



# Starting, registering or closing a business

Information about starting, registering or closing a business.

## Ready for business

The key things you need to know and do when starting your own business.

## Registration

Learn what registrations your type of business needs to meet your tax, super and reporting obligations.

## Changing, selling or closing your business

What you need to know when changing business structure, pausing or closing a business or selling your business.

## Sharing economy and tax

How to determine if your activities are part of the sharing economy and the impact on your super and tax.

# Obligations for Business Registration

Learn what registrations your type of business needs to meet your tax, super and reporting obligations.

**Last updated** 9 December 2023

If you're starting a new business, you may need an Australian business number (ABN). Not everyone is entitled to an ABN, so the registration process will ask specific questions to determine your entitlement to an ABN.

To work as a business you'll need an ABN, which generally means you:

- provide products and services directly to your customers, whether that's the public or other businesses
- source your own customers, for example by advertising your products and services
- quote and invoice for work, including setting or negotiating prices
- have a separate business bank account and your own business insurance such as public liability and WorkCover
- lodge and report all business income, even if the business earnings are below the tax-free threshold.

An ABN has its own set of obligations. You may be required to:

- register for goods and services tax (GST)
- lodge activity statements to us
- register for PAYG withholding and meet your super obligations for eligible employees
- meet other federal, state and territory regulatory obligations such as payroll tax, worker's compensation, and operating licences.


Once you have your ABN, you can deal with us online using [myID and Relationship Authorisation Manager](#) (RAM).

You can register for your ABN and any tax registrations at the same time through the Australian Business Register (ABR) website.


You will need to notify us within 28 days if you update your ABN details, such as:

- add or cancel a registration – for example, you must register for PAYG withholding if you start employing people
- change your business details, like the address or authorised contact person
- cease operating your business – you are required to cancel your ABN and any tax registrations
  - you must finalise all of your business obligations, including lodging any reports and tax returns, paying tax debts and finalising your activity statements.

### **Next steps**

- [ABN entitlement](#)  – check the ABR website to see if you're entitled to an ABN
- [Work out which registrations you need](#) – find out what you need to register for

### **See also**

- [Starting your own business](#)
- [Supporting your small business](#)
- [Simple access to information and services for business](#)  on the business.gov.au website.

- [Australian business number \(ABN\) for non-residents](#)

## Work out which registrations you need



Some registrations are compulsory, while others are optional.

## Update your details



You're required by law to tell us within 28 days when your business details change, such as address or associates.

QC 31789

# Work out which registrations you need

Some registrations are compulsory, while others are optional.

**Last updated** 6 February 2017

When you're starting a new business, it's important to find out what registrations apply to your business to ensure you're complying with all relevant regulations.

### Find out about:

- [Business or company registrations](#)
- [Taxation registrations](#)
- [Other registrations](#)
- [Examples of business registrations](#)
- [Update your details](#)

### Next step:

[Register your business](#)

## Business or company registrations



You can apply for a business name and register for secure online authentication when you apply for an ABN.

## Taxation registrations



All businesses need a tax file number (TFN), but other tax registrations depend on the type of business you're running.

## Examples of business registrations



If you're in business you may need to register for certain tax obligations and entitlements.

## Other registrations



If you're in business you may need other licences, permits or registrations to operate.

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# Business or company registrations

You can apply for a business name and register for secure online authentication when you apply for an ABN.

**Last updated** 13 November 2024

### On this page

[Australian business number](#)

[Secure online authentication](#)

[Registering your business name](#)

[Getting an Australian company number](#)

If you're applying for an Australian business number (ABN), you can also apply for a business name and register for secure online authentication and taxes, like GST and PAYG withholding, at the same time.

As not everyone is [entitled to an ABN](#) , you will be asked a series of questions when applying for one to determine your entitlement.

If you're setting up business as an individual (a 'sole trader'), it will speed things up if you provide your tax file number (TFN) when you

apply. Companies should provide their Australian company number (ACN).

## Australian business number

An ABN is a unique 11-digit identifier that makes it easier for businesses and all levels of government to interact.

You will need an ABN to:


- operate in the GST system, including claiming GST credits
- avoid pay as you go (PAYG) tax on payments you receive
- confirm your business identity to others when ordering and invoicing
- set up access to government online services for your business
- be endorsed as a gift deductible recipient or an income tax exempt charity.


