



An Analysis of Payroll Management Practices for SMEs in Australia: Insights from A2Z Accountants

Submitted To

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

6th December 2025

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Subject: Submission of Internship Report on "*An Analysis of Payroll Management Practices for SMEs in Australia: Insights from A2Z Accountants*"

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to submit my internship report entitled "**An Analysis of Payroll Management Practices for SMEs in Australia: Insights from A2Z Accountants**" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my degree of Bachelor of Business Administration with a major in accounting.

Since this report entails my experience at A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd., Australia, where I was an intern involved with payroll processes, taxation compliance, and related financial services provided to small and medium-scale enterprises, this report analyses how accounting firms like these treat Australia's regulations to deliver authentic payroll services to keep enterprises sustainable.

I am grateful for your supervision and guidance throughout this journey. Hopefully, this report satisfies your expectations.

Respectfully yours,

Md. Jonayed Asraf

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Department of Business Administration

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Daffodil International University

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby certify that the internship report entitled “**An Analysis of Payroll Management Practices for SMEs in Australia: Insights from A2Z Accountants**” was submitted by **Md. Jonayed Asraf (ID: 221-11-1467)**, under the program of Bachelor of Business Administration with major in Accounting at the Department of Business Administration, Daffodil International University.

The report was submitted to partially fulfill the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration. I am satisfied that the report meets high standards regarding content quality, structure, level of analysis, and professional presentation.

Accordingly, I am approving this report for submission and evaluation.



Mr. Md. Arif Hassan
Assistant Professor
Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Business & Entrepreneurship
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DECLARATION

I, **Md. Jonayed Asraf**, hereby declare that this internship report entitled “**An Analysis of Payroll Management Practices for SMEs in Australia: Insights from A2Z Accountants**” is original work submitted for the purpose of obtaining my Bachelor of Business Administration degree at Daffodil International University.

The report covers my actual internship experience at A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd., Australia, wherein I was working under the designation of Graduate Accountant (Intern). The analysis, observations, and recommendations included in this report relate to my actual experience only, with corresponding credits given when required.

I hereby declare that this report has not been previously submitted for any academic or professional purpose and that it is my original work.

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Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillah!

To express my heartfelt glad to Allah – Subhan Allah –Tala for providing me with enough strength and opportunity to complete this internship program successfully.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Md. Arif Hassan, for his help while I was writing this report. His assistance was greatly valuable to me and helped me relate different theories learned at school with practice done at work.

I would like to thank A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd., Australia, for allowing me to gain this valuable experience as well. A huge thank you to all members of A2Z Accountants for your guidance, support, and expertise that helped me gain knowledge about accounting. It was indeed life-changing because you were so open with your knowledge and assigned me with tasks too.

I would like to thank my family for their boundless support and sacrifices which helped me get this internship opportunity abroad. I could stay strong because of their encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and classmates for their support and for sharing experiences that enriched this journey.

It was an important part of my professional development, and I would like to thank all those involved for making it so successful.

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Executive Summary

This report provides an insightful examination of the practices of small and medium-sized enterprises in Australia regarding their payroll. This report relies on practical knowledge gathered during the internship as an industry professional with A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd. This report also examines how accounting practices are dealing with the tight regulations to provide an efficient and effective payroll processing service for the sustainability of the businesses. As the Graduate Accountant, I personally handled the entire process of the payroll for over fifteen SME clients.

Australia's payroll landscape poses significant complexity for small businesses. With more than 120 modern awards, the changing regulations of Fair Work, superannuation laws, PAYG requirements, and Single Touch Payroll reporting, most owners of SMEs do not have the expertise in payroll. Mistakes can lead to underpayment of staff, heavy fines for the employer, and damage to workplace relationships-issues that seriously threaten business continuity. A2Z Accountants was able to shed some much-needed light on the three basic prerequisites for effective payroll management: robust, cloud-based platforms such as Xero and QuickBooks, capable of carrying out complex calculations automatically; systematic quality control processes that catch mistakes before they reach employees; and deep professional expertise in the interpretation of awards. Yet there are still important problems. Dependence on client data makes businesses vulnerable if incomplete information is passed on, portfolios become larger and are difficult to expand because of manual verification processes, and reactive responses to statutory changes are liable to set up temporary compliance gaps that concern clients.

This internship provided me with much more than technical knowledge. This experience taught me that the management of payment is, in fact, the management of people, that the survival of students, such as myself, relies on our employers paying us correctly, and that employers, similarly, require effective tools to establish trust and productivity in the marketplace, and help their business grow, rather than languish, worried about regulatory issues.

