



Key messages

UNCLASSIFIED External

Title:	COVID-19 DSP focus group		
Issue date:	15 May 2020		
Venue:	Webex		
Event date:	14 May 2020	Start: 3:00pm	Finish: 4:00pm
Chair:	Martin Mane	Facilitator:	Martin Mane
Contact	Scott Payne	Contact phone:	07 3347 6888
Next meeting	21 May 2020		

Previous action items

Martin Discussed the action items from 7 May meeting:

1. JobKeeper channel stats were distributed to the group via email prior to the meeting.
 - a. Majority seen in Agent space via portals
 - b. Small % over the phone for those that have limited connectivity, this hasn't been advertised as method as we want people to use online services where they can.
2. Banks requesting confirmation of enrolment for JobKeeper
 - a. Escalated internally but ATO looking to maintain current position
 - i. Feedback: Small Business Ombudsman (Kate Carnell) is sure to push this agenda with the ATO

Agenda item: 2 – Super Industry

Shane advised we are looking to implement a more rigour's process to catch out false and misleading claims

- Approx. 1.2 million applications have been approved

- Releasing over \$10 billion to individuals

Agenda item: 3 – Small business community

Andrew advised:

- Receiving good feedback from JobKeeper as we see money being distributed out to employers
 - Those who use software with functionality built in
 - Utilising STP for a different purpose
- Calls
 - Cashflow boost experience, clients not getting full \$10,000 as is offset against other debts
 - When will JobKeeper stop, will it finish early or be extended
 - Where is my money
 - Clients not completing all steps (2 and 3), need to make declaration each month
- Lots of new to STP users
 - How will they be prepared for end of year
- Looking to have as much prefill at lodgement to make it easier for new reporters.

Agenda item: 4 – Individuals & Intermediaries community

Things have settled in the past week in relation to Job Keeper support for taxpayers with tax agents are returning to their normal work. While lodgements are ahead of the same time last year, micro and small practices are really struggling to get their lodgements done in time. As a result, we are hearing they are struggling to finalising their lodgments and seeking deferrals in time for the work they will not be able to finish in time.

There are high-level talks with industry around provision of assistance, with no solution yet settled on but potential treatment options to support micro and small practices are being actively examined.

This specific experience is almost totally being driven by the additional workloads and stress from supporting their clients through the COVID19 response and the compression of timeframes so close to the May 15 deadline for all other Income Tax returns. David indicated that even though only 18% of lodgements were outstanding and agents had lodged a million more lodgements than the same time last year, they were still struggling.

- Early data shows agents are seeing clients coming in early to lodge for TT20 returns so issues like the implications of a lack of pre-fill data is being looked at.
- The ATO expects large volumes once gateway opens of the magnitude, we saw last Tax Time at July as a result of the current impacts on economic activity.
- David advised that the TT20 release was planned for 19-22 June and reminded the meeting that this information was available at <https://pls.status.ato.gov.au> (the PLS Dashboard).
- When asked about system preparedness for TT20, David observed that last year we saw large numbers of early lodgers due to the Tax Bonus and that resource planning had used that experience in planning for this year's Tax Time. David also explained that as part of the first day of Job Keeper, EST had stood up an operations group that

reviewed system performance from a whole of experience perspective on an hourly basis and that this group would be re-formed for Tax Time.

- David also advised that the ATO now has the capacity to slow entry to its online services to reduce the chance of any systems failure due to excess user demand.
- Xero advised that they are not allowing early lodgments, with their users advised that cannot submit 2020 returns until 1 July.

Agenda item: 5 – Single Touch Payroll

Daren advised we are seeing approx. 2000 new employers begin reporting through STP each day in May.

- Almost 683,000 employers now reporting through STP, a total of 83% of total employer population
- Seeing several unsuccessful 1st submission from cloud users
 - Primarily SSID error – If DSPs can try to push the linking step more even though it is clear in products will help reduce this number
- Still waiting formal update regarding STP Phase 2 dates.

Action Item – Daren to seek further clarification around question raised from Max – Labour hire / contractor eligibility – Scott Payne sent Daren recent response from similar situation that had been raised as a ticket through Online services for DSPs. In summary:

- STP doesn't support use of allowance fields for this group
- Some employers assuming, they are labour hire not sole traders
- Employers re-categorising staff regardless to enable reporting through STP

Once response received Michael (ATO Communications) will look at communication through web content

Agenda item: 6 – Communications

Michael advised there is still a big focus on identify and maintain.

- Questions around JobKeeper payment timeframes
 - In legislation we have up to 14 days, but funds are getting out a lot quicker
- Boosting awareness of scams/schemes to defraud individuals and government
- Improving the navigation of web content is underway – particularly JobKeeper content
- Continuing to update the “Top Calls” page
- All 3 JobKeeper podcast episodes now available
- Webinar recording (held 12 May) with TPB to be published soon to the TPB's YouTube channel
- Bushfire/natural disaster deferrals are coming to an end
 - Messages going out to advise support is still available for those that need it
- TT20 communications
 - Trying to shift the peak back through communications campaign

Agenda item: 8 – Open floor

General discussion around security:

- Some issues have been identified that are being worked through internally, can't go into details at this stage
- We are seeing some general schemes/scams as always when new measures are released
 - Request if DSPs are seeing fraudulent activities to share information with ATO
- There are some sophisticated activities involving several different parties not just a singular party.