

You and your shares 2018

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For 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

Covers:

- individuals who invest in shares or convertible notes
- taxation of dividends from investments
- allowable deductions from dividend income
- record keeping requirements for investors



For more information
go to ato.gov.au



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 in this publication and it is either misleading or turns out to be incorrect and you make a mistake as a result, we must still apply the law correctly. If that means you owe us money, you must pay it but we will not charge you a penalty. Also, if you acted reasonably and in good faith we will not charge you interest. If correcting the mistake means we owe you money, we will pay it and pay you any interest you are entitled to.

If you feel that this publication does not fully cover your circumstances, or you are unsure how it applies to you, you can seek further help from us.

We regularly revise our publications to take account of any changes to the law, so make sure that you have the latest information. If you are unsure, you can check for more recent information on our website at ato.gov.au or contact us.

This publication was current at **June 2018**.

HOW SELF-ASSESSMENT AFFECTS YOU

Self-assessment means we use the information you give on your tax return and any related schedules and forms to work out your refund or tax liability. We do not take any responsibility for checking the accuracy of the details you provide, although our system automatically checks the arithmetic.

Although we do not check the accuracy of your tax return at the time of processing, at a later date we may examine the details more thoroughly by reviewing specific parts, or by conducting an audit of your tax affairs. We also have a number of audit programs that are designed to continually check for missing, inaccurate or incomplete information.

What are your responsibilities?

It is your responsibility to lodge a tax return that is signed, complete and correct. Even if someone else (including a tax agent) helps you to prepare your tax return and any related schedules, you are still legally responsible for the accuracy of your information.

What if you lodge an incorrect tax return?

If you become aware that your tax return is incorrect, you must contact us straight away.

Initiatives to complement self-assessment

There are a number of systems and entitlements that complement self-assessment, including:

- the private ruling system (see below)
- the amendment system (if you find you have left something out of your tax return)
- your entitlement to interest on early payment or over-payment of a tax debt.

Do you need to ask for a private ruling?

If you are uncertain about how a tax law applies to your personal tax affairs, you can ask for a private ruling. To do this, complete a *Private ruling application form (not for tax professionals)* (NAT 13742), or contact us.

Lodge your tax return by the due date, even if you are waiting for the response to your application. You may need to request an amendment to your tax return once you have received the private ruling.

We publish all private rulings on our website. We edit the text to remove all information that could identify you.

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

You and your shares 2018 (NAT 2632) helps people who hold shares or bonds as an investment to understand their tax obligations. It covers:

- how dividends received by Australian resident and non-resident individuals are taxed, and
- the type of expenses you may be able to claim against dividend income.

If you acquired shares after 19 September 1985, capital gains tax (CGT) may apply when you dispose of them. For more information, see *Personal investors guide to capital gains tax 2018* (NAT 4152) available at ato.gov.au

Who should use this guide?

Use this guide if you are an individual taxpayer who holds shares or bonds as an investment.

This guide will also help people who carry on a business of trading in shares. However, it does not deal with the specific taxation of shares held as trading stock or with the profits or losses arising from the disposal of such shares. If you need further advice on these aspects of owning shares, contact us or a recognised tax adviser.

Publications and services

To find out how to get a publication referred to in this guide and for information about our other services, see the inside back cover.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Shares

A company issues shares to raise the money needed to finance its operations. When a company issues shares, it grants shareholders various entitlements, for example, the right to receive dividends or the right to share in the capital of the company upon winding up. A company may issue different classes of shares, so these entitlements may vary between different shareholders.

Non-share equity interests

Certain interests which are not shares in legal form are treated in a similar way to shares for some tax law purposes. These interests are called non-share equity interests. Examples include a number of income and stapled securities. For more information, see the publication *Debt and equity tests* at ato.gov.au

Company debentures, bonds and convertible notes

Companies borrow money by issuing debt securities commonly known as 'debentures' or 'bonds'. Bonds can be bought and sold in the stock market in the same way as shares. Usually the company pays back the money borrowed after a period of time. Sometimes the holder of a bond is given the right to exchange the bond for shares in the borrowing company or another company. Company bonds that can be exchanged for shares are referred to in this publication as 'convertible notes'.

A company bond or debenture is a promise made by a company to pay back money that it previously borrowed. In addition, the company pays interest until the money it borrowed is paid back. Interest you receive as the holder of a company bond or debenture is included in your tax return as interest income at **L** item **10 Gross interest**. Special rules apply if you sell a company bond before the company returns the money that it borrowed, or if the bond is exchanged for shares in the borrowing company or another company.

Sometimes a company will issue a bond in return for a sum of money that is less than the face value of the debt the company promises to pay in the future. This is often referred to as a 'discounted security'. Sometimes a company will issue a bond that promises to increase the amount of principal paid back by an amount that reflects changes in a widely published index such as the Consumer Price Index or a share market index. If you have acquired such a security, you should contact us or a recognised tax adviser if you are unsure of the taxation consequences. Special rules apply to the taxation of gains and losses on such securities both in respect of income earned while you own the securities and on their disposal or redemption.

Non-equity shares

Under the debt and equity rules, the dividends on some shares are treated in the same way as interest on a loan for some tax law purposes. These shares are called non-equity shares. In some circumstances, a redeemable preference share may be a non-equity share.

HOW DOES A COMPANY PAY DIVIDENDS AND DISTRIBUTION?

Dividends

If you own shares in a company, you may receive a dividend or distribution.

In any income year you may receive both an interim and a final dividend. In most circumstances, you will be liable to pay income tax for that income year on the dividends you are paid or credited.

You must include in your assessable income dividends paid or credited to you. Your shareholder dividend statement or distribution statement should contain details of the date a payment was made to you, which is generally referred to on the statement as the payment date or date paid. It is this date that will determine in which income year you include the dividend in your assessable income. Where the dividend is paid by cheque, it is deemed to have been paid to you on the date the cheque was posted to you by the company, not on the date the cheque was received, banked or cleared.

A dividend can be paid to you as money or other property, including shares.

Dividend reinvestment schemes

Most dividends you are paid or credited will be in the form of money, either by cheque or directly deposited into a bank account. However, the company may give you the option of reinvesting your dividends in the form of new shares in the company. This is called a dividend reinvestment scheme. If you take this option, you must pay tax on your reinvested dividends. Keep a record of the market value of the new shares acquired through the dividend reinvestment scheme (at the time of reinvestment) to help you work out any potential capital gains or capital losses on the eventual disposal of the shares.

Bonus shares

If you are paid or credited taxable bonus shares, the company issuing the shares should provide you with a dividend statement or distribution statement indicating the share value that is subject to tax. A company should also have informed you if it issued tax-free bonus shares out of a share premium account.

From 1 July 1998, bonus shares will be taxed as a dividend if the shareholder has a choice between receiving a dividend or the shares, unless they are issued in certain circumstances by a listed public company which does not credit its share capital account. If you make a capital gain when you dispose of bonus shares that you received on or after 20 September 1985, you may have to pay CGT even if they are not taxed as a dividend. For more information, see *Guide to capital gains tax 2018* at ato.gov.au

Amounts treated as dividends

The rules in Division 7A of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* (ITAA 1936) prevent private companies from making tax-free distributions to shareholders (or their associates). Unless they come within specified exclusions, advances, loans and other credits to shareholders (or their associates) are treated as assessable dividends to the extent that they exceed the company's distributable surplus. Payments or other benefits you obtain from a private company in which you are a shareholder, or an associate of a shareholder, may be treated as if they are assessable dividends paid to you. For more information, see **Private company transactions treated as dividends** on page 14 and **Trust loans, payments and forgiven debts treated as dividends** on page 15.