Professional accounting services can help medium and small-sized businesses ensure sustainability by making the process of compliance simple, providing leaders useful financial insights without adding extra administrative burdens, and redirecting the management's previously valued time to the issues that truly matter, such as their own businesses. The concluding remarks include learning as the basis for professional performance, learning that continues to be shaped by evolving regulations and laws in Australia.

Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1 Background

Daffodil International University offers internships for BBA students. Students are dealing with actual clients and actual business information. They are learning from classroom teachings as well as gaining hands-on experience. The internship component can help accounting students gain important skills: meeting tight deadlines, performing operations with actual systems applied in accounting firms, and conveying technical knowledge skilfully and correctly. These cannot be accomplished inside the classroom.

I selected A2Z Accountants deliberately because it aligns with my own professional development and objectives. The internship provided me with experience not only outside of but beyond Bangladesh because it introduced me to Australian rules, standards, and practices in business. More than ever before, this training benefits me because I am now ready to begin an international career. A2Z Accountants provided an excellent experience for me because of two major reasons: firstly because of their focus on quality and standards related to professionalism; hence, I could develop actual skills necessary for professional certification. Second, they retain more than 95 percent of their clients.

The internship applied BBA concepts into real-life work. The study of basic concepts such as bookkeeping and preparation of account statements shifted into real-life applications that business owners need their employees to perform. Payroll and cash flow management were experience-based using management accounting theories, while audit and compliance studies were applied at A2Z's quality control processes. Apart from applying knowledge into action, using cloud accounting tools such as Xero and QuickBooks was valuable experience with technology applications. Interacting with actual small and medium-scale business owners helped increase knowledge on how accounting can keep these businesses sustainable.

1.2 Objectives

- To analyze Process Flow of Payroll Management at A2Z Accountants.
- To examine the operational efficiency and compliance challenges in payroll management of SME clients served by A2Z Accountants in Australia.

1.3 Scope of the Study

What the Study is About

Payroll Process for Small and Medium Businesses: A case study of A2Z Accountants Payroll Process for Small and Medium Businesses: A case study of A2Z Accountants Payroll Process for Small and

Medium Businesses: A case study of A2Z Accountants Payroll Process for Small and Medium Businesses: A case study of A2Z Accountants

What the Study Covers

The research covers:

- Payroll management systems and processes used at A2Z Accountants for SME clients
- Compliance frameworks related to Fair Work regulations, modern awards, and ATO requirements
- Quality control mechanisms and verification procedures in payroll processing
- Technology platforms (cloud-based accounting software) used for payroll management
- SME clients across diverse industry sectors including retail, construction, hospitality, professional services, and light manufacturing
- How payroll practices align with Australian regulatory standards and industry best practices

1.4 Methodology of the Study

The report relied on data from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Data

- Internal A2Z Accountants documentation including process manuals, compliance procedures, and client records.
- Discussions with senior accountants and payroll specialists at A2Z Accountants.

Secondary Data

- **Fair Work** Commission regulations, modern awards, and employment law requirements.
- **Australian Taxation Office (ATO)** guidelines and compliance standards.

1.5 Limitations and Boundaries

Enterprise Size — This research limits its applicability to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and doesn't consider large corporations or multinational operations where payroll management differs significantly.

Limited Access to Client Data – As the analysis is based on observations, access to the client is limited and within confidentiality limits, restricting thorough quantitative analysis.

Time Limitation — The practices and challenges identified are those observed during the time of the internship indicating short-term focus rather than longitudinal trends.

Geographic and Regulatory Context — The research is limited to payroll practices under the Australian regulatory framework, and not across borders or other jurisdictions.

1.6 Overall Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction – Introduces the internship background, objectives for research, the problem statement concerning difficulties in payroll management of SMEs, objects of investigation, methods of study, and research restrictions.

Chapter 2: Company/Organization overview – Describes the organizational profile of A2Z Accountants, its core values, history and present situation, market position, technological integration and the six main service areas that it provides: taxation, payroll, bookkeeping, business structuring (SMSF), business advisory services.

Chapter 3: Internship Roles and Responsibilities, and Learnings – Describes roles and responsibilities of the internship in respect to payroll management, tax compliance, reconciliation and client communication; provides examples of tasks carried out; discusses key discoveries, reasons for placement of duties, links with academic courses, and suggestions for closing the academic-practice gap.

Chapter 4: Critique and Reflections – Examines the regulatory framework of the Australian payroll management system, studies the process A2Z Accountants use to run payroll, conducts a SWOT analysis on their current practices, contrasts performance against ideal standards of regulation, and reflects on dilemmas, findings and professional growth from the training.

