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Greetings from the IGT

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...and it is hard to believe that 2017 is almost over. This past year has been a whirlwind of reviews and complaints, submissions, moving premises and engaging with stakeholders both familiar and those only introduced to us this year.

As the year draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has engaged with and supported our office. I reiterate the message that we are here to help and will do our utmost in all cases.

I also acknowledge and express my gratitude for the hard work and dedication of my staff, many of whom you would have met or dealt with throughout the year. The ethos of the office has always been to deliver the highest levels of service to the community and it is pleasing that feedback from our satisfaction survey suggests that we do.

It is also pleasing that many of the ideals which are instilled in our team accord with ancient precepts laid down thousands of years ago within the Egyptian Civil Service, that were recently brought to my attention by Mr Michael Inglis of Counsel, and which are still relevant today:

- Be courteous and tactful as well as honest and diligent.
- All your doings are publicly known, and must therefore be beyond complaint or criticism.
- Be absolutely impartial.
- Always give a reason for refusing a plea; complainants like a kindly hearing even more than a successful plea.
- Preserve dignity but avoid inspiring fear.
- Be an artist in words, that you may be strong, for the tongue is a sword.

You can expect this from everyone in our team in all your dealings with us.

Ali Noroozi
IGT



Official opening of new IGT office

On 8 November 2017, we were delighted to host the Hon Kelly O'Dwyer MP, Minister for Revenue and Financial Services, as well as leaders and representatives of the public service and private sector at the official opening of the IGT's new premises.

The event was a big success and we are grateful to everyone who made time to attend.



Review update

The reviews into [GST Refunds](#) and [Pay As You Go Instalments](#) are approaching their tail ends and we expect to finalise both early in the new year.

We have considered an extensive amount of materials and engaged with senior ATO officers in a series of workshops on various aspects of internal and external fraud control as part of the [ATO's Fraud Control Management](#) review. We expect to meet the deadline of 30 June 2018.

The [Future of the Tax Profession](#) review is well underway and we have conducted a significant amount of international and domestic research as well as considering ATO materials. The IGT has recently delivered the closing address of a Symposium on the Future of the Tax Profession hosted by La Trobe and Edith Cowan Universities. The text of the address, which discusses the themes of the review and some of the areas we are examining, is available on our [website](#).



Complaints handling service update and client feedback

As our complaints handling service matures, we have seen an increase in the numbers of taxpayers seeking our assistance. This financial year, up to 30 November 2017, we have received 1,036 complaints – approximately 6 per cent higher than for the same period last year.

Our service continues to deliver favourable outcomes for taxpayers and the feedback from our client satisfaction survey has been very positive. The most recent results show that 80 per cent of respondents were satisfied with our service. Our team members have also received direct positive comments from the taxpayers who have dealt with them. Some of these comments include:



- *I didn't really expect you to be able to work so quickly...excellent, excellent, thanks very much, it's the most response we've had from anyone in 5 years;*
 - *Please accept my sincere thanks for your prompt, courteous and professional response to concerns I raised first with the ATO and then with your office; and*
 - *Thank you for your help. Things really progressed very quickly after I contacted you.*
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Engaging with stakeholders

Whilst client feedback on our service has been very positive, one consistent area of improvement brought to our attention was that a large number of people still do not know they can reach out to us for assistance. To remedy this, our team has actively engaged with a range of stakeholders throughout Australia and it has been a highly productive year in that regard.



This year has seen us engage with our stakeholders and practitioners based in Penrith, Albury, Ballarat, Parramatta, Castle Hill, Newcastle, Campbelltown, Penshurst, Burwood, Gosford, Bankstown and Hurstville as well as those in all of the capital cities.

It is pleasing that the response to these engagement activities has been very positive, as highlighted and reported in the [Courier](#) newspaper following the presentation that was delivered to tax practitioners in Ballarat by the IGT and one of our Directors, Jarrod Joseph.

We hope to continue this work throughout next year. If you are part of a discussion group and would like to arrange a presentation from our team members, please [email](#) us.

Season's greetings

On behalf of our team at the IGT, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and safe and joyous holidays with your family and friends. We look forward to working with you in the New Year.



Feedback

We welcome your feedback on how we can make our newsletter more informative and interesting for the community, including any features that you would like to see in upcoming editions. Please [email us](#) with your suggestions.