Demerger dividends

Dividends paid to you under a demerger are generally not included in your assessable income. This concession will apply automatically to eligible demergers unless the head entity elects that the dividend should be assessable for all shareholders. Where that election is made, you should include the dividend on your tax return as an unfranked dividend.

Generally, the head entity undertaking the demerger will advise you whether a demerger dividend has been paid and whether it has elected that the dividend be assessable. In addition, we may have provided advice in the form of a Class Ruling specific to the demerger which may have been supplied with the head entity's advice. If you are in any doubt, contact us.

Non-share dividends

Distributions from a non-share equity interest that do not constitute a non-share capital return are called non-share dividends.

Franked dividends from a New Zealand franking company

Under the Trans-Tasman imputation system, a New Zealand franking company that has elected to join the Australian imputation system may pay a dividend franked with Australian franking credits. Australian shareholders of a New Zealand franking company that has made such an election may be entitled to claim the benefits of the franking credits attached to the dividends. For more information, including information on how these dividends are taxed, see *Trans-Tasman imputation special rules* at ato.gov.au

HOW DIVIDENDS ARE TAXED

Dividends are taxed differently depending on whether the shareholder is a resident or non-resident of Australia.

This section explains the taxation implications for resident shareholders. If you are a non-resident, see **Dividends paid or credited to non-resident shareholders** on page 11 to find out how the dividends you receive will be taxed.

Dividends paid to shareholders by Australian resident companies are taxed under a system known as 'imputation'. It is called an imputation system because the tax paid by a company may be imputed or attributed to the shareholders. The tax paid by the company is allocated to shareholders by way of franking credits attached to the dividends they receive.

The basis of the system is that if a company pays or credits you with dividends which have been franked, you may be entitled to a franking tax offset for the tax the company has paid on its income. The franking tax offset will cover or partly cover the tax payable on the dividends.

Franked dividends

A resident company, or a New Zealand franking company that has elected to join the Australian imputation system, may pay or credit you with a franked dividend. Dividends can be fully franked (meaning that the whole amount of the dividend carries a franking credit) or partly franked (meaning that the dividend has a franked amount and an unfranked amount). The dividend statement or distribution statement you receive from the company paying the franked dividend must state the amount of the franking credit and the amounts of the franked and unfranked parts of the dividend.

Unfranked dividends

A resident company may pay or credit you with an unfranked dividend. There is no franking credit attached to these dividends.

If you receive an unfranked dividend declared to be conduit foreign income on your dividend statement or distribution statement, include that amount as an unfranked dividend on your tax return.

HOW NON-SHARE DIVIDENDS ARE TAXED

The imputation system applies to non-share dividends in the same way that it applies to dividends. A non-share dividend may be franked or unfranked. Any amount of the dividend, whether franked or unfranked, or any amount of franking credit carried by the dividend should be shown at the appropriate place on the tax return as if it were a dividend paid on shares.

Dividends on non-equity shares

Under the imputation system, dividends paid on certain shares that are classified as non-equity shares (for example, some redeemable preference shares)

are treated as unfrankable distributions for imputation purposes. As a consequence, these dividends cannot be franked. For more information, see *Debt and equity tests: guide to the debt and equity tests* at ato.gov.au

THE DIVIDEND OR DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If an Australian company pays or credits you with a dividend or a non-share dividend, the company must also send you a dividend statement or distribution statement advising:

- the name of the entity making the distribution
- the date on which the distribution was made
- the amount of the distribution
- the amount of any franking credit allocated to the distribution
- the franking percentage for the distribution
- where the distribution is unfranked, a statement to that effect
- where the distribution is franked, the franked part and the unfranked part
- where any or all of the unfranked amount of the distribution has been declared to be conduit foreign income, the portion so declared
- the amount of tax file number (TFN) withholding tax withheld if you have not quoted your TFN to the company.

EXAMPLE 1: Payment of dividends

On 15 February 2018, an Australian resident company Coals Tyer Ltd paid John, a resident individual, a fully franked dividend of \$700 and an unfranked dividend of \$200. John received the dividend statement from Coals Tyer Ltd shown in **Example 3**.

We will follow the Coals Tyer Ltd example through the next few sections of this guide to see what John needs to do with the information.

EXAMPLE 2: Assessable dividend income

John's assessable income for 2017–18 in respect of the dividend is:

Dividend	\$
Unfranked dividend received	200
Franked dividend received	700
Franking credit	300
Total assessable dividend income	1,200

If these were the only dividends John was paid or credited with for the income year, he can transfer these amounts directly to item **11 Dividends** on his 2018 tax return.

EXAMPLE 3: Shareholder dividend statement

COALS TYER LIMITED

ABN 00 000 000 000

Shareholder dividend statement

Payment date

15 February 2018

Notification of 2017 final dividend – paid 15 February 2018

Security description	No. of shares	Unfranked amount	Franked amount	Franking credit
Ordinary shares	6,400	\$200	\$700	\$300
TFN amount	\$0.00		Net dividend	\$900.00

Please note that your tax file number has been received and recorded.

Please retain this advice for taxation purposes as a charge may be levied for a replacement.

Please advise promptly in writing of any change of address.

TAXATION IMPLICATIONS

If you are paid or credited dividends or non-share dividends, you must include the following amounts in assessable income on your tax return:

- the unfranked amount
- the franked amount, and
- the franking credit, provided you are entitled to a franking tax offset in respect of the franking credit. See **Your franking tax offset** in the next column for eligibility.

We show you on the next page how John would complete item **11** on his tax return, using the figures in the Coals Tyer Ltd example.

You can see on the Coals Tyer Ltd statement above that John had no TFN amount withheld from the dividends he was paid or credited. Where a resident shareholder does not provide an Australian company with their TFN, the company must deduct tax from the unfranked amount of any dividend at the highest income tax rate for individuals (47%) plus the Medicare levy (2%), which makes a total rate for 2017–18 of 49%. As John had advised Coals Tyer Ltd of his TFN, no TFN amount was withheld.

If John had not advised Coals Tyer Ltd of his TFN, a TFN amount would have been withheld from the unfranked amount of the dividend and shown by John on his tax return at **V** item **11**. A credit for the TFN amount withheld would then be allowed in John's tax assessment.

If John received more than one dividend statement during the income year, he would need to show the total amounts at **S**, **T**, **U** and **V** (if applicable) item **11** on his 2018 tax return.

EFFECT ON TAX PAYABLE

Example 4 shows how the fully franked dividend of \$700 and the unfranked dividend of \$200 from Coals Tyer Ltd affect John's tax liability. It is assumed that John has other income of \$80,000. The Medicare levy is not included in the calculation.

John's assessable income includes the franking credit in addition to the franked and unfranked dividends, and John's tax is based on this higher figure. However, he is able to use the tax already paid at the company level (the franking tax offset) to reduce the amount of tax that he has to pay on his assessment.

EXAMPLE 4: Tax payable on dividend income

John's tax return (extract)

Tax return item	Value (\$)
Unfranked dividend received	200
Franked dividend received	700
Franking credit, non-cash	300
Other assessable income	80,000
Total taxable income	81,200
Tax on \$81,200, assessed at 2017–18 rates	17,937
less franking tax offset	300
Tax payable*	17,637

* This does not include any liability for the Medicare levy.