Chapter 5: The Most Final Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion -- Gathers ex-pacts views on efficiency of operating practices and regulatory constraints, provides five concrete suggestions for improvement in financial management of payrolls, and ends with a reminder that paying raise should always have regard to rates on which companies and individuals can deal effectively in sustainable business.

Chapter 6: Implications – Examines applicability of academic learning in professional practice, the impact interns have made on their organization, relevance to industry of new emerging trends, growth in professional capacity and capabilities, further accounting practice lessons from experience.

Chapter 2:

Company/Organization Overview

2.1 Overview of A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd.

A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd. is one of the leading accounting firms that provide professional tax Accountant services, catering to individuals and businesses across Australia. The company offers various financial services for different types of clients: Individual Taxpayers, Growing Businesses, and Self-Managed Superannuation Funds. The company offers traditional accounting expertise combined with appropriate technology and small step advisory services.

The company serves Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and can thus be said to offer services of a true business partner rather than just a compliance partner. A2Z Accountants works closely with clients to offer them valuable insights necessary for proper growth and success. It works on creating lasting relationships with every business with which it connects while taking responsibility for their satisfaction and understanding their specific needs. Therefore, A2Z Accountants has been able to retain many clients and adapt to industry trends successfully.

Core Values

- **Professional Excellence:** Perpetually renewing skill sets to provide solutions above and beyond client expectations.
- **Integrity and Trust:** Provide an honest, confidential and transparent environment to help engender long-term and valuable relationships.
- **Client-Centric Service:** Listening to individual client requirements and aligning service as a key to success
- **Innovate & Technology:** Using modern tools to offer better, quicker, and efficient accounting services.
- **Continuous Learning:** Keeping abreast of industry changes through ongoing professional development.

2.2 History and Current Operations

Founding and Growth

The initial vision of A2Z Accountants was to combine good basic accounting work with modern technology and the human touch. The company built a reputation for doing so and expanded gradually because of referrals largely based on good service and quality work and not for huge acquisition or mergers with other accounting firms with more clientele. Instead, A2Z Accountants concentrated on developing those relationships and providing more services when customers' needs expanded or increased.

Market Position Today

A2Z Accountants is a mid-sized accounting company catering to hundreds of clients successfully. They assist individual and small to medium-scale concerns, professional service organizations, and even more complex structures. They retain more than 95% of their clientele, and referrals for their new customers largely occur because of their quality service delivery. Partnering with non-competitive firms ensures that clients get rapid access to holistic business solutions.

A2Z Accountants assists the client in transitioning to new digital processes. They utilize cloud accounting software, such as Xero and QuickBooks, which offers automation and safe and reliable digital communications. They are now offering their clients expert advice that assists the client in making crucial decisions, incorporating the traditional aspect of accountancy and new and innovative thinking that enhances productivity and serves as an impetus for proactive communication.

2.3 Core Business Areas

A2Z Accountants operates across the six main service areas, each designed to tackle specific financial management and business needs:

Taxation Services

The tax experts are experienced in offering simple and sophisticated tax solution services for both individual and corporate clients. This wide range of experience is the result of helping their clients manage their finances to the exact point of paying no less and no more than what their tax liability is and staying tax compliant. Whether it's capital gains tax planning and investment advice, their purpose remains the same.

Payroll Services

Payroll can be an absolute nightmare for many businesses. The ever-changing laws affecting the workforce in Australia, such as superannuation, paying the payroll tax, and reading awards, leave many owners and managers completely bewildered. This is where A2Z Accountants understand the concern. Payroll services are no trivial matter, and that's why they provide their clients with complete support for their payroll needs.

Accounting and Bookkeeping

This is where it begins. These services range from basic accounting, such as installing accounting software, to complete financial management. They offer training where necessary, answers to any queries, and analysis reports that translate figures into meaningful business information. This is an accounting service that organizes business records and makes finances tell the story of the business.

Business Structuring and Registration

If anyone setting up or restructuring your business. They help the clients with the basics. These encompass not only company incorporation and registration, providing Australian Business Numbers

(ABN) along with ASIC forms, but most importantly to say, determining what business structure suits it best on taxation and work practice. Nailing that from the very beginning will save headaches-and dollars-further down the line.

Self-Managed Super Fund (SMSF) Services

SMSF specialists assist clients who would like to gain control over their retirement funds. They are not accountants but SMSF Specialist Advisors, who qualify after undergoing challenging learning programs. They deal with setting up funds, as well as managing the rest, such as investments and retirements. This requires expert knowledge, and they possess it.

