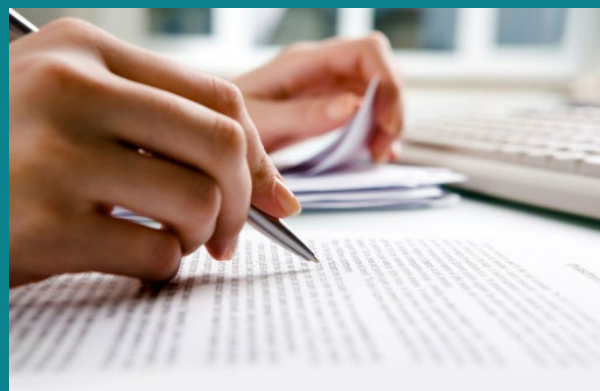


## BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

March 2020

### Latest news about Inland Revenue's transformation



#### Changes to be implemented over Easter

Over the past week we have discussed the risks and benefits of going live now or at a later date with many senior business and tax industry stakeholders. Having considered the risks fully from all perspectives, we have decided that on balance, it is preferable to implement the latest round of our transformation changes over Easter as planned.

In thinking about the option to delay, we recognised that the external risks at any future date are unknown. The Government has signalled that managing COVID-19 will be something that is ongoing for some time, and that includes managing the economic impacts. By upgrading our systems in line with our current plan, we increase our ability to respond swiftly which gives the Government more flexibility to help New Zealanders. A delay increases the risk that we won't be able to meet customers' needs.

The changes we are introducing as part of the fourth transformation release will provide immediate and long-term benefits to New Zealand. Not making these changes would mean delaying the benefits and some are now more critical than ever. For example:

- People will be able to do more for themselves and apply for help if they need it through myIR.
- Any customer experiencing difficulties will be able to apply for relief through a simple, new myIR service – they will no longer have to ring us or fill in a form.
- Borrowers who are struggling to repay their student loans will be able to apply for a special deduction rate online – they won't have to ring us or write to us.
- It will be easier for customers to get the help they need and will help to ensure their payment obligations reflect their current income.
- Employers will be able to set up instalment arrangements themselves online for any debt they owe instead of having to call us.
- The Government guarantee of employer KiwiSaver contributions (which can only be implemented in our new system) is more important than ever in the current environment.

**We will temporarily close to implement the changes**

As we have with our previous changes, we will temporarily close most of our customer facing systems while we implement our next round of changes. We have practised this closedown period, so we have a good idea of how much time is needed. Our priority is to have a stable system for customers and staff.

We will turn off our current system from **3pm 9 April until the morning of 16 April**. This includes two business days and our phone and online services will be unavailable during that time. Please note that on 16 April **COVID-19 restrictions will still apply**, front offices will be closed, and our phone services will be severely limited.

During the closedown period, we will continue to support MSD in approving wage subsidy applications, and will continue to make all expected payments, including Working for Families payments.

What this means for other activities during the closedown period:

- You can still pay your bill through your bank as you normally would and access our website (see also the payment options section below)
- If you have draft returns or draft secure mail in myIR, these will be deleted. Be sure to complete these before 3pm on Thursday 9 April so you don't lose them.
- Employment Information (EI) returns for payday filing that are due over the temporary closedown can be filed on Friday 17 April.
- For returns due on 9 April note that our systems will be unavailable from 3pm.
- If you receive weekly or fortnightly Working for Families payments and are expecting a payment on either Tuesday 14 April or Wednesday 15 April, **you will receive your payment early**, on Thursday 9 April or Friday 10 April.

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## Responding to COVID-19

Ensuring people get their entitlements, including their COVID-19 relief, is an essential service and Inland Revenue's top priority.

We are now required to operate very differently, including how we work with you. Our phone services are severely limited and the only effective way to contact us is **online and through myIR**.



Please be assured that the people who work at Inland Revenue are doing their very best to make sure all New Zealanders get what they need as soon as they need it.