Ensure you keep your ABN details up to date in the Australian Business Register.

If you cease business, you will need to cancel your ABN. Before doing this, make sure you've met all your lodgment, reporting and payment obligations such as activity statements and PAYG withholding reports.

## How to apply for or cancel an ABN

You can apply for or cancel an ABN, or apply to have an ABN you previously held reissued:

- online using the [Australian Business Register](#) 
- through your registered tax agent or BAS agent.

You can also lodge an *Application to cancel registration* (NAT 2955) form with us to **cancel** your ABN. You can order this form using our [online publication ordering service for business](#) .

Read more about [Changing, selling or closing your business](#).

## Secure online authentication

To securely access a number of government online business services like Online services for business or the Australian Business Register (ABR), you need a secure way to verify your business identity.


You can do this by setting up your [Digital ID and Relationship Authorisation Manager \(RAM\)](#).

Before registering for a service, check your system is compatible.

## Registering your business name


Most businesses will need to apply for a registered business name with the Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC).


You can carry on a business in your own name without registering a business name if you don't change or add anything to your name. For example, John Smith doesn't have to register a name to trade as J Smith or John Smith, but he does to trade as John Smith Landscaping.

To apply for a [registered business name](#)  you will need to have applied for or have an ABN.

By 31 October 2018 all businesses will need to register all trading names as a business name with ASIC in order to continue operating with it. ABN Lookup will only display business names registered with ASIC from this date.

## Getting an Australian company number

If you plan to run your business through a company, you need to [register your company](#)  and get an ACN. You do this with ASIC when you start your company. You need to get your ACN **before** you can get your ABN and tax registrations.

If you want to become a director of a company, you'll need to apply for a [director identification number](#)  (director ID). You must apply for your own director ID to verify your identity with the Registrar of the Australian Business Registry Services (ABRS).



# Examples of business registrations

If you're in business you may need to register for certain tax obligations and entitlements.

Last updated 13 November 2024

## On this page

[Initial business registrations for Nguyen](#)

[Adding GST registration](#)

[Business registrations for Renee Fashions Pty Ltd](#)

The following examples show the types of registrations a business may need:

- [Example: Registration for a sole trader](#)
- [Example: Registration for a company](#)

### Example: Registration for a sole trader

Nguyen is a qualified electrician. He starts his own part-time business, doing jobs on customer premises and at his workshop. Some of his business details are:


- Business structure: sole trader
- Expected turnover: \$40,000 per year
- Staff: works alone.









## Initial business registrations for Nguyen



ABN, yes.


ABN

Nguyen registers for his ABN online at the [Australian Business Register](#)  (ABR). He can easily do his business name registration at the same time.

 TFN, no. TFN	As a sole trader, Nguyen uses his individual TFN. He doesn't need a separate TFN for his business.
 ABN, yes. Online services	By registering for a personal myGov account and linking it to the ATO, Nguyen can do tax transactions for his business online. He can do this using our <a href="#">Online services for individuals and sole traders</a> .
 TFN, no. GST	The expected GST turnover from his business is less than \$75,000 so Nguyen doesn't have to register for GST. He decides not to register, which means he can't charge GST or claim GST credits. He can register later if he needs to.
 ABN, yes. PAYG instalments	Nguyen can voluntarily enter into pay as you go (PAYG) instalments to start paying his income tax by instalments throughout the year. This will help him avoid having to pay a big tax bill after he lodges his first tax return.
 TFN, no. PAYG withholding	Nguyen plans to work alone, with no employees. He can register later if he needs to.
 TFN, no. Fringe benefits tax	Nguyen has no employees.
 ABN, yes. Business name	Nguyen can register his business name 'Nguyen's All Electrical' on the <a href="#">Australian Business Register</a>  when he registers for an ABN.

Later, Nguyen decides to put more time into his business. He expects his business sales to increase to \$90,000 per year.

## Adding GST registration

 ABN, yes.	Nguyen's projected GST turnover is now \$75,000 or more, so he must register for GST within 21 days of
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GST	when he starts putting more time into his business. Nguyen will then charge GST on his sales, and will be entitled to claim GST credits for any business purchases that include GST.
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### Example: registration for a company

Renee starts her own clothing shop. At the same time, she creates a company, Renee Fashions Pty Ltd, through which she runs the business. Some of her business details are:

- Business structure: company
- Expected turnover: \$190,000 per year
- Staff: three (including Renee).

