

Getting Started with ABN BAS

ABN BAS is a Registered BAS Agent that exclusively services members of the Australian Bookkeepers Network (ABN) and their clients. ABN BAS offers a range of services to benefit both BAS Agents and non-BAS Agents. ABN BAS is a separate entity to ABN and has its own web site at www.abnbas.net, however ABN and ABN BAS share the same directors, staff and business premises. Membership of ABN BAS is complimentary and automatic to all Australian Bookkeepers Network (ABN) members.

About this Fact Sheet

The cornerstone of the ABN BAS Quality Assurance Review process is our BAS Wizard software. However, complementing the software is a suite of resources and Fact Sheets that are available throughout the ABN BAS website.

This Fact Sheet brings together all of our resources into a logical, step-by-step guide which is perfect for both the new and experienced BAS Wizard user. We will work through a series of steps as depicted in the following table.

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BACKGROUND**1****Understand the BAS Agent laws & the choices faced by bookkeepers**

The new BAS Agent Laws commenced 1 March 2010.

If you are not quite across the changes, start by reading our Fact Sheet entitled [The BAS Agent Laws in a Nutshell](#). This will provide you with a concise overview of the new laws and their impact on the bookkeeping industry. Then, for a more detailed understanding, you may wish to visit the [BAS Agent Laws – What Are They?](#) page of the ABN BAS web site.

Once you have gained an understanding of the new laws, it is then important that you understand the choices that you face. To assist with this, we recommend that you refer to our Fact Sheet entitled [The BAS Agent Laws – Choices for Bookkeepers](#). This Fact sheet adopts an interactive approach to guide you through a series of questions to determine where you stand.

BACKGROUND**2****Understand the ABN BAS service offering in relation to Quality Assurance Reviews and BAS Lodgement**

The main service offering of ABN BAS relates to Activity Statements and is two fold:

1. We perform Quality Assurance Reviews of Activity Statements for both BAS Agents and non-BAS Agents; and
2. We act as the BAS Agent for clients of ABN members who are not BAS Agents themselves, and attend to the electronic lodgement of their client's Activity Statements with the ATO.

In terms of the Quality Assurance Reviews that we offer, there are two types: Limited Quality Assurance Reviews and Detailed Quality Assurance Reviews. It is crucial that you understand the difference between the two and when each applies.

Please read our Fact Sheet entitled [Quality Assurance Reviews & BAS Lodgement](#). This Fact Sheet also outlines important information about how ABN BAS prices its services and the practicalities of invoicing and payment.

BACKGROUND**3****Familiarise yourself with the ABN BAS turnaround times**

ABN BAS takes pride in providing swift turnaround times with Quality Assurance Reviews and BAS Lodgement. Better than most, we understand the immense time pressures that our members often work under.

ABN BAS provides two types of Quality Assurance Review: Limited and Detailed. The type of Quality Assurance Review will determine our turnaround standards. It is crucial that you understand our Turnaround Standards as they shape your expectations of us and thus represent a key aspect of our working relationship.

Please read our Fact Sheet entitled [Turnaround Times for ABN BAS Quality Assurance Reviews](#).

USING BAS WIZARD**4****Download BAS Wizard and supporting files**

For each BAS or IAS that you prepare for a client, you submit to us a BAS Wizard file. It is this file that we subject to our Quality Assurance Review

BAS Wizard draws on the data from your existing accounting system, whatever that might be, and through a quality assurance framework, moulds that data into an accurate, completed BAS. *BAS Wizard* is designed to:

- ✓ Help you review and properly classify your GST transactions
- ✓ Identify errors or mis-postings within your accounts
- ✓ Perform key reconciliations to provide total confidence in your reporting
- ✓ Perform complex adjustments and calculations as required by the ATO
- ✓ Create journal entries to take account of these adjustments
- ✓ Assist you in calculating your obligations under PAYG Withholding, PAYG Instalment, FBT and several other taxes
- ✓ Reconcile, total, and populate your BAS
- ✓ Guide you through the correct recording of your BAS liability or refund
- ✓ Ensure the accurate reconciliation of the BAS with your control accounts

To obtain a copy of BAS Wizard, visit the ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **BAS Wizard** in the left-hand pane. Then click on **Download Latest Version**.

