

ONLINE TAX FILE NUMBER REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR PERMANENT MIGRANTS AND INDIVIDUALS VISITING AUSTRALIA

FACT SHEET

1 BACKGROUND

The Tax Office, in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) has developed an online registration process that will enable permanent migrants and temporary visitors to Australia to apply for an individual tax file number (TFN) via the internet.

From December 2002, permanent migrants and temporary visitors to Australia, who are in Australia and have a visa that allows work rights or permanent migration, will be able to apply for a TFN online any time

2 WHAT IS A TFN?

A TFN is a unique number issued to a person by the Tax Office.

While you do not have to have a TFN, it is to your advantage to have one.

If you do not have a TFN you may:

- pay more tax than necessary, or
- not be able to get government benefits you are entitled to receive.

Only one TFN is issued to you for your lifetime. Once a TFN has been issued to you, there is no need to re-apply for one if your circumstances change—for example, if you move interstate, change jobs, change your name, have investments, or claim government benefits.

3 WHY YOU MAY NEED A TFN?

A TFN will assist you when you:

- work in Australia
- lodge a tax return
- ask about your personal tax affairs
- apply for certain income assistance or support payments (such as pensions or benefits from either Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs)
- make or receive payments under the Pay As You Go system
- have savings accounts or investments that earn income—for example, interest or dividends.

4 WORKING IN AUSTRALIA

If you are authorised by DIMIA to work in Australia, it is to your advantage to have a TFN.

5 WHO CAN USE THE ONLINE SYSTEM TO APPLY FOR A TFN?

The new online registration system can be used by people from overseas who have visas that allow work rights in Australia. These include working holiday makers, New Zealanders (who get a visa upon arrival), permanent migrants, overseas students who have had their visa amended to allow them to work, and people with a business class visa.

Applying online means you will not need to provide physical documentation as proof of identity.

6 HOW DOES THE ONLINE TFN REGISTRATION SYSTEM WORK?

When applying for a TFN online, the TFN registration system will compare your personal and travel document details with those held on DIMIA systems. If your details are validated by DIMIA, the application will progress through the TFN registration system. If the transaction is successful, the system will issue a receipt number and the TFN advice will be sent to the Australian address provided as part of the details in your application.

7 HOW TO APPLY FOR A TFN ONLINE

The online TFN registration system will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the Tax Office website (www.ato.gov.au). Where technical difficulties are experienced, such as computer down time, you will be advised to try again later. Alternatively, you will also have the option to download a paper version of the application to complete and submit by post, or in person.

8 BENEFITS

By applying for a TFN online, applicants will:

- be able to apply 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- be able to apply for and receive their TFN quicker.
- not have to queue to have their identity documents sighted by Tax Office staff
- be able to retain valuable identity documents while their application is being processed

9 YOUR PRIVACY

The Tax Office is authorised by the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* to ask for information on the TFN application. The Tax Office needs this information to help administer laws relating to taxation, Commonwealth benefits and superannuation.

We may give this information to other government agencies authorised by law to receive it. For example, Commonwealth agencies which administer laws relevant to your particular situation. Depending on your situation these agencies could include Centrelink, the Australian Federal Police, the Child Support Agency, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, DIMIA, the Department of Family and Community Services and the Department of Education, Science and Training

10 FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more information, visit our website at www.ato.gov.au/individual or phone the tax file number helpline on **13 28 61**.