Business Advisory Services

This is where A2Z Accountants transcends the world of mathematics. This where the consulting team functions as true business partners, helping clients with decisions on where to go and how to get there. They deal with financial, performance, and strategic planning, cash management, and even succession. Learning from the client and coming up with customized, long-term, and sound strategies – that’s the essence of the partnership.

Chapter 3:

Internship Roles, Responsibilities, and Learnings

3.1 Role and Responsibilities

As a Graduate Accountant, I was involved in accounting and compliance work for a varied portfolio of SME clientele during my internship at A2Z Accountants Pty Ltd. My role encompassed multiple areas of accounting practice, with particular emphasis on payroll management, tax compliance, and financial operations.

Payroll Management

- Setting up payroll for new clients, including employee information, award classifications, super funds and PAYG withholding
- Processing quarterly superannuation guarantee contributions with correct calculations and payments in a timely manner
- Organising and completing monthly PAYG withholding reports in accordance with ATO specs
- Administering leave such as annual leave, sick leave and long service leave accruals
- Checking modern awards to ensure that pay rates, penalty rates, overtime calculations and leave entitlements have all been paid correctly.
- Finalizing Through Single Touch Payroll – Processing Payment Summaries
- Managing terminations of employees including all final pays and relevant accrued entitlements

Tax Compliance and Lodgement

- Preparing GST returns with accurate input tax credit calculations
- Lodging Business Activity Statements within statutory deadlines
- Reviewing taxation positions to optimize client outcomes
- Ensuring full compliance with ATO requirements

Bank Reconciliation and General Ledger Maintenance

- Reconciling bank statements with accounting records
- Identifying and correcting discrepancies before financial reporting
- Maintaining accurate general ledger accounts
- Supporting reliable financial decision-making through accurate records

Period-End Closing Support

- Preparing journal entries for period-end adjustments
- Conducting trial balance reviews for accuracy verification
- Assisting in drafting financial statements
- Ensuring completion of the financial reporting cycle

Client Communication and Query Resolution

- Responding to client inquiries via email and phone
- Explaining complex technical information in accessible language
- Resolving payroll and tax-related queries promptly
- Building and maintaining professional client relationships

Cloud-Based Accounting System Management

- Managing client accounts on Xero and QuickBooks platforms
- Processing transactions through cloud-based systems
- Generating real-time financial reports and insights
- Ensuring data accuracy and system integrity

3.2 Rationale of those roles and responsibilities

Working at A2Z accountants was an intensive role I played which revolved around directly impacting the organization and its clients. I was responsible for different areas of work, which provided a tangible contribution to the firm by enabling it to deliver services that are reliable, compliant and client oriented.

Payroll Management

Paying employees daily, made me primarily in charge of paying people properly and on time. Because if I made a mistake it would immediately impact people's ability to earn a living and damaged client trust. In my role I made sure all parties abided by Fair Work and superannuation laws so that our clients and the firm were not inadvertently drawn into a legal dispute. I helped the firm retain its reputation for reliability with 100% accuracy in payroll processing.

Tax Compliance

GST returns and BAS statements needed to be submitted within ATO deadlines. If clients were late or there were errors, clients could receive penalties, or it could damage the reputation of the firm. I always submitted on time so that clients knew that their taxation matters were looked after and they would not incur additional expenses.

Bank Reconciliation

I worked to keep the banks balanced so customers were able to stay current and their accounting was correct. Every incorrect item that was located and corrected helped prevent problems with future accounting analysis. The careful analysis and attention to detail allowed customers to trust their accounting figures so they could make informed business decisions, and it allowed the company to accurately utilize these figures for other consulting projects.

Client Communication

Talking with clients directly made me exactly that: a spokesperson for the company. These interactions directly influenced how satisfied clients were and how well they remained with me when I addressed difficult matters and answered possible concerns directly related to their expectations and satisfaction with services. I described technical details to clients so they could easily understand how we could assist and benefit their cause when necessary. With this position comes not only helping but knowing when others need to get involved too.

Managing Multiple Clients

Managing 15+ concurrent clients per quarter, I made a direct impact on the overall capacity for the firm to service its client base. My organizational skills enabled senior accountants to concentrate on bigger advisory assignments. My efficiency in day-to-day tasks and in getting the work done cost effectively allowed the firm to continue making a profit while providing good service.

Overall Impact Because of these responsibilities my work directly impacted client satisfaction, compliance with regulators and the firm's professional reputation.

