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## 2011/2012 Federal Budget - ... highlights

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While this is a long summary, I have highlighted with coloured sections the areas more relevant to clients and associates. So you can read the sections of interest more quickly. I have also made editor's comments and tax tips next to relevant sections.

At the bottom I have included links to how the *Financial Spectrum* financial planners see the budget outcome and Propertyinvesting.com Steve McKnight

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The media has widely labelled the 2011/2012 Federal Budget the 'NIP AND TUCK' and they are not wrong.

Many of the changes were either because of or justified by the need to improve the workforce participation rate to counter the declining unemployment rate from the current level of 5% to 4.5% by June 2013. Others were simply to fulfil the promise of bringing the budget into surplus.

Some changes were more than cosmetic with a temporary flood and cyclone reconstruction levy set to apply in the 2011/2012 income year to those who earn over \$50,000 (adding \$1.725bn to Government revenues over 5 years). FBT changes will add an additional \$970m over 5 years. And, a **few tucks will be made to the tax system** with the phasing out of the dependent spouse tax offset and **removing the ability for minors to access the low income tax offset on unearned income** in order **to restrict income splitting**.

Some areas of interest to business remained unchanged: the **company tax rate reductions** announced in the previous Budget remain intact as do some of the small business initiatives. Some extra revenue has been gained by delaying the start of some broader (mostly green) reforms and infrastructure projects, and holding indexation at current levels for family payments.

In the superannuation area, **reforms to the excess contributions tax regime** may provide some **relief** (**but not this year**).

Some of the detail, such as the **\$5,000 write-off for small business to purchase a car** (replacing the entrepreneurs tax offset), and the FBT changes were announced/leaked ahead of the budget. So, there were few surprises in this budget.

The elephant in the room was the carbon emissions trading scheme, or the lack of it. There is no detail beyond funding for an advertising campaign. This means that when the final shape of the emissions trading scheme is known, the Government will need to release an updated set of figures.

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Barbara & co – Property Tax Specialists is a member of the Knowledge Shop and Hayes Knight Network

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## Key Budget points include:

Real GDP expected to grow to 4% on 2011/2012 as unemployment falls to 4.75% in the same year (placing pressure on skills and wages)

- First steps towards the **abolition of simple tax returns** with a move towards “tick and flick” returns – tax returns replaced with an **optional** \$500 standard deduction from 1 July 2012 and \$1,000 from 1 July 2013
- Previously announced tax cuts due to commence on 1 July 2010 remain in Budget (as do the changes to the Senior Australians tax offset)
  - *Editor – very small – but still welcome*
- 50% **discount on tax paid on interest income** (on up to \$1,000 of interest income)
  - *Editor – very small – but still welcome*
- Medical expenses tax offset increased
  - *Editor – this is NOT good for those of us with children and large medical expenses*

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**If you need any assistance with the issues raised in this update, please contact us today at Property Tax Specialists on 02 9411 8133 or email [Shukri@propertytaxspecialists.com.au](mailto:Shukri@propertytaxspecialists.com.au) . Please do not act on the information contained in this summary or the announcements by Government without first seeking professional advice. The budget measures and many of the announcements must first pass through parliament.**

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## Look out for the ATO

Each year the ATO is provided with additional funding to tackle key areas perceived to be leaking revenue. The 2011/2012 budget provides for programs aimed at tackling:

- Fraudulent tax returns
- Reporting and accounting of Government grants and payments
- Reporting by business of taxable payments (see below)

### ***Business to report building & construction contractor payments***

Certain businesses will be required to report to the ATO **annually** on payments made to contractors in the building and construction industry. The Government states that businesses will “generally only be required to report information that they should currently record as part of their existing obligations.” These obligations include payments made and the contractor’s ABN.

The Government has also flagged that a similar reporting regime may be introduced for contractors in the **commercial cleaning** industry.

*Editor – There is a lot of cash payments in both the above industries.*

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2012
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## **Tax and individuals**

### ***Flood and cyclone reconstruction **levy*****

As previously flagged by the Government, the flood and cyclone reconstruction levy will apply to taxpayers with a taxable income over \$50,000 from 1 July 2011.

