



Self managed super funds – key messages for trustees

Read this fact sheet in conjunction with the *Trustee declaration* (NAT 71089). Keep a copy of this fact sheet with you and refer to it when making important decisions on behalf of your fund.

From 1 July 2007, if you are a new trustee (or director of a corporate trustee) of a self managed super fund (SMSF), you must complete a *Trustee declaration* (NAT 71089).

The trustee declaration is not the same as your fund's trust deed. It is a separate document you must complete and sign to show you understand your duties and responsibilities under the super laws.

YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE FUND

Becoming a trustee of a SMSF is an important decision that carries certain duties and responsibilities. That is, you must manage the fund for the benefit of members into their retirement. You must also ensure the SMSF assets are held in trust and invested on behalf of the members.

You are responsible for ensuring your fund is properly managed and complies with all governing rules (including the trust deed and super laws). These rules apply to you in your capacity as a trustee of the fund. You will also need to make important decisions that may affect the retirement savings of the fund's members.

All trustees are equally responsible for managing the fund and making sure it complies with the law. This is the case even if one trustee is more actively involved in the day-to-day running of the fund than the others, or you use a professional to do certain tasks on your behalf (for example, an accountant, lawyer, investment advisor, super fund administrator or tax agent). All trustees are responsible and accountable for running the fund and making decisions.

If you use a professional to help you manage your fund, it's important you get good advice and choose one that's right for you and your circumstances. It's essential to make sure any financial, investment and legal advice you receive comes from a qualified professional. Good advice is important as your decisions will have an impact on the retirement income of the fund's members, including you.

You must manage the fund separate to your own affairs. This means you must keep the fund's assets, including money, separate from your personal and business assets and ensure they are used solely for fund purposes.

You must not allow money to be withdrawn from the fund earlier than is legally permitted as it is meant for retirement. You must preserve members' benefits in the fund until they retire or reach their preservation age (currently not before age 55, and then rising to age 60 for those born after 30 June 1964). Early access is only allowed in very limited circumstances, for example, in cases of severe financial hardship, on tightly restricted compassionate grounds, or in the event of permanent incapacity.

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND YOUR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Your trustee duties and responsibilities include:

- making sure the purpose of the fund is to pay retirement benefits to members
- organising an investment strategy and making investment decisions
- accepting contributions and paying benefits (pension and lumps sums) in accordance with the rules
- ensuring an approved auditor is appointed for each income year, and
- undertaking administrative tasks such as lodging annual returns and record-keeping.

You must also ensure the fund's trust deed and investment strategy are regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with the law and the needs of the members.

! To avoid penalties, make sure you understand and comply with your duties and responsibilities under the super laws.

 MORE INFORMATION

For more information about your role and responsibilities as a trustee, refer to *Self managed superannuation funds – Role and responsibilities of trustees* (NAT 11032).

To keep up to date with the latest information on SMSFs, subscribe to our on-line newsletter – *SMSF News*. To subscribe, visit our website at www.ato.gov.au and search for ‘SMSF News’.

To obtain a copy of our publications or for more information:

- visit our website at www.ato.gov.au
- phone **13 10 20**
- phone our publication ordering service on **1300 720 092**, or
- write to us at
Australian Taxation Office
PO Box 3100
PENRITH NSW 2740

If you do not speak English well and want to talk to a tax officer, phone the Translating and Interpreting Service on **13 14 50** for help with your call.

If you have a hearing or speech impairment and have access to appropriate TTY or modem equipment, phone **13 36 77**. If you do not have access to TTY or modem equipment, phone the Speech to Speech Relay Service on **1300 555 727**.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We are committed to providing you with advice and information you can rely on.

We make every effort to ensure that our advice and information is correct. If you follow advice in this publication and it turns out to be incorrect, or it is misleading and you make a mistake as a result, we must still apply the law correctly. If that means you owe us money, we must ask you to pay it. However, we will not charge you a penalty or interest if you acted reasonably and in good faith.