3.3 Examples of Tasks Completed

This part shows the actual tasks I undertook while completing my internship at A2Z Accountants and the application of my roles in relation to payroll management, taxation compliance, and financial operations

Payroll Management

I managed full payroll cycles for various SME clients across diverse industries on Xero and QuickBooks platforms. An example was processing payroll every two weeks for a construction client with 12 employees – which included full time site supervisors, Full/part-time admin staff and casuals.

- Check hours claimed on timesheets submitted by client and check for individual weekend or overtime hours requiring penalty rates
- Used classifications under Building and Construction General On-site Award to obtain correct base rates for all employee categories.
- Weekend workers were paid at calculated penalty rates (time-and-a-half for Saturday and double-time on Sundays)
- Done PAYG withholding according to every employees taxation file number declaration, and pay regularity
- Superannuation guarantee contributions at 12% of ordinary time earnings
- Created payslips and processed pay run for Electronic Funds Transfer

- After completing the pay run, STP report sent to the ATO

		BOOKIPI PTY LTD ABN : 91617668185 5 George Street North Strathfield NSW 2137		
Name:	Keira Smith	Period Starting	24 Apr 2023	
Address:	98 Illinois Rd Strathfield NSW 2341	Period Ending	07 May 2023	
		Payment Date	10 May 2023	
		Gross Earning	\$3,800.00	
		Net Pay	\$2,014.00	
		Superannuation	\$399.00	
		Employee Type	Full Time	

	Units	Rate	This Pay	YTD
SALARY & WAGE				
Ordinary Hours	76	\$50.0000	\$3,800.00	\$3,800.00
			\$3,800.00	\$3,800.00
TAX				
PAYG			\$1,786.00	\$1,786.00
			\$1,786.00	\$1,786.00
SUPER CONTRIBUTIONS				
Super Guarantee			\$399.00	\$399.00
Australian Retirement Trust Super Savings - 123123123			\$399.00	\$399.00
LEAVE DETAILS				
		Accrued	Taken	Remaining
Annual Leave		5.84615	0	5.84615
Personal/Carer's Leave		2.92308	0	2.92308
PAYMENT DETAILS				
				Amount
Cash				\$2,014.00

It was a meticulous process, one that involved interpreting awards correctly, entering data accurately and checking systematically, to ensure that employees were paid correctly, whilst complying with Fair Work at the same time.

GST and BAS Preparation

Filed quarterly Business Activity Statements for retail, hospitality and professional services clients. For woven in example, we were preparing BAS for a café who is working in the hospitality industry and having annual turnover, approx. \$850,000.

- We reviewed all sales transactions entered in Xero to ensure correct GST coding (including GST-inclusive sales, GST-free items such as basic food items)
- Reviewed purchase transactions to verify input tax claims made were appropriate, identifying business expenses claimable for GST and non-claimable items
- Matched GST amounts collected on sales (G1) with sales amounts recorded in the accounting system.
- Adjusted Input GST to Purchases Paid (G11) so that only business expenses were recorded as purchases. Net GST calculation (GST payable to or refundable from ATO)

- Compared numbers against prior quarters to look for odd variances that could be coding mistakes
- Provided lodgement of BAS directly through the accounting software
- Lodged the BAS with the ATO using the designated tax agent portal for the practice and prior to the quarterly due date



By using this process, it was ensured that GST returns were accurate and optimum input tax credits were obtained for the clients within the ATO regulations.

Bank Reconciliation

Bank Reconciliation - It was necessary to perform all bank reconciliation per month to keep client records updated. Bank reconciliation for 15+ clients every month required ensuring every transaction was accounted for with those clients.

- Reconciled bank feed transactions to recorded transactions in the accounting system
- Pursued relevant mismatched items like bank fees, interest, or unbooked client payments
- Issued cheques & not yet presented; month-end deposits yet to be cleared
- The amount on the bank statement less timing differences must equal the closing balance in the accounting system, and this was validated

In doing so, I learned things like duplicate payments, bank fees that were not recorded, and transactions that were not properly classified, and I fixed them to ensure the financial records were accurate.