YOUR FRANKING TAX OFFSET

If you are paid or credited franked dividends or non-share dividends (that is, they carry franking credits for which you are entitled to claim franking tax offsets) your assessable income includes both the amount of the dividends you were paid or credited and the amount of franking credits attached to the dividends. You must include both amounts when you lodge your tax return. Tax is payable at your applicable tax rate on these amounts.

If the franking credit is included in your assessable income at **U** item **11**, you are then entitled to a franking tax offset equal to the amount included in your income. It is not necessary for you to claim the tax offset. It will appear on your notice of assessment.

The franking tax offset can be used to reduce your tax liability from all forms of income (not just dividends), and from your taxable net capital gain. **Example 4** shows you how this works.

Any excess franking tax offset amount is refunded to eligible resident individuals, after any income tax and Medicare levy liabilities have been met.

EXAMPLE 5: Impact of franking tax offsets

John's tax return (extract)

Tax return item	Value (\$)
Tax payable on taxable income	2,000
<i>less</i> Other tax offsets	1,500
Net tax payable	500
<i>plus</i> Medicare levy	200
Sub-total	700
<i>less</i> franking tax offset	1,000
Refund (of excess franking credits)	300

(Amounts are for illustrative purposes only.)

Claiming your franking tax offset when you do not need to lodge a tax return

If you are eligible to claim a franking tax offset for 2017–18 but you are not otherwise required to lodge a tax return, see *Refund of franking credits instructions and application for individuals 2018* (NAT 4105). If you need more information, phone **13 28 61**.

WHEN YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO CLAIM A FRANKING TAX OFFSET

Your entitlement to a franking tax offset may be affected by the holding period rule, the related payments rule or the dividend washing integrity rule. The general effect of the holding period rule and the related payments rule is that even if a dividend is accompanied by a dividend statement advising that there is a franking credit attached to the dividend, you are not entitled to claim the franking credit. Your entitlement to a franking tax offset could also be affected if you or your company undertake a dividend streaming or stripping arrangement, or you enter into a scheme with the purpose of obtaining franking credits (referred to as franking credit trading).

Holding period rule

The holding period rule requires you to continuously hold shares 'at risk' for at least 45 days (90 days for certain preference shares) to be eligible for the franking tax offset. However, under the small shareholder exemption this rule does not apply if your total franking credit entitlement is below \$5,000. This is roughly equivalent to receiving a fully franked dividend of:

- \$11,666 (for companies that are not base rate entities, with a corporate tax rate of 30%) or
- \$13,181 (for companies that are base rate entities, with a corporate tax rate of 27.5%).

This means that you must continuously own shares 'at risk' for at least 45 days (90 days for certain preference shares) not counting the day of acquisition or disposal, to be eligible for any franking tax offset.

Days on which you have 30% or less of the ordinary financial risks of loss and opportunities for gain from owning the shares cannot be counted in determining whether you hold the shares for the required period.

The financial risk of owning shares may be reduced through arrangements such as hedges, options and futures.

If you acquire shares, or an interest in shares, and you have not already satisfied the holding period rule before the day on which the shares become ex-dividend, the holding period rule commences on the day after the day on which you acquired the shares or interest. The shares become ex-dividend on the day after the last day on which acquisition of the shares will entitle you to receive the dividend. You must hold the shares or interest for 45 days (90 days for certain preference shares) excluding the day of disposal. For each of these days you must have 30% or more of the ordinary financial risks of loss and opportunities for gain from owning the shares or interest.

You have to satisfy the holding period rule once only for each purchase of shares. You are then entitled to the franking credits attached to those shares, unless the related payments rule applies; see the next page.

EXAMPLE 6: Franking credits entitlement greater than \$5,000

Matthew acquired a single parcel of shares on 1 March 2018. On 8 April 2018 Matthew received fully franked dividends of \$13,066 (which had franking credits attached of \$5,600) for 2017–18. On 10 April 2018 Matthew sold that parcel of shares. Because he had not held the shares for at least 45 days and did not qualify for the small shareholder exemption, he failed the holding period test and cannot obtain the benefit of the franking credits.

Matthew shows a dividend of \$13,066 as a franked amount at **T** item **11** on his 2018 tax return but does not show the amount of franking credits at **U**.

He will not receive a franking tax offset in his assessment. That is, he is not entitled to any part of the \$5,600 franking credits.

For the purpose of the holding period rule, if a shareholder purchases substantially identical shares in a company over a period of time, the holding period rule uses the 'last in first out' method to identify which shares will pass the holding period rule.

EXAMPLE 7: Substantially identical shares

Jessica has held 10,000 shares in Mimosa Pty Ltd for 12 months. She purchased an additional 4,000 shares in Mimosa Pty Ltd 10 days before they became ex-dividend (the day after the last day on which acquisition of the shares will entitle you to receive a dividend) and then sold 4,000 shares 20 days after Mimosa Pty Ltd shares became ex-dividend. Her total franking credit entitlement for the income year was more than \$5,000. The shares she sold are deemed to have been held for less than 45 days, based on the last in first out method. Jessica is not entitled to the franking credits on the 4,000 shares sold.

Related payments rule

In certain circumstances, the related payments rule prevents you from claiming the franking credits attached to franked dividends if a related payment is made. This rule applies if you make a 'related payment', for instance you or an associate are under an obligation to pass of the benefit of the franked dividend to someone else.

You must be a 'qualified person' for the payment of each dividend or distribution to claim the franking credits attached to franked dividends.

Where there has been a related payment, to be a 'qualified person' in relation to a dividend or distribution, you must hold the relevant shares 'at risk' for the period beginning on the 45th day before and ending on the 45th day after the day on which the shares became ex-dividend (90 days before and after for preference shares).

Being a 'qualified person' for the payment of current dividends or distributions does not mean that you are automatically a 'qualified person' for future dividends or distributions if you or an associate are under an obligation to pass on those dividends or distributions to someone else. That is, the related payments rule must be satisfied for all subsequent dividends and distributions.

Dividend washing integrity rule

The integrity rule prevents you from claiming more than one set of franking credits where you have received a dividend as a result of dividend washing.

Dividend washing occurs where:

- you, or an entity connected to you, sell an interest in shares that you hold while retaining the right to a dividend, then
- by using a special ASX trading market, you purchase some substantially identical shares.

If the dividend washing integrity rule applies, you are not entitled to a tax offset for the franking credits for the second dividend. However, if your interest in the second parcel of shares exceeds the interest in the first parcel, you may be entitled to claim a portion of these additional franking credits. For more information, see ato.gov.au/dividendwashing

The integrity rule generally applies to all resident taxpayers, but there is an exception. The integrity rule generally does not apply to individuals who receive \$5,000 or less in franking credits in a year, which we call the **small shareholder exemption**.

This exemption only applies when the dividend that was received as a result of dividend washing has been received by the individual directly. It does not apply where the dividend flows indirectly to an individual through their interest in a trust or partnership.

Individuals who receive \$5,000 or less in franking credits in an income year should however be aware that the Commissioner may apply the general anti-avoidance rules if they have entered into a scheme for the purpose of obtaining franking credit benefits.

