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Media Release

For immediate issue

500,000 missing out on Rudd Bonus

In spite of one of the largest awareness campaigns in recent times, about 500,000 eligible taxpayers have not submitted their tax returns to claim the Rudd Bonus and this is partly due to taxpayer fears about the way the bonus payments work.

Scott Griffin, Director of registered tax agents Etax Accountants, said it was incredible that eligible taxpayers had not submitted their 07/08 returns when they could potentially get \$900 tax-free.

Mr Griffin said taxpayer fears of the tax system may be responsible for the 500,000 outstanding returns.

One key reason some taxpayers have not submitted their returns is that they mistakenly believe if they owe the ATO or Centrelink a debt, this will be taken out of their bonus.

However, Mr Griffin said this was *not* the case and that sadly battling mums and dads were among the majority missing out because they were not aware of how the process worked.

“As long as long as they are eligible, they *will* get their bonus and neither the ATO nor Centrelink will deduct any debt from their bonus,” he said.

Once a taxpayer received their bonus they could always use it to pay off any debts and break the cycle of an unsustainable financial situation.

Other taxpayers are many years behind on their tax returns and are afraid they cannot catch up and so do not submit their return which meant they could potentially lose out on the Rudd Bonus.

Mr Griffin said some clients came to them with tax returns as far back as 2001.

“While we strongly advise taxpayers to lodge returns before they are due, an Etax accountant can help make a plan to tackle any overdue tax returns before they get into further tax complications” he said.

Mr Griffin said this approach will give struggling taxpayers a more manageable financial situation rather than accumulating tax debt over the years and adding to financial stress.

He also advised that given the current economic climate, it would be prudent for taxpayers (especially those with families and dependents) to control their taxes sooner rather than later.

He said while it was “understandable that some taxpayers feel scared of the ‘taxman’ they should do the right thing by law and seek advice from professionals who are ready to help them.

“This is money that eligible taxpayers deserve, so they have no reason to sit back and let it go.”

Although the free tax return software from the ATO was available only until May 31, tax agents such as Etax Accountants are able to lodge tax returns for taxpayers until June 30, 2009. Taxpayers can lodge their returns until midnight on June 30 with Etax Accountants.

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Etax Accountants Pty Ltd is Australia's largest online accounting firm preparing tens of thousands of tax returns every year. Etax Accountants has been offering online tax services since 1998 and provides a low cost way to do a tax return while still getting professional advice. Etax is based in Brisbane however clients come from all over Australia and overseas. Etax Director Scott Griffin is an MBA graduate from the Harvard Business School and launched Etax with father, Don and brother, Kent over ten years ago.

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