Find out more at [ird.govt.nz/covid19](https://ird.govt.nz/covid19)

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## COVID-19 Payment options

Inland Revenue will write-off any penalties and interest for businesses unable to pay taxes on time due to the impact of COVID-19. Don't worry about contacting us right now. Get in touch with us when you can.

If you can pay there are several options - internet banking or myIR are the easiest.

You can also make credit card or debit card payments over the phone or set up direct debit payments through your myIR account. For further details on alternative ways to pay your tax see: [www.ird.govt.nz/managing-my-tax/make-a-payment/ways-of-paying](http://www.ird.govt.nz/managing-my-tax/make-a-payment/ways-of-paying)

Some Westpac branches will be open one day a week, on a Wednesday, during the COVID-19 lock-down. For more information on Westpac's new branch opening hours please visit: [www.westpac.co.nz/who-we-are/covid-19/branches-and-atms/](http://www.westpac.co.nz/who-we-are/covid-19/branches-and-atms/)

To help get correct payments to people we would like employers to still file their returns as normal. This helps us work out the right amounts for people and helps the Government continue to respond to what is happening in the economy.

Please note: A further update will be sent to provide you with more information on remittance of use of money interest.

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## COVID-19 Support for Business Research and Development (R&D)

The Government recently passed some changes to the R&D Tax Incentive (RDTI) rules under urgency to provide extra cash support to R&D performing businesses, to help support them through the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Broader refundability rules now apply (instead of the limited refundability rules previously in place) and are backdated to the beginning of the scheme (the 2019-20 income year). Businesses can still access the (previous) limited refundability rules, if they prefer these, in the first year of the scheme.

Read the [COVID-19: Support for Business R&D](#) factsheet to find out more about what the broader refundability rules are and how you can access refundable credits.

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## Seminars now online only

We had planned to run a series of face to face seminars around the country to help employers, tax agents and bookkeepers prepare for our upcoming changes. In light of government advice around COVID-19 and the Level 4 precautions being implemented, the seminars are now being presented online, as recorded webinars.



The on-demand seminars are available to watch at your convenience at: [www.ird.govt.nz/webinars](http://www.ird.govt.nz/webinars)

Presentation packs with speaker notes are also available to download.

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## Making improvements to Inland Revenue's website

Over the last year and a half, we've been working to improve our website, by rebuilding it on a modern and enduring platform so we can give our customers a great online experience. We're nearing the end of this journey and to complete this process, we're working to switch off the heritage website and

subsites in the coming months.

### Switching off [www.kiwisaver.govt.nz](http://www.kiwisaver.govt.nz)

One of the sites we've turned off is the old KiwiSaver subsite – [www.kiwisaver.govt.nz](http://www.kiwisaver.govt.nz).

This subsite was turned off on Wednesday 1 April.

To ensure customers clicking on an old URL will still get to the new KiwiSaver material, we will provide temporary redirects for several months.

Visit the new KiwiSaver material: [www.ird.govt.nz/kiwisaver](http://www.ird.govt.nz/kiwisaver)

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### Beta version of the new and improved Tax Technical website available now

We're also building a new Tax Technical website to help people find tax technical answers more quickly.

A beta test version of the site is now available from the main Inland Revenue website.

If you're interested, take a look now and familiarise yourself with the new look and feel, features and layout. You can also provide comments on the site by using the feedback button on the beta pages. Feedback we receive will help us to improve the site before the first release, likely to be in late April.

We'll continue to improve the site in stages throughout 2020.

Visit the beta content here: [www.taxtechnical.ird.govt.nz](http://www.taxtechnical.ird.govt.nz)

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### On-Demand webinars

In April we will endeavour to bring you topic-based on-demand webinars. These are intended to be short presentations which provide you with more detail than our previous webinars.

Some of the topics that will be included will be:

- Short-Process Rulings
- Investment Income filing
- Changes to payment methods

We encourage you to keep an eye on [www.ird.govt.nz/webinars](http://www.ird.govt.nz/webinars), as these will be uploaded throughout April.

The previous webinars that we ran from October 2019 through to March 2020 to help you prepare for Release 4 are also available to view on-demand.