Underneath the sub-heading “Core Files”, you will find two BAS Wizard templates – one for use with Excel 2007 and Excel 2010, and the other for use with Excel 2003 & Excel 2000.

You will also find the *BAS Wizard User Guide*, a comprehensive reference source for all facets of the BAS Wizard software, and the *GST Tax Code Ready Reckoner*, a reference on how common transactions should be tax coded.

Once you have downloaded the BAS Wizard file, ensure that you enter your Business details in the Introduction sheet and then save this as a template for future use.

USING BAS WIZARD

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Check your macro security settings in Excel


BAS Wizard is a sophisticated Excel spreadsheet and is underpinned by a programming code called Visual Basic for Applications (VBA). In order for the VBA code to function properly, the macro security settings within your version of Excel need to be set to an appropriate level.

If you are using Excel 2003 or Excel 2000 ...

Check that your Macro security settings are set to either **Medium** or **Low** by clicking in Tools, Macros, Security. You should perform this check from within Excel, but before opening BAS Wizard.

If you are using Excel 2007 ...

Your Macro security settings are administered through the so-called Trust Center.

1. Click the **Microsoft Office Button**  , and then click **Excel Options**.
2. Click **Trust Center**, click **Trust Center Settings**, and then click **Macro Settings**.
3. Click **Enable all macros**.

For further information on Trust Center Settings in Excel '07, visit the Microsoft website at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/help/HA100310711033.aspx>

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If you are using Excel 2010 ...

1. Click the **File Tab**, and the **Microsoft Office Backstage view** appears.
2. Under **Help**, click **Options**. The **Options** dialogue appears.
3. Click **Trust Center**, click **Trust Center Settings**, and then click **Macro Settings**.
4. Click **Enable all macros**.

It is important to note that lower levels of macro security can make your computer vulnerable to malicious code that could be contained within other Excel files. You may want to restore your macro security settings to their usual settings after using BAS Wizard.

If you are using Excel for Macs ...

Unfortunately, you cannot make use of BAS Wizard. This is because much of the sophistication of BAS Wizard lies in the fact that it is underpinned by a language known as Visual Basic. Presently, Microsoft do not provide Visual Basic functionality in their MAC version of Excel.

USING BAS WIZARD**6****Familiarise yourself with BAS Wizard using our sample file**

The best way to become quickly acquainted with BAS Wizard is by taking a look at a completed BAS Wizard file for our Sample Business, *Kelvin's Candies*.

Visit the ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **BAS Wizard** in the left-hand pane. Then click on **Download Latest Version**. Underneath the sub-heading "Additional Resources", you will find **Sample Business Facts**, a PDF file which contains the sample data, and **Sample Business BAS Wizard – Kelvin's Candies**, a completed BAS Wizard file for the sample business.

When you open the BAS Wizard file, the *Introduction* sheet will greet you. The *Introduction* sheet provides an explanation of how to use the spreadsheet, and the various commands that are contained within it. It also provides an overview of the role of each of the sheets contained within *BAS Wizard*.

Across the bottom of the screen, you will see tabs for all of the other worksheets that make up BAS Wizard. To prepare a BAS, you simply work your way through each worksheet, one-by-one.

So with the Sample Business Facts in hand, work your way through the Sample Business BAS Wizard and you will quickly get a feel for how BAS Wizard comes together.

USING BAS WIZARD**7****Learn about the additional information required by ABN BAS when performing Detailed Quality Assurance Reviews**

Where ABN BAS is performing a Detailed Quality Assurance Review, such as where it is acting as BAS Agent for the lodgement of the BAS with the ATO, additional information needs to be inserted into the BAS Wizard file.

