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Bulletin helps you max your tax – dummies guide on what you can claim on your tax return

Emily MacDonald, Gold Coast Bulletin
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WORKING the tax system can seem like a good idea when you get a supersized refund, but unless you want to end up with a hefty fine, or even jail time, honesty and keeping meticulous records is the only way to go.

Principal of Philip Strout Business and Tax Advice, the Grange's Philip Strout, said this year the ATO wasn't targeting certain industries, but rather more general work-related deductions when it came to choosing who to audit.

He said this meant almost anyone could receive an audit request from the ATO.

The Bulletin has done the hard yards and put together a dummies guide to tax to help you get the most out of your tax return.

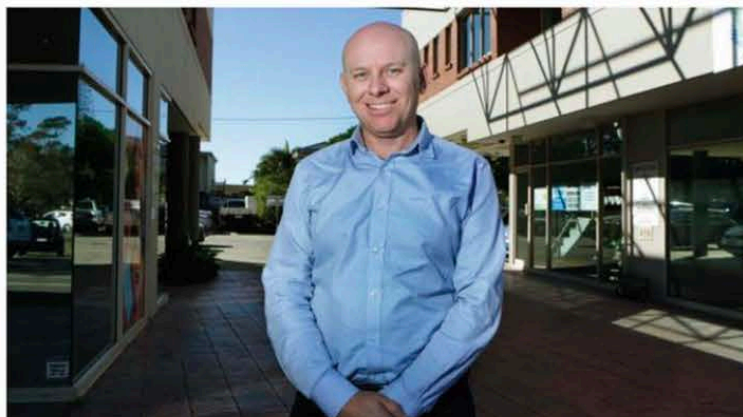
Grab today's Gold Coast Bulletin for today's full Max Your Tax guide.

TRADIES

- Replacing, insuring and repairing tools. Items costing more than \$300 will have to be depreciated
- Sunscreen, hats, sunglasses and other items to protect against skin cancer

PROFESSIONALS

- Technical books, trade books or journals
- Car travel – provided you don't double dip if your company pays you an allowance. You must also keep records, such as a logbook. Travelling to and from work doesn't count
- Seminar expenses
- Union and professional organisation fees
- Laptops, smart phones and tablets if you use them for work. If they cost more than \$300 each, claim depreciation. Keep a logbook of personal vs. work use
- Home office expenses, if you set aside a certain area of your house specifically for this use. Keep a diary stating the hours the office is used. Claim electricity and depreciation of equipment



Small business owner Paul Wilson from We Find Houses in Tugun says he needs to make sure spending dollars makes sense at tax time. Picture: Tim Marsden.

BLUE COLLAR

- Uniforms, provided they have company branding. Being required to wear a particular colour pants isn't enough. Provided that the clothing is deductible, you can also claim laundry and repair costs

- Union fees

HOME BASED WORKERS

- Your home must be clearly identified as a place of business. For example, through signage, a separate entrance etc. Deductions can be claimed on rent or mortgage, rates, maintenance, decorating and bills such as telephone, pest control etc

PERFORMING ARTISTS

- The cost of make up, teeth whitening, a hairstyle as well as tinted contact lens or cosmetic glasses required for a paid role. Auditions don't count

- Union and professional organisation fees



Performing artists like Australian Academy of Performing Arts coach Sonia Rakovska can claim the cost of make up, teeth whitening and glasses. Picture: Brendan Radke.

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

- Personal grooming products because looking immaculate is part of the job

- Moisturisers and hair conditioners to combat air pressure

- Union fees

STUDENTS

- Stationery, textbooks and trade, professional, or academic journals

- Student union fees, student services and amenities fees

- Course fees, although not including repayments to HECS or HELP

- Computer and technical equipment up to \$300 and depreciation for items over that amount

- Internet usage, although not connection fees

TRUCKIES

- CB radios

- Fridges

- Sleeping Bags

- Tools – to repair truck or used for work

- Premium paid on top of standard drivers' licence

- Overalls (including laundry and maintenance)

- Motor vehicle travel if carrying bulky tools

- Detergent and polish for truck

- Maps/street directory

- Meals and accommodations for overnight trips

- Working dogs – for carrying livestock

- Sunglasses

- Union fees

- Log books

HOSPITALITY

- Chef's checked pants, hats etc

- Knives/sharpening tools plus equipment such as whisks, equipment bag etc

- Cook books and food magazines

- Computers to prepare menus

- Union fees

- Laundry and maintenance of uniforms

- Motor vehicle travel to pick up supplies

NURSES

- Registration fees
- Self education – conferences, professional development courses
- Uniforms, including laundry and maintenance. Also, fob watches, non-slip nurse shoes
- Union and professional organisation membership
- Reference books, professional library, journals, stationery
- Mobile/pager for on call but not agency nurses unless they are employed by the agency itself
- Travel to alternative worksites
- Equipment including stethoscopes, scissors, clamps and similar items



📌 Nurses can claim uniforms, equipment, self education and registration fees come tax time.

REAL ESTATE AGENTS

- Real estate licence plus renewals
- Stationery and business cards
- Advertising
- Hammer (for erecting signs)
- Motor vehicle expenses
- Mobile and telephone
- Referral expenses
- Professional development and training courses
- Maps and street directories



📌 Real estate agents like Ray White Surfers Paradise CEO and property agent Andrew Bell can claim vehicle expenses, phone expenses, advertising and stationary at tax time.

RETAIL

- Cost of buying and laundry or dry cleaning of compulsory uniform. This doesn't include brand names from store or non-logo clothing like black pants and white top
- Buying meals when you work overtime, if you receive an overtime meal allowance
- Using your car (including parking and tolls) for work errands. Doesn't include trip to and from work
- Work-related magazines, journals, books
- Work-related mobile or home telephone calls, internet usage
- Professional associations and union fees
- Attending training sessions at another site other than work

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- Attending training sessions at another site other than work
- Stationery

TEACHERS

- Annual teacher registration
- Reference books, professional library, stationery
- Computer, disks, repairs, printer cartridges etc
- Home office expenses
- Work-related calls
- Association and union fees
- Travel to sporting and school activities not at your school
- Excursions and camps
- Teaching aids
- Stop watch for physical education
- Self education

ADULT ENTERTAINERS

- Costumes and lingerie
- Condoms, lubricants, gels, oils and tissues
- Stage make up and dance lessons but not general make up or hairdressing
- Mobiles and car travel for work purposes
- Novelties and fetish equipment

PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES

- Anything used in the course of your on-field performance including hats, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Fees to negotiate new contracts and travel expenses
- Fines and penalties received for on-field conduct only.

Tips courtesy of H&R Block Tax Accountants and the ATO



Professional athletes like Gold Coast Titans star Dave Taylor can claim anything used on-field and travel expenses. Picture: Scott Fletcher.