Xero updates software to support Australian small businesses to access JobKeeper payments

_MELBOURNE, 22 APRIL 2020 - _Xero_, the global small business platform, has delivered new technology updates for customers to access the Australian Taxation Office's new JobKeeper program. In Australia, Xero's software has been adapted to help small businesses and their advisors assess eligibility for relief, pay employees a wage subsidy, and file required reports to the tax office.

The new inclusions were developed to coincide with the government opening applications for its JobKeeper wage-subsidy program this week. More than 800,000 businesses have registered their interest in the program since it was announced last month, according to the Treasury.

Trent Innes, Xero Australia and Asia Managing Director, said, “Small businesses struggling to operate through COVID-19 need urgent help connecting to the government assistance that’s been made available. These new online features give employers and their advisors the tools to demonstrate eligibility and navigate the payroll processes that are necessary to receiving government aid.

“Since legislation passed two weeks ago, our product teams have worked around-the-clock to ensure our customers could benefit from the new features when the JobKeeper program opened for applications.”
Eligibility calculator

To qualify for the JobKeeper program and the government’s cash-flow boost of up to $100,000, small business employers have to demonstrate a substantial fall in revenue and continue to lodge their activity statements and report payroll using STP. Small businesses can now use Xero to help calculate their change in revenue over a chosen period of time. The government generally requires a 30 percent drop, though there are exceptions.

Xero Payroll

Xero Payroll now lets employers easily identify staff who may be eligible for the $1,500 JobKeeper wage subsidy. By comparing the government’s criteria against data in Xero Payroll, the software can suggest a list of workers and flag any potential problems with eligibility, such as Australian residency status.

Once an employer has qualified for JobKeeper, Xero Payroll can help process the payments received, record the amount paid to staff, and report the details to the tax office. This includes submitting the correct codes to the ATO to avoid any hitches in start dates, employee enrolment or payroll reimbursement.

Most of this happens seamlessly in the background while employers are filing with Single Touch Payroll (STP), the digital initiative that has been mandatory for most small business employers in Australia since mid-2019. Using STP makes accessing coronavirus-related economic stimulus much simpler than applying manually. And JobKeeper’s monthly reporting requirement – which starts in early May – is easily handled through new features in Xero and STP.

Mr Innes said there would be more enhancements and updates to the Xero software in the weeks and months ahead.

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About Xero

Born in the cloud, Xero is a beautiful, easy-to-use platform for small businesses and their advisors around the world. Xero provides its 2+ million subscribers with connections to a thriving ecosystem of 800+ third-party apps and 200+ connections to banks and financial service providers. On the inaugural
2018 Financial Times FT1000 High-Growth Companies Asia Pacific list, Xero was the fastest growing tech company in the $200+ million segment. Xero won ‘Accountancy Software Provider of the Year’ at the British Business Awards in 2019, and was rated by Canstar Blue as the best accounting software in Australia from 2015-2018 and in New Zealand in 2019.