A **0.5%** levy will apply to individuals with taxable income of between \$50,001 and \$100,000 in the 2011/2012 income year. A **1%** levy applies to taxable income above \$100,000. Exemptions are expected to apply to:

- Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) recipients in 2010/2011;
- Those affected by a disaster declared by the National Disaster Recovery and Relief Arrangements and would have qualified for an AGDRP;
- NZ non-protected special category visa holders who received an ex-gratia payment for a disaster that occurred in 2010/2011.

The measure is expected to apply to the 2011/2012 income year only and is estimated to raise \$1.725 billion between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2013.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### ***Dependent spouse offset phased out***

From 1 July 2011, the dependent spouse offset will be phased out for taxpayers with a dependent spouse born on or after 1 July 1971 (40 years of age or less). The phasing out of the offset is expected to generate \$755 million by 30 June 2015. The Government points out that the DSTO has its origins in the ITAA 1936 at a time when a breadwinner was expected to 'maintain' a spouse even without children, and there were limited employment opportunities for women. They no longer see this as relevant.

*Editor – This will not affect many people*

Taxpayers with an invalid or permanently disabled spouse, supporting a carer, or people who are eligible for the zone, overseas forces and overseas civilian tax offsets are unaffected by this change.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### ***Income splitting targeted – minors unable to access LITO on unearned income***

In a move designed to target income splitting between adults and children, minors will not be able to access the low income tax offset (LITO) to reduce tax payable on their unearned income, such as dividends, interest, rent, royalties and other income from property, from 1 July 2011.

*Editor – Low income tax offset is available for people who have low taxable income. It was designed to help people on the low income socio groups pay no tax as they work part time or casually. While unearned income of children was taxed at highest rates, the LITO allowed them to increase the amount received (to about \$3k in 2010) before they were taxed. People with income in discretionary trusts were able to minimise tax – to a small extent (unless you have a lot of children)*

Unearned income of minors who are orphans or disabled, as well as compensation payments and inheritances received by minors, will not be affected by this measure.

The Assistant Treasurer noted that increases in the LITO over the last 10 years have been accompanied by increased distributions of tax-free income to children, especially from discretionary trusts.

The change will generate an ongoing revenue gain for the Government of \$740 million over 5 years.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### ***No deductions against government assistance payments***

In response to the recent High Court decision in *FCT v Anstis* [2010] HCA 40, the Government will amend the tax legislation to ensure that taxpayers cannot claim deductions against government assistance payments from 1 July 2011. In the Anstis case the High Court allowed a student to claim self-education expenses against Youth Allowance.

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Students in receipt of Youth Allowance (Student) will still be able to claim a deduction for self-education expenses incurred in the 2011 income year. For each of the years 2006/07 to 2009/10, the Commissioner has previously determined that eligible taxpayers will be able to receive an automatic deduction of \$550 or make higher claims if their self-education expenses can be substantiated.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### ***Bringing forward of the low income tax offset***

As previously announced, the Government will increase the amount of the Low Income Tax Offset (LITO) that is delivered through regular payments of salary and wages from 50% to 70% of their total entitlements (the remaining 30% is paid as a lump sum in the taxpayer's tax return). The total LITO entitlement remains unchanged.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### ***Increase to Medicare low income thresholds***

The Medicare levy low income thresholds will increase to \$18,839 for individuals and \$31,789 for families. The additional amount of threshold for each dependent child or student will also increase to \$2,919. And, the Medicare levy threshold for single pensioners below Age Pension age will increase to \$30,439.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2010
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## **Superannuation**

### ***Excess contributions tax changes***

Individuals who breach the concessional contributions cap by up to \$10,000 can request that these excess contributions be **refunded to them from 1 July 2011**. The refund option will only apply to first time breaches of the concessional caps.

Taxpayers affected will have the **option to take excess concessional contributions** out of their superannuation fund **and have it assessed at their marginal rate of tax**, rather than incurring a potentially higher rate of excess contributions tax.

Currently, excess concessional contributions are taxed at 31.5%, in addition to 15% tax when contributions are made to the fund.

*Editor – A welcome relief... But still administratively time consuming*

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This change will impact on expected revenue from the excess contributions tax by \$19.9 million over 5 years.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### **Higher caps for over 55s**

Clarifying the 2010/2011 budget announcement, the Government will set the higher concessional superannuation contributions cap for eligible individuals aged 50 and over with total superannuation balances of less than \$500,000 to \$25,000 above the general concessional cap.