Disclosure on your tax return (all years)

If you are not entitled to a franking tax offset, show on your tax return the amount of franked dividend received at **T** **Franked amount** item **11**. Do not show the amount of any franking credit at **U** **Franking credit** item **11**.

Application of the rules to interests in partnerships and trusts

If you have interests in partnerships or trusts (other than widely held trusts) which hold shares, the holding period rule and the related payments rule apply to your interests in the shares held by the partnership or trust in the same way that the rules apply to shares you own directly. Therefore, the partner or beneficiary has to hold their interest in the shares held by the partnership or trust

'at risk' for the required period. The related payments rule will apply if they are not holding their interest in the partnership or trust 'at risk' and they have an obligation to pass on their share of net income of the partnership or trust which is attributable to the franked dividend.

If you have interests in a widely held trust, the holding period rule and related payments rule apply to your interest in the trust (rather than in the shares held by the trust).

ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS FROM DIVIDEND INCOME

If you invest in shares, you may be able to claim a deduction for certain expenditure you incurred in deriving your income from those shares. The following are examples of expenses that may be deductible.

Management fees

Where you pay ongoing management fees or retainers to investment advisers, you will be able to claim the expenditure as an allowable deduction. Only a proportion of the fee is deductible if the advice covers non-investment matters or relates in part to investments that do not produce assessable income. You cannot claim a deduction for a fee paid for drawing up an initial investment plan.

Interest

If you borrowed money to buy shares, you will be able to claim a deduction for the interest incurred on the loan, provided it is reasonable to expect that assessable dividends will be derived from your investment in the shares. Where the loan was also used for private purposes, you will be able to claim only interest incurred on that part of the loan used to acquire the shares.

Interest on capital protected borrowings

A capital protected borrowing is an arrangement under which listed shares, units or stapled securities are acquired using a borrowing where the borrower is wholly or partly protected against a fall in the market value of the listed shares, units or stapled securities.

Interest attributable to capital protection under a capital protected borrowing arrangement for shares, units or stapled securities entered into, or extended, on or after 1 July 2007 is not deductible. The interest is treated as if it were a payment for a put option. This treatment applies where the shares, units or stapled securities are held on capital account for investment purposes.

The amount of interest that is reasonably attributable to the capital protection is worked out using the methodology applicable to the type of capital protected borrowing.

For more information on capital protected products and borrowings and on how to work out the interest payable on a borrowing that is attributable to capital protection, go to ato.gov.au or contact a recognised tax adviser.

Travel expenses

You may be able to claim a deduction for travel expenses where you need to travel to service your investment portfolio, for example, to consult with a broker or to attend a stock exchange or company meeting. You can claim a deduction for the full amount of your expenses where the sole purpose of the travel relates to the share investment. Where the travel is predominantly of a private nature, only the expenses which relate directly to servicing your portfolio will be allowable.

Cost of journals and publications

You may be able to claim the cost of purchasing specialist investment journals and other publications, subscriptions or share market information services which you use to manage your share portfolio. See *Taxation Determination TD 2004/1 – Income tax: are the costs of subscriptions to share market information services and investment journals deductible under section 8-1 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997?* for more information.

Internet access and computers

You may be able to claim some of the cost of internet access in managing your portfolio. For example, if you use an internet broker to buy and sell shares, the cost of internet access will be deductible to the extent you use the internet for this purpose. You cannot claim a deduction for the private use portion.

You can also claim a capital allowance (previously known as depreciation) for the decline in value of your computer equipment to the extent that it has been used for income-producing purposes. You cannot claim a capital allowance for the private use portion.

For more information, see *Claiming mobile phone, internet and home phone expenses* at ato.gov.au

Borrowing expenses

You may be able to claim expenses you incurred directly in taking out a loan for purchasing shares which can reasonably be expected to produce assessable dividend income. The expenses may include establishment fees, legal expenses and stamp duty on the loan. If you incurred deductible expenses of this kind totalling more than \$100, they are apportioned over five years or the term of the loan, whichever is less. If your expenses are \$100 or less, they are fully deductible in the year you incur them.

Dividends that include listed investment company capital gain amounts

If a listed investment company (LIC) pays a dividend to you that includes a LIC capital gain amount, you may be entitled to an income tax deduction.

You can claim a deduction if:

- you are an individual
- you were an Australian resident when a LIC paid you a dividend

- the dividend was paid to you after 1 July 2001, and
- the dividend included a LIC capital gain amount and the capital gain resulted from a CGT event happening to a CGT asset owned by the LIC for at least twelve months.

The amount of the deduction is 50% of the LIC capital gain amount. The LIC capital gain amount will be shown separately on your dividend statement.

You do not show the LIC capital gain amount at item **18 Capital gains** on your tax return.

EXAMPLE 8: Completion of tax return

Ben, an Australian resident, was a shareholder in XYZ Ltd, a listed investment company. For the 2017–18 income year, Ben received a fully franked dividend from XYZ Ltd of \$70,000 including a LIC capital gain amount of \$50,000. Ben includes on his tax return the following amounts:

Franked dividend (shown at T item 11)	\$ 70,000
Franking credit (shown at U item 11)	\$ 30,000
Assessable income	\$100,000
Deduction for LIC capital gain (shown as deduction at item D8 Dividend deductions)	\$(25,000)
Net assessable income	\$75,000

Other deductions

Any other expenses you incur which relate directly to maintaining your portfolio are also deductible. These could include bookkeeping expenses and postage.

Deductions denominated in a foreign currency

All deductions that are denominated in a foreign currency must be translated into Australian dollars before being claimed on your Australian tax return. For more information on the exchange rates that should be used in translating foreign currency deductions, go to ato.gov.au and see:

- *Foreign exchange (forex): translation (conversion) rules*
- *Foreign exchange (forex): general information on average rates.*

Expenses that are not deductible

Unless you are carrying on a business of share trading, you cannot claim a deduction for the cost of acquiring shares (for example, expenses for brokerage and stamp duty). These will form part of the cost base for CGT purposes when you dispose of the shares. Unless you are carrying on a business of share trading, you cannot claim a deduction for a loss on the disposal of shares. The loss is a capital loss for CGT purposes. For further information, see the *Personal investors guide to capital gains tax 2018* (NAT 4152).

DIVIDENDS PAID OR CREDITED BY NON-RESIDENT COMPANIES

If you are a temporary resident and receive dividends from a non-resident company you will not need to show the dividend on your Australian income tax return. For more information, see *Foreign income exemption for temporary residents – introduction* at ato.gov.au

If you are a shareholder of a New Zealand franking company that has paid a dividend that is franked with Australian franking credits, you may be eligible to claim a franking tax offset. For more information on how to claim the franking tax offset, see *Trans-Tasman imputation special rules* at ato.gov.au

Non-resident companies, other than certain New Zealand franking companies, are not subject to the imputation system and you will not be entitled to claim a franking tax offset for any tax paid by the company.

However, you may find that foreign tax has been withheld from the dividend so that the amount paid or credited to you is reduced.

In most circumstances, you will be liable to pay Australian income tax on the dividend. You must include the full amount of the dividend at item **20 Foreign source income and foreign assets or property** on your *Tax return for individuals (supplementary section) 2018*. This means the amount you are paid or credited plus the amount of any foreign tax which has been deducted. You may be able to claim a foreign income tax offset for the foreign tax paid.

In certain circumstances, foreign dividends may be exempt from tax. For example, they may be exempt to avoid any double taxation, or exempt because the portfolio out of which the dividends have been paid has already been taxed at a comparable rate.

