

Advanced Income Tax Law

Chapter 21

Electronic Lodgments

Practitioner Lodgment Service

Since 1 July 2016, the practitioner lodgment service (PLS) has been the online lodgment channel. It allows tax professionals to electronically:

- lodge a wide range of forms, including tax returns, activity statements and schedules.
- access a range of services, such as client updates and direct debits.
- download various reports and lists.

About the PLS

PLS uses Standard Business Reporting (SBR) for lodgment and interaction with the ATO.

A tax practitioners' software must, therefore, be **SBR-enabled** before they can use the service.

About the PLS

The PLS can be used to lodge various (but not all) return forms, activity statements and schedules. Most prior-year tax returns and amendments (1998 to 2018 inclusive) can be lodged using PLS.

This includes individual, company, partnership, superannuation fund and trust returns.

For SMSF returns, the PLS can be used to lodge returns from 2008 to 2020.

SBR-enabled Software

SBR is built into many business and accounting software packages, and incorporates standard terms used in government legislation and reporting, making them 'SBR-enabled'.

SBR-enabled software lets users prepare and lodge reports to government directly from tax and business management software.

As SBR-enabled software is designed to assist businesses, an active (ABN) is required.

SBR-enabled Software

Using SBR-enabled software, a tax practitioner can prepare and lodge their clients' most common government forms directly from financial, accounting or payroll software.

The tax practitioner can:

- prepare and lodge selected electronic forms securely and in real time.
- receive fast confirmation that the ATO have received a lodgment.
- report through a single online channel.

SBR-enabled Software

The access requirements for SBR-enabled software are different depending on whether the tax practitioner uses desktop or hosted (cloud-based) software.

Desktop software

Desktop software users must:

- have an AUSKey.
- ensure the AUSKey holder is authorised to the relevant registered agent number(s) in Access Manager (including setting the relevant 'Client' permissions).

SBR-enabled Software

Hosted (cloud-based) software

For practices using hosted (cloud-based) software, the practice must notify the ATO of the hosted SBR software service, before attempting to lodge.

Electronic Lodgment

A taxpayer must provide the tax agent with a written declaration before the agent transmits the return.

This declaration serves two purposes:

- it authorises the tax agent to lodge the taxpayer's return electronically, and
- records the taxpayer's agreement with the information intended for transmission to the ATO.

Electronic Lodgment

Lodgment limitations

Although all income tax return types can now be lodged electronically, there are some returns that may not necessarily be processed within 14 days.

These are:

- deceased estates.
- outstanding tax or child support debt cases.
- cases where previous year returns are outstanding or unissued.

Electronic Lodgment

Lodgment limitations

- complex schedule leases.
- excepted net income/capital gains cases.
- exempt foreign salary and wages income cases,

Returns with invalid or missing tax file numbers cannot be lodged electronically.

Electronic Lodgment

Tax agent responsibilities

When a tax agent is lodging an income tax return electronically on behalf of a client they must:

- get the completed declaration from the client authorising them to lodge electronically, before transmitting the tax return (Part A of the declaration).
- provide their agent's certificate electronically to the ATO where they are using their own facilities to transmit the return or amendment application.
- give the client a copy, or the original, of the Notice of Assessment where the client's address for service of notice is the tax agent's address.