The general concessional contribution cap is set at \$25,000. When it increases due to indexation, the higher cap will increase by the same dollar amount.

*Editor – Good for a lot of people.*

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2012
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### **Minimum payment amounts for account based pensions**

In previous years (2009 to 2011), the Government **halved** the minimum pension payment amounts. From 1 July 2011, the Government will start phasing down the minimum pension drawdown relief back to pre-GFC levels.

Minimum payment amounts for account based, allocated and market linked (term allocated) pensions will be reduced by 25% for 2011/2012 and will return to normal in 2012/2013.

<b>Date of effect</b>	2011/2012 income year
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### **Implementation of stronger super measures**

Over \$40 million has been allocated over five years to the ATO and \$8.4 million to ASIC to implement a range of Stronger Super changes and reforms.

Offsetting this cost will be an increase to the SMSF levy by \$30 from the 2010/2011 income year to \$180 and the introduction of Auditor registration fees from 1 July 2012.

*Editor – This means higher costs for those with SMSF as auditors and accountant are working on thin margins now.*

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### **Super co-contribution indexation frozen**

The Government will continue to freeze the indexation applied on the income threshold above which the maximum superannuation co-contribution begins to phase down. The matching

contribution will remain at up to \$1,000 for people with incomes of up to \$31,920 (with the amount available phasing down for incomes up to \$61,920), until at least 30 June 2013.

*Editor – For those people who are on low incomes including spouses who work casually or part time with partners, this is still good to try and access.*

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## Small Business

### **Accelerated** deduction for motor vehicles

As announced on 8 May, the Government will enable small business to claim up to \$5,000 as an immediate tax deduction for motor vehicles. The remainder of the motor vehicle value will be added to the general small business depreciation pool (depreciated at 15% in the first year and then 30%).

This measure is in addition to the previously announced immediate write off for new business assets worth less than \$5,000 from 2012/2013.

*Editor – Great for small business – Would have been nicer if it was available before the end of 2011 financial year. But this would have meant more economic activity when the government and reserve is trying to slow it down to keep inflation in check*

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<b>Date of effect</b>	2012/2013 income year
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### **Abolition of the Entrepreneurs' Tax Offset**

The Government has stated that the ETO is poorly targeted and complex. The ETO will be abolished from the 2013 income year to make way for other small business incentives. The abolition of the ETO will save the Government \$365 million by 30 June 2015.

*Editor – No big loss*

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<b>Date of effect</b>	2012/2013 income year
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## Fringe benefits tax

### **Car fringe benefit changes – statutory formula method rates replaced**

The Government will replace the current rates that apply when using the statutory formula method to determine the taxable value of car fringe benefits with a single rate of 20% that will apply regardless of the distance travelled. The change directly targets salary sacrificed and employer provided vehicles.

The measure applies from Budget night and will be phased in over four years:

Distance travelled during FBT year	Statutory rate (multiplied by the cost of the car)				
	Existing contracts	New contracts entered into after 7:30am, 10 May			
		From 10 May 2011	From 1 April 2012	From 1 April 2013	From 1 April 2014
0 – 15,000 km	0.26	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
15,000 – 25,000 km	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
25,000 – 40,000 km	0.11	0.14	0.17	0.20	0.20
40,000 + km	0.07	0.10	0.13	0.17	0.20

Compared to the current statutory rates, a single rate of 20% will:

- increase the tax concession provided for vehicles driven less than 15,000 kilometres a year;
- maintain the current tax concession provided for vehicles driven between 15,000 and 25,000 kilometres a year; and
- decrease the tax concession provided for vehicles driven more than 25,000 kilometres a year.

The operating cost or log book method remains unchanged and will become much more attractive for employees who undertake a significant amount of work related travel.

<b>Date of effect</b>	New contracts entered into from 7:30pm AEST, 10 May 2011
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### ***Fly in fly out rules extended for remote areas***

Currently, transport from an employee's usual place of residence to their usual place of employment for employees working in remote areas of Australia under fly-in fly-out arrangements is exempt from FBT. These arrangements will be extended to Australian residents working in remote areas overseas.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2009
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## **Pay As You Go**

### ***Reduction in GDP adjustment factor for PAYG instalment taxpayers***

The GDP adjustment factor for PAYG instalment taxpayers who use the GDP adjustment method will reduce from 8% (which is the rate that would apply for the 2011-12 income year under the current law) to 4% for the 2011/2012 income year. This is intended to apply for a single income year before returning to the statutory rate.