There are special rules which need to be satisfied for you to claim a foreign income tax offset. For more information see:

- **Q20 Foreign source income and foreign assets or property** at ato.gov.au/instructions2018
- *Guide to foreign income tax offset rules* (NAT 72923) at ato.gov.au

EXAMPLE 9: Payments by foreign companies

Emma has shares in a company resident in the United States of America. She was entitled to be paid a dividend of \$400. Before she was paid the dividend the company deducted \$60 in foreign tax, sending Emma the remaining \$340. (All amounts have been translated into Australian dollars.)

When she fills in her Australian tax return, Emma includes \$400 at **M Other net foreign source income** item **20** and she may be able to claim a foreign income tax offset of \$60 at **O Foreign income tax offset** item **20**.

Dividends denominated in a foreign currency

All assessable dividends received that are denominated in a foreign currency must be translated into Australian dollars before being included on your Australian tax return.

For more information on the exchange rates that should be used in translating foreign currency amounts, go to ato.gov.au and see:

- *Foreign exchange (forex): translation (conversion) rules*
- *Foreign exchange (forex): general information on average rates*

DIVIDENDS PAID OR CREDITED TO NON-RESIDENT SHAREHOLDERS

Non-resident individuals can also be paid or credited franked dividends or unfranked dividends from Australian resident companies. However, they are taxed differently from resident shareholders.

If your residency status alters during the year (for example, you became a resident in the second half of the year) there may be occasions where withholding tax was not deducted from payments made to you before you became a resident. If this happens, you should attach a schedule to your tax return explaining your circumstances. We will work out the amount of withholding tax you have to pay on these dividends and advise you of this amount.

Franked dividends

If you are a non-resident of Australia, the franked amount of dividends you are paid or credited are not subject to Australian income and withholding taxes. The unfranked amount will be subject to withholding tax (see below). However, you are not entitled to any franking tax offset for franked dividends. You cannot use any franking credit attached to franked dividends to reduce the amount of tax payable on other Australian income and you cannot get a refund of the franking credit. You should not include the amount of any franked dividend or any franking credit on your Australian tax return.

Unfranked dividends

The other type of dividend a resident company may pay or credit to you is an unfranked dividend. There is no franking credit attached to these dividends.

The whole or a portion of an unfranked dividend may be declared to be conduit foreign income on your dividend statement. To the extent that the unfranked dividend is declared to be conduit foreign income, it is not assessable income and is exempt from withholding tax.

Any other unfranked dividends paid or credited to a non-resident are subject to a final withholding tax.

Withholding tax is imposed on the full amount of the unfranked dividends. That is, no deductions may be made from the dividends, and a flat rate of withholding tax is applied whether or not you have other Australian taxable income. Withholding tax is also deducted from

the unfranked amount of any partly franked dividends that you are paid or credited.

Withholding tax is deducted by the company before a dividend is paid, so you will be paid or credited only the reduced amount. It is deducted at a rate of 30% unless you are a resident of a country with which Australia has entered into a tax treaty that varies the amount of withholding tax that can be levied on dividends.

Australia has entered into tax treaties with more than 40 countries and the rate of withholding tax on dividends is limited to 15% in most of these agreements. Details of the rates that apply to residents of specific countries can be obtained from us. Dividends paid on shares that are classified as non-equity shares under the debt and equity rules are treated as interest payments for withholding tax purposes. For the residents of many countries, the rate of withholding tax on these payments is 10%.

The withholding tax on unfranked dividends is a final tax, so you will have no further Australian tax liability on the dividend income. Therefore, if the only income you earned was dividend income which was a fully franked dividend or an unfranked amount of a dividend which either has withholding tax deducted or declared to be conduit foreign income, you do not need to lodge an Australian tax return.

If you were paid or credited dividends which were not fully franked and were not declared to be conduit foreign income (and from which withholding tax was not deducted) you should attach a separate schedule to your tax return showing details of those dividends. We will work out the amount of withholding tax you have to pay on these dividends and advise you of this amount.

However, if that dividend is paid to you under a demerger that happened on or after 1 July 2002 and the head entity has not elected that it be assessable, you do not include it on your tax return even though it is an unfranked dividend and no withholding tax has been paid on that dividend. If you are in any doubt, contact us.

Deductions

You cannot claim any expenses incurred in deriving dividends which are not assessable in Australia, including any dividend which you do not need to show on your Australian tax return.

PARTNERS WHO HAVE AN AMOUNT ATTRIBUTABLE TO A DIVIDEND INCLUDED IN THEIR NET INCOME OR LOSS FROM A PARTNERSHIP

When calculating its net income or loss for tax purposes, a partnership that is paid or credited a franked dividend includes both the amount of the dividend and the franking credit in its assessable income. This is subject to the partnership satisfying the holding period rule and other rules contained in the provisions dealing with franked dividends.

If a share of the net income or loss of a partnership shown at item **13 Partnership and trusts** on your tax return (supplementary section) is attributable to a franked dividend, you may be entitled to claim a franking tax offset, which is your share of the partnership's franking credit arising from that dividend.

You are not entitled to a franking tax offset if you do not satisfy the holding period rule or related payments rule in relation to your interest in the shares held by the partnership, or the partnership does not satisfy those rules in relation to the shares.

If the partnership satisfies the rules in relation to the shares and the small shareholder exemption applies to you, you do not have to satisfy the holding period rule.

For more information, see **When you are not entitled to claim a franking tax offset** on page 7.

EXAMPLE 10: Partnerships and trusts

Partnership income	
Item	Value (\$)
Franked dividend	700
Franking credit, non-cash	300
Net income of partnership	1,000
Individual partner: 1/2 share	
Taxable 1/2 share of net income of the partnership	500
Other assessable income	80,000
Total taxable income	80,500
Gross tax at 2017–18 rates	17,709.50
less 1/2 of total franking tax offset	150
Tax payable*	17,559.50

* This does not include any liability for the Medicare levy.

BENEFICIARIES WHO HAVE AN AMOUNT ATTRIBUTABLE TO A DIVIDEND INCLUDED IN THEIR NET INCOME FROM A TRUST

A trust that is paid or credited franked dividends includes both the amount of the dividend and the franking credit in its assessable income when calculating its net income or loss for tax purposes.

This is subject to the trust satisfying the holding period rule and other rules contained in the provisions dealing with franked dividends.

If there is any net income of a trust to which no beneficiary is presently entitled, or for which the trustee is assessed on behalf of a beneficiary who is under a legal disability, the trustee is taxed on that income at special rates of tax. The trustee will be entitled to a franking tax offset for any franking credit included in that part of the net income.

If you are the beneficiary of a trust and the trust makes a loss for tax purposes, there is no net income of the trust and any franking credit is lost. Trust losses cannot be distributed to beneficiaries.

If a share of the net income of a trust shown at item **13** on your tax return (supplementary section) is attributable to a franked dividend, you may be entitled to claim a franking tax offset. This is your share of the trust's franking credit arising from that dividend.

If the trust is a widely held trust, you will not be entitled to a franking tax offset if you do not satisfy the holding period rule or related payments rule in relation to your interest as a beneficiary in the trust or the trust does not satisfy those rules in relation to the shares. If the trust is not a widely held trust, you must satisfy the holding period rule and related payments rule in relation to your interest in the shares held by the trust in order to be entitled to the franking tax offset.