If you make an honest mistake when you try to follow our advice and you owe us money as a result, we will not charge you a penalty. However, we will ask you to pay the money, and we may also charge you interest.

If correcting the mistake means we owe you money, we will pay it to you. We will also pay you any interest you are entitled to.

You are protected under GST law if you have acted on any GST advice in this publication. If you have relied on GST advice in this publication and that advice later changes, you will not have to pay any extra GST for the period up to the date of the change. Similarly, you will not have to pay any penalty or interest.

If you feel this publication does not fully cover your circumstances, please seek help from the Tax Office or a professional adviser.

The information in this publication is current at June 2007.

We regularly revise our publications to take account of any changes to the law, so make sure that you have the latest information. If you are unsure, you can check for a more recent version on our website at www.ato.gov.au or contact us.

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INDIVIDUALS

SMSF TRUSTEES

INSTRUCTIONS AND FORM

NAT 71089-06.2007

SEGMENT

AUDIENCE

FORMAT

PRODUCT ID



Australian Government

Australian Taxation Office

Trustee declaration

To be completed by trustees and directors of corporate trustees of self managed super funds.




Read this declaration in conjunction with *Self managed super funds – Key messages for trustees* (NAT 71128).

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THIS DECLARATION?

You must complete this declaration if you became, on or after 1 July 2007, a **new** trustee (or director of a corporate trustee) of:

- a **new** self managed super fund (SMSF), or
- an **existing** SMSF.

You must sign this declaration within 21 days of becoming a trustee or director of a corporate trustee of a SMSF.

 You do not have to complete this declaration if you were appointed as a trustee or director before 1 July 2007.


INFORMATION YOU NEED TO READ

Make sure you read *Self managed super funds – Key messages for trustees* (NAT 71128). It highlights some of the key points from the declaration and some important messages for you.

BEFORE COMPLETING THIS DECLARATION

Before you complete and sign this declaration, make sure you:

- read each section of it, and
- understand all the information it contains.

 If you have any difficulties completing this declaration or you do not fully understand the information it contains:

- speak to a professional adviser
- visit our website at www.ato.gov.au, or
- phone us on **13 10 20**.

If you're not familiar with some of the terms used in this declaration or you need more information, refer to *Self managed superannuation funds – Role and responsibilities of trustees* (NAT 11032).

WHEN COMPLETING THIS DECLARATION

When you complete this declaration, remember to:

- insert the full name of the fund at the beginning
- sign and date it, and
- ensure it is signed and dated by a witness (anyone over the age of 18 years).

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THE DECLARATION?

You must keep your completed declaration for at least 10 years and make it available to us if we request it.

We recommend that you keep a copy of your completed declaration and *Self managed super funds – Key messages for trustees* (NAT 71128) and refer to them when making important decisions, such as those relating to investments, making contributions and paying a pension or lump sum.

 Do not send your completed declaration to us.



Self managed super fund trustee declaration

I understand that as an individual trustee or director of the corporate trustee of

Fund name

I am responsible for ensuring that the fund complies with the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993* (SISA) and other relevant legislation. The Commissioner of Taxation (the Commissioner) has the authority and responsibility for administering the legislation and enforcing the fund's compliance with the law.

If I do not comply with the legislation, the Commissioner may take the following actions:

- impose administrative penalties on me
- enter into agreements with me to rectify any contraventions of the legislation
- disqualify me from being a trustee or director of a corporate trustee of any superannuation fund in the future
- remove the fund's complying status resulting in a significant tax penalty on the fund, and
- prosecute me under the law, resulting in fines or imprisonment.

I must keep myself informed of changes to the legislation relevant to the operation of my fund and ensure the trust deed is kept up to date in accordance with the law and the needs of the members.

SOLE PURPOSE

I understand it is my responsibility to ensure the fund is maintained for the purpose of providing benefits to its members upon their retirement (or attainment of a certain age) or their beneficiaries if a member dies.