ABN BAS has specific requirements about what additional information is required and how it is to be inserted into BAS Wizard. If the additional information is not supplied correctly, ABN BAS cannot perform its Quality Assurance Review and the BAS Wizard file will be rejected.

To understand exactly what information we require, you should familiarise yourself with the Fact Sheet entitled [Inserting Attachments into BAS Wizard](#).

USING BAS WIZARD**8**

View further sample files containing MYOB & QuickBooks specific reports

To complement the Fact Sheet entitled [Inserting Attachments into BAS Wizard](#), we have also produced sample BAS Wizard files for an MYOB client (Clearwater Pty Ltd) and a QuickBooks client (Stadium Construction & Hardware Pty Ltd).

By viewing these files, in particular the attachment worksheets, you will be able to see first-hand the specific reports which are required to be included when submitting a Detailed Quality Assurance Review.

Visit the ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **BAS Wizard** in the left-hand pane. Then click on **Download Latest Version**. You will see separate sub-headings for "MYOB" and "QuickBooks" which each contain the sample BAS Wizards.

USING BAS WIZARD**9**

Begin submitting files to ABN BAS

It is now time to start preparing actual BASs for your clients and submitting them to ABN BAS for Quality Assurance Review and/or Lodgement with the ATO. The process is very straightforward:

1. Once your client's data for a BAS period has been recorded accurately and completely, review the tax codes that you have assigned to transactions by referring to the **GST Tax Code Ready Reckoner**.
2. Load BAS Wizard and save a copy of the file, giving it a file name that identifies the client and BAS period (e.g. Jim's Plumbing March 2010").
3. Complete the BAS Wizard spreadsheet for that client. Where a Detailed Quality Assurance Review is being sought, insert any relevant attachments into the BAS Wizard file.
4. Be conscious of the preliminary integrity checks in Sheet 13. If any of these are showing as problems, you will need to correct them before submitting the file to us.
5. Submit the BAS Wizard file to us using *Bookkeeper-Client Connect*, ABN's state-of-the-art secure file transfer facility.
6. We will email you an ABN BAS Declaration to confirm we have conducted our Quality Assurance Review on this Activity Statement. If ABN BAS **will be** the BAS Agent that will lodge this Activity Statement with the ATO, we will also email you a copy of the Activity Statement that was electronically lodged.

Once you have completed a BAS for a particular client using *BAS Wizard*, you can use that file as a starting point for preparing a later BAS for the same client. By doing this, there will be a certain amount of information which you will not need to re-enter. Many of the same accounts and adjustments that you entered for the first BAS will hold true again for the second, meaning that in certain sheets, all you will need to change is the amounts. If, by chance, some adjustments that you were required to perform the first time round are no longer relevant, you can quickly delete all of the input on a particular sheet simply by pressing the *CLEAR* icon at the top of the sheet.

If you do adopt this approach, you should be careful of a couple of things. Firstly, ensure that you assign a new file name or else you will be working over your previous *BAS Wizard* file. Secondly, be careful not to allow last period's amounts to be accidentally used again in this period.

SUPPORT**10**

Find out about your options if you need support

BAS Wizard User Guide

If your question is a "How To" style question concerning the BAS Wizard software itself, the BAS Wizard User Guide is a great place to start. You may have already downloaded it as part of Step 4 of this Fact Sheet. If you did not, then visit the

ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **BAS Wizard** in the left-hand pane. Then click on **Download Latest Version**.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We also have a large library of FAQs which address commonly asked questions, both technical and practical. To access these FAQs, visit the ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **Members FAQ** in the left-hand pane.

This bank of FAQs is to be distinguished from those that exist in the free area of the ABN BAS web site which are centred around the BAS laws in the broader sense.

ABN BAS Helpline

Clients are reliant on the services and advice that they receive. This imposes both responsibility and liability on the bookkeeper and with that, significant pressure to ensure that the advice provided is correct. ABN BAS relieves some of this pressure by providing members with email-based helpline support from qualified accountants and tax agents. Whether it be some much-needed guidance on a complex GST or BAS matter, or simply a second perspective for peace-of-mind, the ABN BAS Helpline is an invaluable right-hand for you to turn to. Simply visit the ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **ABN BAS Helpline** in the left-hand pane.