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The GDP adjustment factor for PAYG instalment taxpayers increases the previous year's adjusted taxable income by the previous year's nominal GDP growth, to determine the tax instalments to be paid in the income year.

The GDP adjustment method is used by the overwhelming majority of taxpayers required to pay quarterly income tax instalments, mainly small businesses, but also some individual investors, certain trustees and small superannuation funds.

*Editor – This is good news for client with business and investment income and consequently PAYG instalments*

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## Capital Gains Tax

### ***Scrip for scrip roll-over and the small business concessions***

The Government will tighten the scrip for scrip rollover provisions to ensure that trusts, superannuation funds, and life insurance companies are treated the same way as other entities.

The scrip for scrip roll-over integrity provisions apply to transactions where stakeholders in the target and acquiring entities have the potential to influence both entities. Some trusts, superannuation funds and life insurance companies consider the integrity provisions do not apply to them because as the stakeholders, they own the interests for the benefit of others (that is, the beneficiaries), rather than for their own benefit.

The Government does not believe this was the intention of the integrity provisions and will make amendments to ensure that they apply effectively to all stakeholders.

A similar issue arises for the small business tax concessions. The Government will make amendments to ensure that trusts will not be able to avoid being treated as connected entities when testing eligibility for the concessions (on the basis that trusts do not own assets for their own benefit).

Under these changes some small businesses will also be able to access the small business CGT concessions because the changes will make their business assets 'active'.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	CGT events happening after 7:30pm AEST on 10 May 2011
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### ***Main residence exemption extension for special disability trusts***

The Government will backdate and extend the CGT main residence exemption for special disability trusts to income assessments for the 2006/2007 and later years (the previous budget had made this measure effective from 1 July 2009).

As part of the measures, the Government will also provide a CGT exemption where assets are transferred to a SDT for no consideration, and provide a CGT exemption for the recipient of the principal beneficiary's main residence if it is disposed of within two years of the principal

beneficiary's death. Further details outlining this measure are available in the attachment to the media release below.

<b>Date of effect</b>	2006/2007 income assessments
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### ***Trading stock exception for super funds removed***

The Government will remove the trading stock exception to the CGT primary code rule for complying superannuation entities for specified assets from Budget night.

The Government is concerned that a small number of superannuation entities are treating shares as trading stock to deduct losses on their shares against income other than capital gains.

This measure ensures gains or losses on specified assets (primarily shares, units in a trust and land) are subject to CGT.

<b>Date of effect</b>	7:30pm AEST on 10 May 2011
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### ***Other CGT changes***

Other minor amendments with a minor revenue impact were flagged in the Budget. These include:

- Ensuring that the roll-over for the exchange of shares in one company for shares in another company operates properly, so that there is deferral of a profit or loss where the original shares are held on revenue account at the time of the exchange. This change will have effect from 7.30 pm (AEST) on 10 May 2011.
- Amending the roll-over for certain disposals of assets by a trust to allow roll-over relief to apply where a transferee company or trust holds rights, just before the disposal or transfer time, associated with a deed or similar document that is designed to facilitate the transfer of assets into the company or trust. These changes to the roll-over for the disposal of assets by a trust to a company will have effect for CGT events happening after 7.30 pm AEST on 10 May 2011 and the changes to the roll-over for the transfer of assets between certain trusts will have effect for CGT events happening on or after 1 November 2008.
- Ensuring that gains and losses arising from life insurance policies that are generally exempted from CGT are not then taxed under the ordinary income tax provisions by removing the exception to the 'CGT primary code' rule for such gains and losses. These changes will apply to CGT events happening in the 2005-06 income year and later income years.
- Legislating the current Tax Office practice of allowing a testamentary trust to distribute an asset of the deceased person **without a CGT taxing point occurring**. **The income tax law in relation to deceased estates will also be rewritten** using a principle based format and minor technical issues relating to deceased estates fixed. These changes will apply to CGT events happening on

or after the day the legislation receives Royal Assent.