Bank transactions

Wells Fargo Checking ▾

Give feedback Update Requests (2) Link accounts ▾

Checking 101

Bank: \$13,145.23

Posted: \$12,447.89 5m

Gold card 43

Bank: \$17,799.32

Posted: \$0 5m

Savings 34

Bank: \$201,822.05

Posted: \$201,822.05 5m

Pending (101) Posted Excluded [Switch to previous version](#) [Tutorial](#) [Go to bank register](#)

Date	Full Bank Description	Amount		From/To	Categorize or Match	Actions
05/26/2025	THE SPOON	-\$385.94	+	Select vendor	Meals with clients	Match Categorize Post
05/25/2025	MARKEPLACE NA PA	-\$111.44	+	Marketplace	Select category	Match Categorize Post
05/24/2025	PAYMT ID: RON BLANDFC	\$3,785.23	4	Select customer	Invoice 28 05/01/2025	Match Categorize Match
05/17/2025	DIRECT DEP ID: XXXXXX3	\$100,000.00	+	Select customer	Invoice 1005 05/02/2025	Match Categorize Match
05/17/2025	ACH Payment to Maggie G	-\$1,500	+	Maggie Group	RULE Cost of sales: landscap	Match Categorize Post
05/08/2025	CARD PAYMENT	-\$1,505.38	2	Select vendor	PAIR Gold card	Match Categorize Post

Financial Reporting Support

I provided support in the month-end closing process by preparing for adjusting journal entries for accruals, prepayments, and depreciation for instance, I made accrual of unpaid superannuation

liability, accrual of unexpended insurance costs and also accounted for fixed assets via calculation of diminishing value or straight-line methods during June 2025 year-end closing for various clients.

- Accrual Expenses (Future Wages, superannuation, utilities etc) not Paid but accruing to the period
- Split out some prepaid expenses that should be spaced over accounting periods
- Executed relevant depreciation techniques on fixed asset registers
- Drafted journal entries with appropriate account codes and narratives
- Proposed month end adjustments to senior accountants prior to posting

By performing this work, they ensured that financial statements were truly representative of the entity's financial position at period-end.

Client Communication

I was briefly in charge of payroll, so I often contacted clients to clear up any payroll questions or tax obligations, or to ask them to send me certain documents. For example, we were often asked how to respond to a retail client question regarding casual loading rates and leave entitlements for part-time staff who worked extra hours.

- Responded immediately to the client's email inquiry
- Reviewed the appropriate contemporary award (General Retail Industry Award) to confirm entitlements
- Provided a clear, easy summary of the client's obligations
- Provided a payroll setup review to confirm compliance

3.4 Important Learnings

My internship at A2Z Accountants transformed my theoretical knowledge into practical expertise. The following learnings collect from direct engagement with SME clients and real-world accounting challenges.

Payroll Management

- **Award interpretation and Payroll Process:** While doing research, I realized that selecting the correct modern award for an employee requires considering industry, position description, qualifications, and work duties. It's difficult to get clear answers on these matters; thus, research on every case becomes important.
- **Software Configuration:** I realized that proper initial configuration of payroll software regarding award types, PAYG rates, and super funds prevents recurring problems throughout the life of the employment contract.

- **Compliance with superannuation:** I realized that superannuation guarantee payments must be made on or before the 28th of the month following every quarter with no exception. Late payments incur Superannuation Guarantee Charge which cannot be deducted for taxation purposes with or without engagement.
- **Leave tracking:** I realized that leaves are accrued differently depending on employment status, number of hours worked, and regulations such as meal breaks and rest times. For example, casuals, part-time workers, and full-timers get leaves differently.
- **Single Touch Payroll requires real-time accuracy:** I can't wait until year's end to correct any problems because Single Touch Payroll requires real-time accuracy with my year-end software.

Tax Compliance and Lodgement

- **GST classification:** I understood that while it was necessary to classify goods or services into GST-free, input-taxed, or taxable supplies based on their nature, this was to be done in accordance with GST rules. Errors impact client positions.
- **There must be documentation for input tax credits:** I realized that for GST credits to be claimable, there must be supporting tax invoices, and the intention must be for business purposes.
- **Preparation of BAS:** I realized that when done correctly, preparation of the BAS can identify strange transactions or encoding errors which serve as checks beyond required compliances.
- **Deadline management:** I realized that being able to submit deadlines on time requires planning not only with how well you prepared technically but when your client's information becomes available.

Bank Reconciliation and General Ledger Maintenance

- **Bank Feeds Reconciliation:** I found that while using automatic bank feeds, human reconciliation is still required. There could be duplicates, incorrect codes, and unmatched entries.
- **General Ledger:** I realized how important it was to maintain accurate general ledger accounts because these formed the basis for honest accounting statements and tax returns.

Client Communication and Query Resolution

- **Your clients want context:** you need to know what's behind your clients' questions so that you can answer their questions properly.
- **Email communication:** Email responses need to be concise, complete, and professional because these become part of records and indicative of service delivery at the firm.