TRUSTEE DUTIES

I understand that by law I must:

- act honestly in all matters concerning the fund
- exercise skill, care and diligence in managing the fund
- act in the best interests of all the members of the fund
- ensure that my money and other assets are kept separate from the money and other assets of the fund
- take appropriate action to protect the fund's assets (for example, have sufficient evidence of the ownership of fund assets)
- not enter into any contract, or do anything, that would prevent me from, or hinder me in, properly performing or exercising my functions or powers as a trustee or director of the corporate trustee of the fund
- prepare and implement an investment strategy that takes the whole of the fund's circumstances into account, which includes, but is not limited to
 - the risks associated with the fund's investments
 - the likely return from investments, taking into account the fund's objectives and expected cash flow requirements
 - investment diversity and the fund's exposure to risk due to inadequate diversification, and
 - the liquidity of the fund's investments having regard to the fund's expected cash flow requirements in discharging its existing and prospective liabilities, and
- allow all members of the fund to have access to information and documents as required, including details about
 - the financial situation of the fund
 - the investments of the fund, and
 - the members' benefit entitlements.

Investment restrictions

I understand that, as a trustee or director of the corporate trustee of the fund, subject to certain limited exceptions specified in the law, I am prohibited from the following:

- lending money of the fund to, or providing financial assistance to, a member of the fund or a member's relative (financial assistance means any assistance that improves the financial position of a person directly or indirectly including the provision of credit)
- acquiring assets (other than listed securities, business real property or managed funds) for the fund from members or associates or other related parties of the fund
- borrowing money (or maintaining an existing borrowing) on behalf of the fund
- having more than 5% of the fund's total assets at any time of the year as loans to, or investments in, related parties of the fund (including trusts) and assets subject to a lease or lease arrangement between the trustee and a member, relative or other related party (these assets are in-house assets), and
- entering into investments on behalf of the fund that are not made or maintained on an arm's length (commercial) basis, ensuring that the purchase or sale price of the fund's assets reflect market value.

Accepting contributions and paying a benefit

I understand that I can only accept contributions and pay benefits (pensions or lump sums) to members or their beneficiaries when the conditions specified in the law and the fund’s governing rules (including its trust deed) have been met.

Administration

I understand that the trustees of the fund must:

- keep and retain for at least 10 years
 - minutes of all trustee meetings at which matters affecting the fund were considered (this includes investment decisions and decisions to appoint members and trustees)
 - records of all changes of trustees, including directors of the corporate trustee
 - each trustee’s consent to be appointed as a trustee of the fund or a director of the corporate trustee, and
 - all trustee declarations
- ensure that the following are prepared and retained for at least 5 years
 - a statement of financial position
 - an operating statement, and
 - accounts and statements that correctly record and explain the transactions and financial position of the fund
- notify the Tax Office within 28 days of any changes in
 - trustees, directors of the corporate trustee or members of the fund
 - fund name
 - details of the contact person, contact phone and facsimile numbers, and
 - the postal address, registered address, or address for service of notices for the fund
- notify the Tax Office in writing as soon as practicable (not later than 28 days) after becoming aware that the fund has ceased to be a self managed superannuation fund or ceased to exist
- ensure that an approved auditor is appointed to audit the fund for each income year and provide that auditor with documents as requested, and
- lodge the fund’s annual return by the due date.

DECLARATION

By signing this declaration I acknowledge that I understand my duties and responsibilities as a trustee or director of the corporate trustee of the self managed superannuation fund named on this declaration (or if the fund’s name changes, that name). I understand that:

- I must ensure this document is retained for at least 10 years or while I remain a trustee or director of the corporate trustee (whichever is longer) and if I fail to do this, penalties may apply, and
- I may have to make this document available for inspection by a member of staff of the Tax Office and if I fail to do this, penalties may apply.

Trustee’s or director’s name

Trustee’s or director’s signature

Date

Day Month Year
 / /

Witness’ name (witness must be over the age of 18 years)

Witness’ signature

Date

Day Month Year
 / /