



Banking, money and taxation in Wellington

► CURRENCY EXCHANGE

The currency of New Zealand is the New Zealand Dollar. New Zealand banks and post offices offer foreign exchange services and most have currency exchange calculators on their websites.

► OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

If you have not set up a New Zealand bank account before coming to Wellington, it should be at the top of your list of things to do once you arrive. Employers will need to know your bank account number in order to pay your wages.

► CHOOSING A BANK

There are 17 banks registered in New Zealand. The Reserve Bank of New Zealand has a list of all banks operating in New Zealand on their website at www.rbnz.govt.nz

Most New Zealanders choose to bank with one of New Zealand's 'big six' banks. These are well-established banks with a network of branches and ATM machines across the country. The six largest banks are:

- **ANZ**, www.anz.co.nz or call 0800 103 123
- **ASB**, www.asbbank.co.nz or call 0800 803 804
- **Bank of New Zealand**, www.bnz.co.nz or call 0800 240 000
- **Kiwibank**, www.kiwibank.co.nz or call 0800 11 33 55
- **National Bank**, www.nationalbank.co.nz or call 0800 18 18 18
- **Westpac**, www.westpac.co.nz or call 0800 400 600

Each bank offers a range of cheque and savings accounts. You can make an appointment with your local bank manager to discuss which type of account is the best for you.

Multilingual staff are available at some banks to help new migrants.

► BANKING SERVICES

Most New Zealand banks provide a variety of services, including ATM (bank machine) transactions, cheque and savings withdrawals or deposits, internet banking, mortgages, and international transfers between bank accounts. There are usually fees associated with these services.



► DISPUTES AND PROBLEMS WITH BANKS

If you have a complaint to make about your bank, your first step is to discuss the problem with your bank manager. If you are unhappy with the way your bank responds to the problem you may apply for help from the Banking Ombudsman. The Banking Ombudsman offers a free service that is independent of the banks and government.

- Anyone can access this free service. To find out more visit the **Banking Ombudsman** website at www.bankombudsman.org.nz or call 0800 805 950

► EFTPOS

Many New Zealanders use a direct debit system called EFTPOS (Electronic Fund Transfer at Point of Sale) to pay for goods and services. Instead of paying in cash you can swipe your bank card, enter your private PIN number and the amount due will be deducted automatically from your bank account. Most shops in New Zealand accept EFTPOS.

GETTING YOUR INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (IRD) NUMBER

You will need an IRD number before you start a job. An IRD number is a unique number issued to you that will never change even if you go overseas and then return to New Zealand at some time in the future.

To obtain your IRD number you will need to fill in an application for individuals (IR595) form from the Inland Revenue Department website.

- For more information about how to get your IRD number, visit the **Inland Revenue Department** website at www.ird.govt.nz or call 0800 227 774



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SETTLEMENT SUPPORT
NEW ZEALAND



INCOME TAX

All New Zealand citizens and residents who earn income from a job or business activity must pay income tax. The Inland Revenue Department (IRD) collects income tax. The government uses these taxes to pay for government expenditure, including public services such as education, healthcare, railways, roads and welfare.

From 1 October 2008, income tax rates in New Zealand are:

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Income to \$14,000 | 12.5% |
| \$14,001 to \$40,000 | 21% |
| \$40,001 to \$70,000 | 33% |
| \$70,001 and over | 39% |

The income tax year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Most wage and salary earners have their tax deducted from their pay by their employer throughout the year. This is called "Pay As You Earn" (PAYE). However, if you earn income that has no tax deducted, or if you paid too much or



not enough tax during the year, you'll need to file a return (IR3) or get a personal tax summary (PTS).

- For more information, visit the **Inland Revenue Department** website at www.ird.govt.nz or call 0800 227 774

KIWISAVER

KiwiSaver is a government-run voluntary savings scheme that is designed to make it easier to save for your future. You will be able to access your savings when you are eligible for the pension, called New Zealand Superannuation, (currently 65) or after five years membership, whichever is later. Being a KiwiSaver member will not affect your eligibility for NZ Super.

The Government will help you save with KiwiSaver by giving you a \$1000 to start with, a tax credit of up to \$1042.86, a fee subsidy and, if you qualify, a first home deposit subsidy.

- For more information about **KiwiSaver**, visit www.kiwisaver.govt.nz or call 0800 549 472.

WORKING FOR FAMILIES

Working for Families is a government scheme designed to help make it easier to work and raise a family. It pays extra money to many thousands of New Zealand families with children.

Financial support is available for almost all families with children who earn under \$70,000 a year. It is also available to many families earning up to \$100,000 a year.

- To learn more, visit the **Working for Families** website at www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

BUDGETING ADVICE SERVICES

Free budgeting advice services are available in Wellington to help you control your money, make financial plans, repay debt or learn simple book-keeping skills. These services are free and confidential.



Here are some organisations offering free budgeting advice services in Wellington:

- **Citizens Advice Bureau** in Wellington provides free budgeting services. To visit a CAB branch in Wellington, visit their website at www.cab.org.nz or call 0800 367 222
- **Wellington City Mission** provides free budgeting services. To learn more, visit their website at www.wellingtoncitymission.org.nz or call 389 2033
- **Wellington City Council's community directory** contains listings for groups that provide budgeting advice and assistance. Visit www.wellington.govt.nz and enter the keyword 'budgeting'.

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