- **Relationship-building enhances service:** Taking the time to get to know each business and every individual's challenges and communications style makes future service encounters simpler and more efficient.

Cloud-Based Accounting System Management

- **System set-up:** It has been found helpful to set up properly the account structure, taxation codes, and tracking categories when utilizing Xero or QuickBooks to avoid reoccurring data. [Read More.](#)
- **Monitoring Automation:** I found that automated functionalities like bank feeds, recurring payments, and STP reporting still need professional monitoring to identify discrepancies and ensure correct classification.

Integration of Knowledge and Practice

- **Theory vs. Reality:** I realized that knowledge theories establish an ideal system which reality cannot achieve. Cleaner data does not necessarily mean that every sector fits well into reality and requires judgment when interpreting policy.
- **Managing under pressure:** I realized that it's important to factor time into considerations when faced with different deadlines.
- **Continuous learning requires lifelong commitment:** It was realized that accounting processes and principles keep on varying every day with new rules and technologies emerging on how to account properly.

3.5 Connection with Academia

The work experience with A2Z Accountants related the theories learned inside the classroom to practice at work. It made learning accounting at BBA (Accounting) meaningful and applicable.

I applied double-entry accounting, accrual accounting, and accounting and reporting principles to real-life business transactions and prepared accounting statements. It was eye-opening to see how good accounting can assist with major business decisions and trust-building with parties interested in business activity.

Although I researched Bangladeshi taxation at a graduate level, it provided me with the correct concepts required to cope with Australia's GST and BAS systems. Preparing actual tax returns honed my analytical research and judgment capabilities to transform theory into practice.

Knowing how to utilize Xero and QuickBooks was more than just what I learned at school. It enhanced my knowledge and capabilities with cloud accounting systems which are prevalent in Australia.

Learning about research necessary for coping with new taxation laws and financial disputes introduced new action steps related to incorporating academic concepts into real-life scenarios.

3.6 Recommendations for Strengthening Academic-Practice Integration

Drawing on my experience of applying Bangladeshi learning outcomes to Australian professional practice, I propose the following to equip students for the global accounting environment:

- **Introduce Advance Payroll Management in Curriculum**

Universities need to extend their teaching workforce not only in relation to how to compute pay but into areas that cover what employment regulations stipulate, how awards are interpreted, and how payrolls work. There are differences in regulations; however, some basic principles must always remain constant: correct identification of employment, payment and allowances, reversions or deductions/cuts, and timely reporting. Students must get experience with cloud-based payrolls regardless of how these systems exist internationally and not specific to any countries.

- **Practical Tax Return Preparation**

Students need more experience with real returns preparation scenarios. Universities can collaborate with practitioners or establish internal clinics with access to NBR systems and procedures under supervision. Practical training benefits students to adapt to different regulatory systems because transferable skills like information gathering, analysis of taxation positions, and preparation of returns can easily adapt to different systems of taxation.

- **Comparative International Accounting and Taxation**

There should be courses offered at universities on international accounting standards. It would help students understand how IFRS standards differ from others, how taxation systems differ internationally, and how companies cope with global taxation regulations.

- **Practical Compliance Workshops**

Practical Compliance Workshops featuring representatives or practitioners of NBR or other international expertise would keep students updated. Practical knowledge of compliance practices beyond Bangladeshi shores would widen students' outlooks and equip them for eventual global assignments.

- **Client Communication and Professional Skills Development**

Educational programs need to cover training related to communicating technical knowledge to non-accountants effectively; this becomes even more important for those students who work internationally because they need to explain and discuss complex thoughts despite differences in language and culture.

- **Integrated Case Studies Reflecting Real Complexity**

Real Complexity Cases used in academic studies should reflect real-life scenarios at work: circumstances like imperfect knowledge, ambiguous situations, numerous tasks with equal importance, and tight deadlines. Students need to hone their skill at making decisions with incomplete knowledge and defending these judgments professionally. Cases studies should be taken from local and global scenarios to equip students with diverse career alternatives.

Chapter 4:

Critique and Reflections

4.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the payroll management processes that I witnessed at A2Z Accountants during my internship position there. It combines practice with theory related to it. The primary objective of this chapter is to determine how efficient payroll management systems are for small and medium-scale enterprises in Australia and how this experience aided me with professional development. I was employed at A2Z Accountants under the position of Graduate Accountant with multiple SMEs directly to perform their payroll services for their businesses. There, I gained knowledge about implementing Australia's payroll system, Fair Work compliance, reading modern awards, and accounting for PAYG withholding payments, super payments, and STP returns.