## Business registrations for Renee Fashions Pty Ltd

 ABN, yes. Director ID	As the director of the company, Renee will need to verify her identity and apply for a director identification number (director ID) from <a href="#">Australian Business Registry Services</a>  .
 ABN, yes. ACN	Before doing her tax registrations, Renee must register her company with <a href="#">Australian Securities &amp; Investments Commission</a>  (ASIC) and obtain an Australian company number.
 ABN, yes. ABN	The company needs an ABN as it must register for GST. Renee does her ABN registration online at the <a href="#">Australian Business Register</a>  (ABR). If she wants to, Renee can also register for her business name and other tax registrations at the same time.

 ABN, yes. TFN	The company needs a separate TFN.
 ABN, yes. Secure online authentication	To do the company's tax transactions online, Renee needs a secure way to verify her business identity online such as her <a href="#">Digital ID and Relationship Authorisation Manager</a> (RAM)
 ABN, yes. Online services	Renee can do tax transactions for her business online using <a href="#">online services</a> .
 ABN, yes. GST	The company must register for GST because its expected annual GST turnover is more than \$75,000.
 ABN, yes. PAYG instalments	Renee can <a href="#">voluntarily enter</a> into the pay as you go (PAYG) instalments system to start paying her income tax by instalments throughout the year. This will help her avoid having to pay a big tax bill after she lodges her first tax return.
 ABN, yes. PAYG withholding	As an employer, Renee Fashions Pty Ltd will need to withhold tax from wages and must register for PAYG withholding.
 ABN, yes. Fringe benefits tax	Renee plans to have private use of a company car, which is a fringe benefit.
 ABN, yes. Business name	Renee can register the company's business name on the <a href="#">Australian Business Register</a>  when she registers it for an ABN.

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## Other registrations

If you're in business you may need other licences, permits or registrations to operate.

**Last updated** 6 February 2017

### On this page

[State government licences](#)

[Council permits](#)

Your business may need other licences, permits or registrations to operate.

## State government licences

Some businesses need licences to operate. These are usually issued by your state government. Most states have a small business department that can tell you what licences you need and how to get them.

### See also:

- [business.gov.au – business and company registration](https://business.gov.au/business-and-company-registration) 

## Council permits

You may also need a council permit to operate your business; for example, to use a building for a specific purpose, or sell food or dangerous goods.

Check any requirements with your local council.

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## Update your details

You're required by law to tell us within 28 days when your business details change, such as address or associates.

**Last updated** 13 December 2022

It is a legal requirement to tell the Registrar of the Australian Business Register (ABR) within 28 days of changes to your registered business details.

These include changes to your:

- postal, email or business address
- associates
- main business activity
- Australian Company Number (ACN) or Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN)
- public officer (this must be in writing and include the public officer's name and a contact address)
- name of trustees.


You should also tell us about changes to your:


- entity name or business name registered with the Australian Securities & Investments Commission
- authorised contact person
- financial institution account details.

We use this information to update the ABR. We may pass on the changes to other government agencies where authorised to do so.

## How to update your details

You can update your details:

- online through the [Australian Business Register](#)  or [Online services for business](#)
- by phone – if you're an authorised contact for the business, [phone us](#) – this is not applicable for adding or updating public officer details
- by lodging a form


- to authorise a custodian organisation, you need to [nominate a custodian for certificate of residency and/or tax relief](#)
  - order the *Change of registration details* form (NAT 2943) using our [online publication ordering service](#) 
- through your registered tax agent or BAS agent.

## Authorised contact

Only primary contacts including public officers, authorised contacts, registered tax agents, registered BAS agents, temporarily appointed tax professionals and specialist tax advisers can contact us on behalf of an entity.

Different entity types will have different [primary contacts](#).

You may need to cancel or apply for newly appointed authorised contacts where applicable.

You should ensure any update to your authorised contacts includes a review of who has been authorised to act on behalf of your business in [Relationship Authorisation Manager \(RAM\)](#) .

**Note:** Authorisations in RAM will not change the authorised contacts for your business. To do this see [How to update your details](#).

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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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