SUPPORT

11**Learn how to handle GST Adjustments & Corrections**

An issue that will sometimes come to light for bookkeepers dealing with Activity Statements is that of GST Adjustments and Corrections.

Our Fact Sheet entitled [GST Adjustments & Corrections](#) explores this issue in depth and explains how to take account of them in BAS Wizard.

SUPPORT

12**Learn how to handle Revised Activity Statements**

A “Revised Activity Statement” is an Activity Statement that is prepared to take account of corrections to a past period. In many cases, GST corrections to past periods can simply be made to future Activity Statements, however on some occasions, this is not possible due to Time and Correction Limits imposed by the ATO. Before determining whether a Revised Activity Statement is in fact required, you should first read the ABN BAS Fact Sheet entitled *GST Adjustments & Corrections*.

If you do determine that a Revised Activity Statement is necessary, our Fact Sheet entitled [How ABN BAS Charges for Revised Activity Statements](#) will explain the process and how it is priced.

SUPPORT

13**Learn how to handle Nil Activity Statements**

A “Nil” Activity Statement is one in which all of the taxes which are being reported on the Activity Statement contain nil amounts.

Our Fact Sheet entitled [Nil Activity Statements](#) explores the Quality Assurance Review requirements in instances where there is nothing to report on a client’s Activity Statement.

CLIENT EDUCATION**14****Make sure your clients value BAS services**

A challenge faced by bookkeepers - whether they be BAS Agents or not - is educating clients about the changed laws. It is important that clients understand the changes that have occurred and the impact of these changes on both your business and theirs.

The BAS Agent Laws impose a greater cost on bookkeepers. BAS Agents face additional costs in acquiring qualifications, maintaining PI insurance, continuing professional development and paying registration fees to the Board. Non BAS Agents face additional costs in having their work Quality Assured if they opt to work with a BAS or Tax Agent to provide BAS Services. These costs should be passed onto clients.

Our Fact Sheet entitled [Making Sure that Clients Value BAS Services](#) provides some practical guidance on how to communicate to clients the changes that have occurred and why they must pay more for the BAS Services that you provide or facilitate for them.

CLIENT EDUCATION**15****Make use of our templates to educate your clients about the BAS changes**

To give you a helping hand, ABN BAS has produced two templates. The first template is suitable for use by a current or aspiring BAS Agent. The second template is suitable for use by the non-BAS Agent that will be making use of ABN BAS to facilitate BAS Services for their clients.

Both templates are provided in Word form so that you can cut and paste them onto your own letterhead or email templates. They are intended to provide a framework for how to communicate the changes to your clients, however in all cases they will require customisation on your part to ensure that they appropriately match your circumstances. Moreover, some of your clients will have a greater appetite for detail than will others, so you may need to adopt a flexible approach, possibly creating a couple of different versions to suit your target audience.

To access the templates, simply visit the ABN BAS web site at www.abnbas.net, log in to the Members Area, and click on **BAS Wizard** in the left-hand pane. Then click on **Client Templates**. You can also view a sample of the templates in PDF form by clicking the below links:

[Client Template for Use by Current or Aspiring BAS Agents](#)

[Client Template for Use by Non-BAS Agents](#)

CLIENT EDUCATION**16****Read our guidelines for the promotion of ABN BAS if you are a non-BAS Agent**

The Tax Agent Services Act imposes severe penalties on persons and entities that are not BAS Agents, who provide, advertise or represent that they can provide BAS Services. ABN BAS members who are utilising the services of ABN BAS to provide BAS lodgement services for their clients must be particularly careful in how they represent their service offerings.

Our Fact Sheet entitled [Legal Guidelines for Non BAS Agents on How They Should Promote the services of ABN BAS](#) provides an overview of the relevant provisions in the law and practical guidance on how you should and should not represent your service offerings.