



Protect yourself from misinformation and disinformation

Protect yourself from tax and super misinformation or disinformation. Use trusted sources and check if you're unsure.

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What are misinformation and disinformation

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information that is **not** created with the intention of causing harm. It's often spread innocently or carelessly where people don't realise the information they're sharing isn't correct.

Disinformation is false or inaccurate information that is **deliberately** created and spread to harm a person, social group, organisation or country.

If you act on misinformation or disinformation about tax or super, it can lead to very serious consequences. So, we recommend that you:

- only act on information you can trust
- check the information with the ATO or a tax or super professional.

Only act on information you can trust

You may come across misinformation or disinformation in many ways. Sometimes it's hard to know if a source is one you can trust. Beware of things like:

- unqualified people sharing incorrect or 'free expert' tax and super advice on various platforms
- fake or dodgy websites with incorrect information
- unofficial government websites – for example, if the website URL doesn't end in '.gov.au' then it may not be an official government website
- fake news articles or false information shared on social media or other platforms
- influencers encouraging you to 'game' the tax and superannuation systems
- promotion of unlawful tax schemes and tax fraud
- ATO-impersonation scams

You may even get false or inaccurate information from artificial intelligence (AI) tools. So, be careful about how you use them for tax and super information. They may give you information that's incorrect, incomplete, outdated or not applicable to your situation. Always check the:

- source of information that the AI tool summarises, by selecting the source link it includes
- information you get with a trusted source like our website or a tax or super professional and whether it applies to your situation.

Don't be misled by disinformation

Unfortunately, we continue to see examples of disinformation about tax and superannuation.

Of particular concern is harmful disinformation that makes **false claims** about the ATO, including ones that Australian courts have consistently rejected. Contrary to these false claims:

- **The ATO does have legal standing** and you can't ignore our authority. Under the *Taxation Administration Act 1953*, the ATO is authorised to assist the Commissioner of Taxation to collect tax revenue and enforce compliance. Ignoring or refusing to engage with us may lead to significant penalties or prosecution.

- **You must fulfil your tax obligations** and you can't opt out of the tax system. Paying tax is a legal obligation under Australian law. The *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, passed by Australian Parliament, set out how tax must be applied. Avoiding tax obligations can lead to significant penalties. For our response, refer to *PS LA 2004/10 Tax laws claimed to be invalid*.






Check information before you act

Getting your tax and superannuation obligations wrong can be serious. You could incur penalties, fines or even be prosecuted. You need to be careful about acting on advice from a person, business or organisation that isn't a qualified expert.

If you're unsure if information is correct, check it with the ATO or a tax or super professional before you act on it.

Check with us

We are your primary source of information about your tax and superannuation obligations. You can connect with us to check information you've got from sources that you're unsure of. Connection options for the ATO include:

- our website – ato.gov.au is your source of truth for tax and super information. As well as general information, we also provide
 - **ATO advice and guidance** – these products will help you understand how the law applies to you
 - information to help you to protect yourself from serious forms of disinformation like
 - tax schemes
 - scams
- subscriptions – sign up to our [newsletters](#) , RSS news feeds or email subscription services to get the information and updates you need for your situation, straight from us
- our official ATO social media accounts on [Facebook](#) , [Instagram](#) , [LinkedIn](#)  and [X](#) 

- [ATO Community](#) – join the conversation to help find answers to your tax and super questions
- **Contact us** – we have multiple options to help you with your tax and super and a dedicated phone number to **verify or report a scam**.

Check with a tax or super professional

Depending on the type of tax or super advice you need, you should check with a tax or super professional, for example:

- a registered tax practitioner – use the [Tax Practitioners Board \(TPB\) Register](#) to check if a tax or BAS agent is registered
- another tax or super professional, including a
 - licensed financial adviser – the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) Moneysmart [Financial advisers register](#) or [ASIC Professional Registers Search](#) can help you work out if the person or organisation offering you the information is an Australian Financial Services (AFS) [licence holder](#) or the director, employee or an authorised representative of an AFS licence holder – if they offer you financial products and advice and don't hold a valid licence issued by ASIC, they could be operating illegally, and you may not be protected
 - an SMSF auditor – use the [ASIC Professional Registers Search](#) to help work out if they're registered
 - a practising legal practitioner – start by checking the person is registered with your state or territory's online register of lawyers
- a qualified insolvency practitioner
 - if you're a company registered under the *Corporations Act 2001*, use [ASIC Series 4A: Registered liquidator lists](#) to check if they're a Registered Liquidator
 - if you're an individual, sole trader or partnership, use the Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA) [Register of trustees](#) to check if they're a Registered Trustee.

You can also check information via your own super fund's website.

How to report misinformation or disinformation

You can confidentially report misinformation or disinformation by either:

- completing the **tip-off form** on our website or in the **ATO app** 'Contact us' section
- phoning us on **1800 060 062**.

Details for reporting

If possible, you should include the following details when reporting:

- details of the misinformation or disinformation, including where it's being promoted
- a link to the website or screenshot of the information
- name and contact details of the person, business or organisation promoting it.

The more details you can provide, the better we can act on it. Even if you only know partial details or can only complete some sections of the tip-off form, it's still very useful.

Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra.

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Our commitment to you

We are committed to providing you with accurate, consistent and clear information to help you understand your rights and entitlements and meet your obligations.

If you follow our information and it turns out to be incorrect, or it is misleading and you make a mistake as a result, we will take that into account when determining what action, if any, we should take.

Some of the information on this website applies to a specific financial year. This is clearly marked. Make sure you have the information for the right year before making decisions based on that information.

If you feel that our information does not fully cover your circumstances, or you are unsure how it applies to you, contact us or seek professional advice.

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