If the trust satisfies the holding period rule and other rules in relation to the shares and the small shareholder exemption applies to you, you do not have to satisfy the holding period rule.

For more information, see **When you are not entitled to claim a franking tax offset** on page 7.

Special rules apply to beneficiaries of trusts (other than trusts that elect to be family trusts within the meaning of the ITAA 1936 or deceased estates) to determine whether they hold their interest at risk.

EXAMPLE 11: Trust with loss in 2017–18

Trust	
Item	Value (\$)
Franked dividend	2,100
Franking credit, non-cash	900
Total income of the trust	3,000
less deductible expenses of the trust	4,000
Loss	(1,000)

Trust losses cannot be distributed to beneficiaries. Franking credits are not refundable in this example.

EXAMPLE 12: Trust with net income in 2017–18

Trust	
Item	Value (\$)
Franked dividend	2,100
Franking credit, non-cash	900
Net income of trust	3,000
Beneficiary information	
Item	Value (\$)
Taxable $\frac{1}{3}$ share of net income of trust	1,000
Other assessable income	80,000
Total taxable income	81,000
Gross tax at 2017–18 rates	17,872
less $\frac{1}{3}$ of total franking tax offset	300
Tax payable*	17,572

* This does not include any liability for the Medicare levy.

JOINT OWNERSHIP OF SHARES

Shares may be held in joint names. If you hold shares jointly with another person, such as your spouse, it is assumed that ownership of the shares is divided equally.

Shares can also be owned in unequal proportions. You have to be able to demonstrate this (for example, with a record of the amount contributed by each party to the cost of acquiring the shares). Dividend income and franking credits are assessable in the same proportion as the shares are owned.

Shares held in children's names

Custodians, such as parents or grandparents holding shares on behalf of minors (under a legal disability), should be treated as the owners of the shares unless the child is considered the genuine beneficial owner.

If a child is the owner of shares, any dividend income should be included on the child's tax return. Note that in some circumstances the income of a minor is subject to the highest marginal rate of tax. Any excess franking credits may also be refundable.

For more information, see *Children's share investments* at ato.gov.au

LIQUIDATION, TAKEOVERS, MERGERS AND DEMERGERS

If you purchased shares in a company that has gone into liquidation, see *Guide to capital gains tax 2018* for more information on how to calculate your CGT.

If you purchased shares in a company that has been taken over or merged with another company, for more information on how to calculate your CGT, see *Personal investors guide to capital gains tax 2018*.

RIGHTS ISSUES

Right to buy shares

Companies may periodically issue their shareholders with rights to purchase additional shares. These are otherwise known as call rights or call options.

A particular rights issue might be described as a 'one-for-four' issue, meaning that you are entitled to purchase an additional share for every four shares you currently own. You can choose to exercise the right, sell it on the stock exchange or allow it to lapse.

You do not have to include in your assessable income the market value of the rights to acquire shares in a company, provided:

- you already own shares in the company
- the rights were issued to you because of your ownership of the shares
- your shares, and the rights, must not have been revenue assets or trading stock at the time they were issued
- the rights were not acquired under an employee share scheme
- your shares, and the rights, were not traditional securities, and
- your shares were not convertible interests.

If all of these conditions are satisfied, the only tax consequences that may arise involve CGT. For information on how CGT measures apply to rights issues, see *Personal investors guide to capital gains tax 2018*.

In other situations, the issue of the rights may mean that you have derived assessable income, or that the CGT provisions apply.

If you acquire rights to additional shares and are a share trader or hold shares as a revenue asset, and you need further information about the tax treatment of the share rights, contact us.

Right to sell shares

If you are issued a tradeable right to sell your shares back to a company (otherwise known as a put option), the market value of the right should be included in your assessable income at the time the right is issued. Any amount that is included in your assessable income will be included in the cost base of your rights or, if you exercise the rights, in the cost base of the shares you acquired as a result of exercising the right.

OPTIONS

Companies may also issue their shareholders with options. If you receive such an option, you have the right to acquire or sell shares in the company at a specified price on a specified date. You may also be able to trade these options on the stock exchange or allow them to lapse.

Options are similar to rights and the terms are often used interchangeably. The main difference between options and rights is that options can usually be held for a much longer period than rights before they lapse or must be exercised. Options may also be issued initially to both

existing shareholders and non-shareholders while rights can only be issued initially to existing shareholders.

Exchange traded options are types of options that are not created by the company but by independent third parties and are traded on the stock exchange. They come in two forms:

- a call option, which is a contract that entitles its holder to buy a fixed number of shares in the designated company at a stated price on or before a specified expiry date, and
- a put option, which is a contract that entitles its holder to sell a fixed number of shares in the designated company at a stated price on or before a specified expiry date.

The information in the **Rights issues** section also applies to call and put options which are issued to you as a consequence of your ownership of shares in a company.

SHARE WARRANTS

Share warrants come in many different forms, for example, equity warrants, endowment warrants, portfolio warrants, capital plus warrants and instalment warrants.

The income tax and CGT consequences of holding, acquiring and disposing of these financial products can be quite complex.

If you have disposed of any of these products, you should contact us or a recognised tax adviser if you are unsure of the taxation consequences.

OFF-MARKET SHARE BUY-BACKS

If you disposed of shares to a company under a buy-back arrangement, you may have made a capital gain or capital loss. A part of the buy-back price may be treated as a dividend for tax purposes. The time you make the capital gain or capital loss will depend on the particular buy-back offer.

If the information provided by the company or any class ruling that has been issued in relation to the buy-back is not sufficient for you to calculate your capital gain or capital loss, you may need to seek advice from us or a recognised tax adviser.

For more information about off-market share buy-backs, see:

- *Taxation Determination TD 2004/22 – Income tax: for off-market share buy-backs of listed shares, whether the buy-back price is set by tender process or not, what is the market value of the share for the purposes of subsection 159GZZZQ(2) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936?* (at ato.gov.au)
- any class ruling that has been issued in relation to the buy-back.

KEEPING RECORDS

Generally, you should keep records of both income and deductions relating to your share investment for five years from 31 October 2018 or the date you lodge your tax return, whichever is later.

Remember that your investment in shares (or other assets such as instalment receipts) may also give rise to a capital gain when you dispose of them. For CGT purposes, you will need to keep detailed records of any shares or other assets you acquired on or after 20 September 1985 or of any other related transaction. You will need to keep those records for five years after you dispose of the shares or other assets.

You must keep records setting out in English:

- the date you acquired the asset
- any amounts which will form part of the cost base of the asset
- the date you dispose of the asset, and
- the capital proceeds from the sale.

You can choose to enter information from your CGT records into an asset register. Keeping an asset register may enable you to discard records that you may otherwise be required to keep for long periods of time. For more information, go to ato.gov.au and see:

- *Guide to capital gains tax 2018*
- *Taxation Ruling TR 2002/10 – Income tax: capital gains tax: asset register*

Keep all the information that a company gives you about your shares. It may be important when calculating your CGT liability after you dispose of them. You must also keep records relating to your ownership of assets for five years from the date you dispose of them.

PRIVATE COMPANY TRANSACTIONS TREATED AS DIVIDENDS

Division 7A of the ITAA 1936 is an integrity measure aimed at preventing private companies, including non-resident private companies, from making tax-free distributions to shareholders (or their associates).