- Ensure that taxpayers can have a small business participation percentage for the purposes of the small business CGT concessions in situations where shares in a company are held jointly by taxpayers and where a discretionary trust has not made a distribution in an income year because it has a tax loss or no net income for that year.
- Provide the Commissioner with a discretion to extend the two year ownership period in which the trustee of a deceased estate or a beneficiary must dispose of an interest in the deceased's dwelling in order to access either the full main residence exemption or a more favourable partial exemption.

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## Debt/equity rules

### *Closing loop holes for connected entities*

The Government will amend the debt/equity tax rules to restrict the application of an integrity provision that deems an interest from an arrangement that funds a return through connected entities to be an equity interest under certain circumstances. As a result, this provision will only apply to arrangements where both the purpose and effect is that the ultimate investor has, in substance, an equity interest in the issuer company. Additionally, the integrity provision will not apply where the Commissioner considers that it would be unreasonable for the provision to apply.

The amendments will apply from the commencement of the debt/equity tax rules (generally 1 July 2001).

<b>Date of effect</b>	Commencement of debt/equity rules
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## Goods and services tax

### *GST instalment system accessible to businesses in a net refund position*

The current legislation does not allow a business that is in a net refund position to pay GST by instalments.

The Government will extend the current GST instalment system to enable small businesses entitled to more input tax credits on their purchases than GST paid on sales to access the instalment system.

<b>Date of effect</b>	Royal Assent of enabling legislation
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### ***Treatment of new residential premises***

Announced on 27 January, the Government will amend how the GST law applies to supplies of new residential premises.

- from 3 October 2007, new residential premises constructed under development lease arrangements are treated as taxable supplies;
- from 1 July 2000, the granting of individual strata lot leases over newly constructed residential premises is not sufficient by itself to make future supplies of the premises input taxed; and
- from 1 July 2000, any change in property title arrangements will not result in the premises once again becoming new residential premises.

The measures overcome the recent Federal Court decision (*Commissioner of Taxation v Gloxinia Investments (Trustee) [2010] FCAFC 46*) which found that the sale by developers of certain newly constructed residential premises to owner occupiers and investors was input taxed rather than taxable.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2000 and 3 October 2007
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### ***GST administration changes deferred***

Administrative changes to the legal framework for the GST that were to commence from 1 July 2011 have been delayed. These include:

- adopt the income tax self assessment regime for indirect taxes and refresh the period of review;
- reform the change of use adjustments;
- allow adjustments for pre-registration acquisitions;
- clarify the treatment of tax law partnerships;
- simplify the GST grouping membership rules, including grandfathering of current membership rules, and allowing grouping of non-operating holding companies and trusts;
- amending indirect tax sharing agreement provisions; and
- introduce a reverse charge for supplies of going concerns and farmland.

The revised start date will be the first quarterly tax period after Royal Assent, or in some circumstances a later quarterly tax period after Royal Assent.

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## Other tax areas of interest

### ***Phoenix company directors targeted***

The Government is seeking to implement a range of measures targeted at directors of phoenix companies:

- the director penalty regime will be extended to superannuation guarantee amounts, making directors personally liable for their company's failure to pay employee superannuation;
- the ATO will be given the power to commence recovery against directors under the director penalty regime, without providing a 21 day grace period, for certain unpaid company liabilities that remain unreported after three months of becoming due; and
- in certain circumstances directors and associates of directors will be prevented from obtaining credits for withheld amounts in their individual tax returns where the company has failed to pay withheld amounts to the ATO.

*Editor – Phoenix companies are those allowed to go bankrupt owing ATO money for SGC and PAYG instalment of employees*

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<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011
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### ***Company loss recoupment rule reforms***

The company loss recoupment rules will be amended to make it easier for companies to satisfy the continuity of ownership test in certain circumstances.

A company can deduct prior year losses if it satisfies the continuity of ownership test or the same business test. This measure will modify the continuity of ownership test so that ownership does not need to be traced through certain superannuation entities. It will also remove technical deficiencies in the modified rules for widely held entities where:

- an entity is interposed between certain stakeholders and the loss company in certain circumstances;
- an interposed entity demerges;
- an interposed foreign entity issues bearer depository receipts; or
- a corporate change arising from the issue of new shares happens.

This measure will also ensure that all membership interests held in an entity are treated as a single asset for the purpose of applying the low value asset exclusions under the loss integrity rules.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	2011/2012 income year
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### ***Early access to farm management deposits in natural disasters***

Primary producers affected by natural disasters will be able to access their farm management deposits (FMDs) within 12 months of making a deposit while retaining concessional tax treatment under the scheme. This measure provides the same taxation relief as provided to primary producers affected by severe drought to those who are affected by other types of natural disaster.

