimum repayment threshold. The repayment thresholds are adjusted each year to reflect any changes in average weekly earnings.

Compulsory repayments are made through your tax return. You can also make voluntary repayments at any time to reduce your loan balance.

From 1 July 2019, the new minimum repayment threshold will be \$45,881 at a 1% repayment rate, with a further 17 thresholds and repayment rates. This graduates up to a top threshold of \$134,573 where 10% of income will be repayable for all study and training support loans. This may impact on your 2019–20 tax return and subsequent years.

Your repayment income will be calculated using the following amounts from your tax return and payment summaries:

- taxable income
- reportable fringe benefits
- total net investment loss (which includes net rental losses)
- reportable super contributions
- any exempt foreign employment income amounts

Example of Repayment income:

Joe has a taxable income of \$50,000 but in his tax return he also has:

- An investment loss of \$1,250
- Reportable fringe benefits of \$4,560
- Reportable super contributions of \$15,000

Jo's repayment income is: 70,810

To check if you are liability for a HELP repayment go to the 'Study and training support loans repayment calculator' below.

<https://www.ato.gov.au/Calculators-and-tools/Host/?anchor=STLoanRepay#STLoanRepay/questions>

Tax Practitioners Board and Australian Tax Office act on complaints of theft of tax refunds

A joint investigation launched by the TPB and the ATO has resulted in the termination of two registered tax agents, QTR Accountants Pty Ltd and Nichol Group Pty Ltd.

After receiving complaints that the registered tax agents, who offered their services online, had not passed on 2017-18 tax refunds to their clients, the TPB initiated an urgent investigation into the conduct of the tax practitioners.

During the investigation the TPB received more than 200 additional consumer complaints from a range of sources, supporting the decision to terminate the agents' registration.

Mr Taylor said this case is indicative of the investigative work the TPB is currently undertaking to ensure the profession is appropriately regulated.

Mr Taylor said 'We have been working to protect clients of tax services by investigating tax practitioners who are reckless with their client's tax affairs and we will continue to investigate and address all categories of serious misconduct.' Mr Taylor said the matter is being pursued by the Western Australia Police Force.

Anyone who has been affected by the possible theft of tax refunds from an online tax service provider is encouraged to:

- submit a complaint to the Tax Practitioners Board
- contact the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (www.acorn.gov.au).

Your private health insurance statement

Your private health insurance statement gives you information about your private health insurance premiums and private hospital cover.

The law has recently changed in regards to the way health insurers give you information about your private health insurance premiums. Previously, your health insurer was required to send a private health insurance statement to each adult covered by the policy by 15 July each year. It is now optional for them to send you this information. The health insurer may send the statement by mail, email, or as a link to an online version.

If you lodge your tax return online using myTax or lodge using a registered tax agent, your health insurance details should be pre-filled. If your health insurance details are not pre-filled or you lodge a paper tax return, you will need to contact your health insurer in order to get a private health insurance statement so that you can complete your income tax return.

It is important to correctly report private health insurance information as the Australian Tax Office uses it to calculate:

- private health insurance rebates taxpayers are entitled to
- the Medicare levy surcharge, if applicable.