If you are a shareholder or an associate of a shareholder in a private company which makes a payment or loan to you or forgives a debt that you owe the company, the company will be taken under Division 7A to have paid you a dividend unless the payment or loan came within specified exclusions.

Division 7A does not apply to the payment if the payment is made to you in your capacity as an employee.

There are a number of exclusions which are detailed in *Payments and other benefits not affected*. Go to ato.gov.au and enter 'Private company benefits – Division 7A dividends' in the 'Search for' box at the top of the page. For example, the following transactions will not be treated as dividends:

- payments of genuine debts
- loans where the loan is put under a qualifying written agreement (meeting minimum interest rate and maximum term criteria) before the private company's lodgment day. In such cases, however, minimum yearly repayments are required to avoid amounts treated as dividends arising in later years

- payments or loans that are otherwise included in your assessable income or specifically excluded from assessable income, by virtue of some other tax law provision.

In Division 7A there are broad definitions for ‘payment’ and ‘loan’. Payment, for example, is now defined to include the provision of a private company asset for use by you.

Subject to the private company’s distributable surplus, the amount of the dividend will generally be equal to:

- the payment made
- the amount of the loan that has not been repaid before the private company’s lodgment day
- the amount of the debt which has been forgiven

If the amounts are treated as dividends you will need to include them in your tax return as an unfranked dividend. In certain circumstances, the dividend may be franked. For example, a dividend paid because of a family law obligation may be franked.

The Commissioner has a discretion to disregard the amount treated as a dividend if it arose because of an honest mistake or inadvertent omission by you, the private company or any other entity whose conduct contributed to that result.

In Division 7A there are also rules relating to payments and loans made through interposed entities and guarantees.

An amount treated as a dividend is not subject to either withholding tax or PAYG withholding and is not a fringe benefit.

For more information on whether the Division 7A rules apply to you, see *Private company benefits – Division 7A dividends* at ato.gov.au

From 1 July 2009, Division 7A applies in relation to loans or payments made, or debts that are forgiven by a closely-held corporate limited partnership to partners or the partner’s associates. For more information, see *Division 7A – closely held corporate limited partnerships* at ato.gov.au

TRUST LOANS, PAYMENTS AND FORGIVEN DEBTS TREATED AS DIVIDENDS

Division 7A also includes rules in Subdivision EA which are designed to ensure that a trustee cannot shelter trust income at the prevailing company rate by creating a present entitlement to an amount of net income in favour of a private company without distributing it and then distributing the underlying cash to a shareholder (or their associate) of a private company.

You may include an amount in your assessable income as if it were a dividend if:

- you are a shareholder or an associate of a shareholder of a private company
- the private company has an unpaid present entitlement from a trust estate, and

- the trustee of the trust estate does one, or more, of the following
 - makes a payment to you that discharges or reduces a present entitlement to an amount that is attributable to an unrealised gain
 - makes a loan to you
 - forgives a debt in your favour.

In applying Subdivision EA to payments, loans and forgiven debts, the trust is treated as a private company for the purpose of determining whether an amount treated as a dividend arises. To enable this, there is a modified application of the general Division 7A provisions.

The amount included as an unfranked dividend in your assessable income is the lesser of:

- the actual amount of the payment, loan or forgiven debt
- the amount of the unpaid present entitlement less any amounts that have been treated as dividends because of previous applications of Subdivision EA or amounts taken to be loans under section 109UB of the ITAA 1936 which is the predecessor of Subdivision EA
- the distributable surplus of the private company with the unpaid present entitlement.

However, Subdivision EA does not apply in all circumstances where there is an unpaid present entitlement to an amount of income from a trust. The general provisions of Division 7A may be applicable, where:

- the entitlement arose after 15 December 2009
- the trustee of the trust is a shareholder or an associate of a shareholder of the private company
- for that entitlement, the private company provides financial accommodation to the trustee of the trust, or enters into a transaction with the trustee of the trust which in substance effects a Division 7A loan. This can occur in circumstances where funds representing the unpaid present entitlement remain intermingled with funds of the trust.

For more information on whether the Division 7A rules apply to you, go to ato.gov.au and see:

- *Private company benefits – Division 7A dividends, including Division 7A – trust amounts treated as dividends – payments and loans through the interposed entities*
- *Taxation Ruling TR 2010/3 – Income tax: Division 7A loans: trust entitlements.*

SALE OR DISPOSAL OF COMPANY BONDS AND CONVERTIBLE NOTES

Company bonds

When you purchase a company bond from someone else, the price you paid for the bond is the cost to you of the bond. This cost to you may be different from the amount of money the company originally borrowed and will have to pay when it redeems the bond.

When a company redeems a bond by paying back the money it borrowed, and you make a profit because the amount you paid for the bond is less than the amount the

company paid you to redeem the bond, that profit should be included on your tax return (supplementary section) at item **24 Other income**. See **example 13**. That profit is not treated as a capital gain.

When a company redeems a bond by paying back the money it borrowed, and you make a loss because you paid more for the bond than the amount the company paid you when the company redeemed the bond, in most instances you can claim a deduction equal to the amount of the loss on your tax return (supplementary section) at item **D15 Other deductions**. It is not usually treated as a capital loss.

If you sell a company bond to someone else before the company repays the money that it borrowed and you make a profit, that profit should be included on your tax return (supplementary section) at item **24 Other income**. That profit is not treated as a capital gain.

If you sell a company bond to someone else before the company repays the money it borrowed and you make a loss, in most instances you can claim a deduction equal to that loss on your tax return (supplementary section) at item **D15 Other deductions**. It is not usually treated as a capital loss.

You are not entitled to claim a deduction for a loss you made on the disposal or redemption of a bond that is a traditional security to the extent that the loss is a capital loss or is of a capital nature if:

- in the case of a bond that is a marketable security
 - you did not acquire the bond in the ordinary course of trading on a securities market and, at the time you acquired it, you could not acquire an identical security in the ordinary course of trading on a securities market, and
 - you disposed of the bond outside the ordinary course of trading on a securities market
- at the time of disposal or redemption, there was an apprehension or belief that the issuer of the bond would fail to pay all of the amounts that it owed to investors.

Capital losses may be able to be applied against capital gains this income year or in a future income year in calculating your net capital gain included in assessable income.

EXAMPLE 13: Company bonds

Company X borrows \$1,000,000 from investors by issuing 10,000 bonds for \$100 each. These bonds pay interest at 8% per annum until the bonds mature in five years time and Company X pays back the money it borrowed.

Terry buys 100 Company X bonds for \$98.75 each on the market and holds the bonds until they mature. On maturity, Company X pays Terry \$100 each to redeem the bonds.

Terry made a profit in the year in which the bonds were redeemed by Company X. The profit, \$125, is equal to the proceeds paid to Terry on redemption less the money Terry paid to purchase the bonds, calculated as follows:

100 bonds × \$100.00 each	=	\$10,000 redemption proceeds paid to Terry
100 bonds × \$98.75 each	=	\$9,875 cost to Terry
\$10,000 – \$9,875	=	\$125 profit

Terry includes the \$125 on his tax return (supplementary section) at item **24 Other income**.

Convertible notes issued by a company before 10 May 1989

Some company bonds give you the choice, at some point during the duration of the loan, of receiving a share or shares in the borrowing company or another company instead of being paid back the money lent to the company. These bonds are referred to here as 'convertible notes'.