The Government is also making minor changes to the administration of the FMD scheme to require more timely and frequent reporting from authorised deposit taking institutions holding FMDs and allow primary producers to hold FMDs with more than one financial institution. Also, where FMD accounts have not been operational for at least 7 years they will be treated as unclaimed monies if the financial institution is unable to contact the FMD holder following reasonable efforts to do so.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	Not stated
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### ***International withholding tax arrangements extended***

The list of countries whose residents are eligible to access a reduced rate of withholding tax on certain distributions from Australian managed investment trusts will be updated to include: Belize; the Cayman Islands; the Commonwealth of the Bahamas; the Principality of Monaco; the Republic of San Marino; the Republic of Singapore; St Christopher and Nevis; and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

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<b>Date of effect</b>	Not stated
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## **Not For Profit sector**

### ***NFP concessional tax status tightened***

Not for Profit (NFP) income tax concessions will only apply to profits generated by unrelated commercial activities that are directed back to a NFP entity to carry out its altruistic work. This means NFP entities will pay income tax on profits from their unrelated commercial activities that are not directed back to their altruistic purpose (that is, the earnings they retain in their commercial undertaking).

These unrelated commercial activities will also not have access to the FBT exemptions or rebate, GST concessions, or DGR support.

Commercial activities that further a NFP entity's altruistic purposes, and small scale and low risk unrelated commercial activities, will not be affected by the reforms. Examples of this type of related commercial activity include not-for-profit hospitals, op-shops that sell second-hand household items and clothing at discounted prices to those in charitable need, NFP child care centres, and businesses whose purpose is to provide meaningful employment to disabled persons.

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NFP entities with existing unrelated commercial activities will initially be able to continue to use their tax concessions to support these activities until consultation on transitional arrangements and phasing out has been completed.

NFP entities that have entered into a government service delivery contract as at 10 May 2011 will be allowed to use their tax concessions in support of that contract. Likewise, the 50,000 National Rental Affordability Scheme allocations will be unaffected by the tax changes.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2011 (affecting new unrelated commercial activity from 7:30pm AEST, 10 May)
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### ***Statutory definition of a charity***

The Government intends to introduce a statutory definition of 'charity' for all commonwealth laws. The current definition is based on common law.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 July 2013
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## **Other areas of interest**

### ***Delay to tax on alternative fuels***

As previously announced in January, the Government will delay the introduction of the customs duty on alternative fuels. Transitional tax rates will also apply to gaseous fuels and biodiesel until 2015/2016.

<b>Date of effect</b>	1 December 2011
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### ***Green Building tax breaks deferred***

The planned tax breaks for 'green buildings' that was to take effect from 1 July 2012 will be deferred.

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### ***Training and apprenticeships***

The Government has committed to funding or continuing to fund a range of training, education and apprenticeship programs. Some of these include:

- Wage subsidies for job seekers with a disability gain experience and employment. The subsidy for job seekers who have been unemployed for over 12 months provides \$3,000 for employment places for a minimum of 26 weeks at 15 hours or more per week.
- Wage subsidies for the long term unemployed (2 years)
- Accelerated apprenticeships for industries with skills shortages (partnered with industry bodies)
- Apprenticeship mentoring program in industries with skills shortages

## ***Cutting back Government allowances and spending on incentives***

Access to a number of Government allowances has been tightened and spending initiatives provided to move people from welfare into the workforce. Some of these include:

- Deferred introduction of paid paternity leave by 6 months to 1 January 2013.
- Freeze indexation of Family Tax Benefits supplements for 3 years.
- Freeze indexation of upper limits and thresholds of family payments for a further 2 years.
- Changes to the Family Tax Benefit A for dependent 16 to 19 year olds in full time secondary study (removing the need to choose between the FTB and Youth Allowance).
- Limit Family Tax Benefit Part A to children under 21.
- Increased audits of new disability support pension claims and the bringing forward of new and stricter assessment criteria.
- Allow disability support pensioners to work up to 30 hours per week.
- Introduce participation requirements for recipients on the disability pension who are under the age of 35 with some work capacity.
- Eligibility and parental means testing for Youth Allowance extended to 21 (currently 20). Newstart allowance closed to applicants under 22 years of age (currently 21).
- Compulsory participation plans for teenage parents (once child turns 6 months).
- Compulsory participation plans for jobless families.
- Incentives for single parents to join the workforce by adjusting the income test for government payments.
- Increased obligations on the long term unemployed.
- Transitional activities for school leavers who leave before completing year 12.
- Reduction in HECS scheme incentive to pay contribution up front from 20% to 10% from 1 January 2012.
- Bonus on voluntary payments to the ATO reduced from 10% to 5%.

## **Economic overview – 2011/2012 budget**

- Budget deficit forecast of \$22.6 billion in 2011/2012.
- Real GDP forecast to grow 4% in 2011/2012 (3.75% in 2012/2013) mostly from commodity exports and business investment.
- New business investment is expected to boom at 16% in 2011/2012 and 14.5% in 2012/2013 (underpinned by resources sector).
- Wages expected to grow 4% over the coming financial year.
- Inflation (underlying) expected to increase from 2.5% to 3% in June 2013.
- Household consumption expected to increase by 3.5% in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.
- Dwelling investment soft at 1.5% under interest rate pressure.
- Exports expected to grow at 6.5% - again off the back of the resources sector.

## Key links

- [Budget speech](#)
- [2011/2012 Budget website](#)
- [Treasurer's website](#)
- **Financial Planners view of the budget**  
<http://www.financialspectrum.com.au/public/releases/federal-budget-2011.pdf>
- **Property Investors** <http://www.propertyinvesting.com/2011-budget-update>

## ***We look forward to being of Service***

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to review & discuss your current property & tax situation, your asset protection strategy, structuring your next investment property, planning to legally minimise your tax position or just to prepare your next tax return.

We look forward to being of service. We also look forward to your referrals.

To improve our service we welcome all constructive comments on this newsletter and other materials.

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### Key Budget media releases

- [Keeping Low-Income Earners Exempt from Medicare Levy](#)
  - [Reforms to Car Fringe Benefit Rules](#)
  - [More Help for Australian Small Business](#)
  - [Making Australia's Tax System Simpler and Fairer](#)
  - [Phasing out the Dependent Spouse Tax Offset](#)
  - [Making it Easier for Charities to Help Those Who Need it](#)
  - [Superannuation - Reform of Excess Contribution Regime Gives Australians New Powers to Request Refunds](#)
  - [Removal of Income Tax Impediments Affecting Special Disability Trusts](#)
  - [Changes to the Low Income Tax Offset for Non-Work Income of Minors](#)
  - [Improving Tax Fairness and Compliance](#)
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## ***Avoid delays - Lodge early – Tax Refunds Sooner***

Most property investors are negatively geared. This means that where they have not requested a variation of their PAYG deduction from their employer, they get refunds on lodging their tax returns at the end of the financial year.

ATO is now processing lodgement of returns very fast, particularly where there is a refund and the refund is being deposited electronically into the taxpayer's bank account. Some refund assessments are issuing within 7 working days.

**Tax Tip** - To get refunds lodge your tax return soon. **Property Tax Specialists** can help facilitate the process and minimise time and cost with their checklists and templates. Contact Shukri on [Shukri@propertytaxspecialists.com.au](mailto:Shukri@propertytaxspecialists.com.au)

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### **Help available**

To make the compilation & reporting task for tax returns easier, clients of **Property Tax Specialists** received checklists and templates to facilitate the process ... **saving them time and money** ... the 'write' way is having clear **documentation**. ATO way means time/money wastage with possible audit investigation.

If you need help contact Shukri Barbara at Property Tax Specialists at [Shukri@propertytaxspecialists.com.au](mailto:Shukri@propertytaxspecialists.com.au)

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### **Disclaimer**

The material and contents provided in this publication are informative in nature only. It is not intended to be advice and you should not act specifically on the basis of this information alone. If expert assistance is required, professional advice should be obtained.

Acknowledgement - parts of this newsletter have been taken from Knowledge Shop Pty Ltd client newsletters. Barbara & co – Property Tax Specialists is a member of the Knowledge Shop and Hayes Knight Network

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Kind Regards

Shukri Barbara

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Property Tax Specialists – [Prosperity & Peace of Mind](#)

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