There may be CGT consequences for investors when a convertible note that was issued by the company before 10 May 1989 is exchanged for shares. For more information, see *Guide to capital gains tax 2018*.

Convertible notes issued by a company after 10 May 1989 and before 15 May 2002

When a convertible note that was issued by a company after 10 May 1989 and before 15 May 2002, is exchanged for a company share or shares, and there is a profit because the shares are worth more (at the time of the exchange) than the amount you paid for the convertible note, this profit should be included on your tax return (supplementary section) at item **24 Other income**.

This amount is income to you whether or not you sell the shares. It is not treated as a capital gain.

When a convertible note that was issued by a company before 15 May 2002, is exchanged for a company share or shares, and a loss is made because the company share or shares have a lower value (at the time of the exchange) than the amount that you paid for the convertible note, in most instances you may claim a deduction equal to

that loss on your tax return (supplementary section) at item **D15 Other deductions**. It is not usually treated as a capital loss.

An exception to your entitlement to claim a loss as a deduction is made for a disposal or redemption of a convertible note that takes place:

- outside the ordinary course of trading on a securities market, and
- at the time of disposal or redemption, there is an apprehension or belief that the issuer of the convertible note will fail to pay all of the amounts that it owes to investors.

In these circumstances, you are not permitted to deduct the loss you made to the extent that it is a capital loss or the loss is of a capital nature.

A sale or disposal of the shares that you acquired through the convertible note will be treated in the same way as the sale or disposal of any other share you may own. If you ordinarily treat shares as an investment and show the gains and losses as capital gains and capital losses, then you should do the same when you sell the shares you acquired through your previous investment in a convertible note.

Special rules govern the cost base of shares acquired in exchange for a convertible note and your entitlement to the CGT discount in respect of those shares. For information on these rules, see *Guide to capital gains tax 2018*.

Convertible notes issued by a company after 14 May 2002

When a convertible note that was issued by the company after 14 May 2002 is exchanged for a company share or shares and:

- there is a profit because the shares are worth more at the exchange date than the cost of the convertible note, or
- there is a loss because the shares are worth less at the exchange date than the cost of the convertible note

as long as the criteria below are met, that profit or loss is not recognised for tax purposes until the shares into which the notes were converted are disposed of.

Special rules govern the cost base of shares acquired in exchange for a convertible note and your entitlement to the capital gains tax discount in respect of those shares. For information on these rules, see *Guide to capital gains tax 2018*.

To be eligible for this treatment the convertible note must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- The convertible note must have been issued after 7.30pm (by legal time in the Australian Capital Territory) on 14 May 2002. The date the convertible note was acquired by the investor is not relevant, only the date the convertible note was issued by the company.
- Before its conversion, the convertible note was a traditional security. That is, a debt security not issued at a substantial discount to face value, and without deferred income features such as indexation of invested capital.

- After conversion, the shares into which the note converts are ordinary shares of a company. The shares do not have to be shares in the company that issued the convertible note. The note can be exchanged for shares in an unrelated company, but they must be ordinary shares of a company.

If the convertible notes do not meet all of the above criteria, they will be treated in the same way as convertible notes that were issued by a company after 10 May 1989 and before 15 May 2002.

Sale or disposal of company bonds and convertible notes that are denominated in a foreign currency

Gains and losses made on disposal of foreign currency denominated notes and bonds must be translated into Australian dollars for your Australian tax return. Both the acquisition cost of the bond or note and the disposal proceeds should be translated into Australian dollars, and a comparison be made between the two amounts to work out the gain or loss for tax purposes.

An example of such a calculation is provided in *Taxation Determination TD 2006/30 – Income tax: foreign exchange: when calculating the amount of any gain or loss on disposal or redemption of a traditional security denominated in a foreign currency, should the amounts relevant to the calculation be translated (converted) into Australian dollars when each of the relevant events takes place?* at ato.gov.au

For more information on whether the new rules will apply to you and on the exchange rates that should be used in translating foreign currency amounts, go to ato.gov.au and see:

- *Foreign exchange gains and losses*
- *Foreign exchange (forex): translation (conversion) rules*

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNET

- For general tax information and up-to-date and comprehensive information about deductions, go to ato.gov.au

PUBLICATIONS

Publications referred to in this guide are:

- *Capital protected products and borrowings*
- *Debt and equity tests*
- *Dividend washing integrity rule*
- *Division 7A – closely held corporate limited partnerships*
- *Division 7A – trust amounts treated as dividends – payments and loans through the interposed entities*
- *Foreign exchange gains and losses*
- *Foreign income exemption for temporary residents – introduction*
- *General information on average rates*
- *Guide to capital gains tax 2018*
- *Guide to foreign income tax offset rules 2018* (NAT 72923)
- *Personal investors guide to capital gains tax 2018* (NAT 4152)
- *Private company benefits – Division 7A dividends*
- *Refund of franking credits instructions and application for individuals 2018* (NAT 4105)
- Taxation Determination TD 2004/1 – *Income tax: are the costs of subscriptions to share market information services and investment journals deductible under section 8-1 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997?*
- Taxation Determination TD 2004/22 – *Income tax: for off-market share buy-backs of listed shares, whether the buy-back price is set by tender process or not, what is the market value of the share for the purposes of subsection 159GZZZQ(2) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936?*
- Taxation Determination TD 2006/30 – *Income tax: foreign exchange: when calculating the amount of any gain or loss on disposal or redemption of a traditional security denominated in a foreign currency should the amounts relevant to the calculation be translated (converted) into Australian dollars when each of the relevant events takes place?*
- Taxation Ruling TR 2002/10 – *Income tax: capital gains tax: asset register*
- Taxation Ruling TR 2005/23 – *Income tax: listed investment companies*
- Taxation Ruling TR 2010/3 – *Income tax: Division 7A loans: trust entitlements*
- Translation (conversion) rules
- Trans-Tasman imputation – information for New Zealand companies.

To get any publication referred to in this guide:

- go to ato.gov.au/publications, or
- phone **1300 720 092**.

PHONE

We can offer a more personalised service if you provide your tax file number (TFN).

- **Individual** **13 28 61**
Individual income tax and general personal tax enquiries, including capital gains tax
- **Business** **13 28 66**
Information about business income tax, fringe benefits tax (FBT), fuel tax credits, goods and services tax (GST), pay as you go (PAYG) and activity statements, including lodgment and payment, accounts and business registration (including Australian business number and tax file number), and dividend and royalty withholding tax
- **Superannuation** **13 10 20**

OTHER SERVICES

If you do not speak English well and need help from the ATO, phone the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **13 14 50**.

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can phone us through the National Relay Service (NRS) on the numbers listed below, and ask for the ATO number you need:

- TTY users, phone **13 36 77**. For ATO 1800 free call numbers, phone **1800 555 677**.
- Speak and Listen (speech to speech relay) users, phone **1300 555 727**. For ATO 1800 free call numbers, phone **1800 555 727**.
- Internet relay users, connect to internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au

LODGE ONLINE

Lodging online with *myTax* is the easiest and fastest way to do your own tax.

Benefits of lodging online:

- Information from employers, banks and government agencies is pre-filled, saving you time and effort.
- We use a range of systems and controls to ensure that your information is protected. It's as safe as online banking.
- It's available 24/7 so you can lodge at your convenience.
- Get your refund faster – generally within two weeks.

For more information about our lodgment options, go to ato.gov.au/lodgeonline