In this chapter, I discuss how I applied an Australian model of payroll management theory before moving on to discuss how it works in practice. I add a SWOT analysis evaluation of what I witnessed at A2Z Accountants and how I personally developed throughout this experience. It illustrates how theory can combine with practice to deliver an assessment that encompasses more than just theory or real-world circumstances but rather fills both gaps with well-rounded knowledge.

4.2 About Australian Payroll Management System

The Australian payroll system operates under tough regulatory conditions which safeguard workers' rights and ensures fair Labor practices. Comprehension of the alternate types of arrangements between the employees and employers is crucial as non-compliance may have major financial penalties and result in a severe reputational damage.

Types of Employees

- Full-Time Employees
- Part-Time Employees
- Casual Employees

Table 1 :Employment Classification Comparison

Aspect	Full-Time	Part-Time	Casual
Work Hours	38 hours/week (standard)	Regular, agreed hours less than full-time	Irregular, no guaranteed hours
Annual Leave	4 weeks paid per year	Pro-rata based on hours worked	No paid leave (compensated by loading)
Personal/Sick Leave	10 days paid per year	Pro-rata based on hours worked	No paid leave
Public Holidays	Paid	Paid (if usually rostered)	Paid only if worked (with penalties)
Superannuation	12% on ordinary earnings	12% on ordinary earnings	12% when earning threshold met
Notice Period	Required for termination	Required for termination	Not required (either party)

Pay Periods and Payment Methods

Australian businesses typically use three pay frequencies:

- **Weekly** (52 periods, common in hospitality/retail)
- **Fortnightly** (26 periods, most popular nationwide)
- **Monthly** (12 periods, typical for salaried roles).

Pay frequency affects PAYG calculations, superannuation tracking, and leave accruals.

Payroll Rules and Regulations

From a financial perspective, the Australian payroll runs within a highly complex set of federal statutes, industrial instruments, and taxes. There are several rules and regulations concerning payroll, among them as follows:

Awards and pay rates: the Fair Work Commission establishes modern awards to prescribe minimum employment conditions for more than 120 industry professions. Each award being industry-related, they normally set minimum pays, penalty rates, allowances, and classifications.

Superannuation: it is mandatory for an employer to contribute 12% annually to a super fund. The rate is projected to increase to 12% from July 2025. Contributions are payable by the 28th day following the end of each quarter.

PAYG Withholding: employers are required to withhold some Pay As You Go amounts based on employees' TFN declarations indicating their eligibility to the tax-free threshold and HELP debt status.

Single Touch Payroll (STP): STP, introduced from 2018, calls for real-time reporting of salary, wages, PAYG and superannuation to the ATO at every pay run.

ATO's Role in Compliance and Auditing: the ATO administers PAYG collections, superannuation, and FBT systems. Using STP with near-live AUDIT, the ATO issues online director penalty notices for non-compliance. There are also interests money and possible legal action for non-compliance.

Table 2: Summary of Regulatory Implications

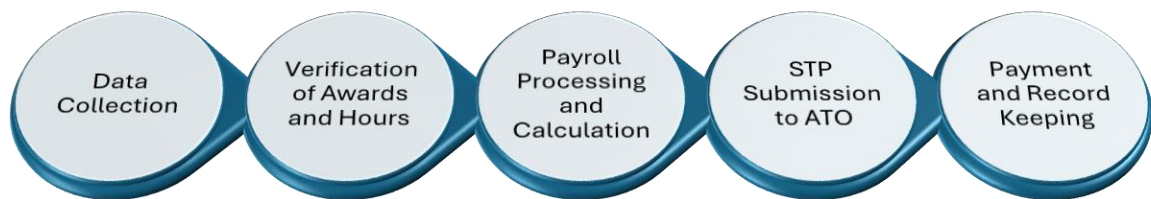
Regulation	Key Requirement	Payroll Implication
Fair Work Awards	Minimum pay rates, penalties, classifications	Must identify correct award, apply appropriate classification and penalty rates
Work Hours Laws	38-hour week standard, overtime provisions	Accurate time tracking, correct overtime calculation, penalty rate application
Superannuation Guarantee	12% employer contribution on OTE	Calculate super on correct earnings base, pay quarterly by due dates
PAYG Withholding	Tax withholding based on TFN declaration	Apply correct tax tables, withhold appropriate amounts, report regularly
Single Touch Payroll	Real-time reporting to ATO	Use STP-enabled software, report with each pay run, ensure data accuracy
Deductions	Only lawful, authorized deductions	Verify authorization, ensure deductions don't breach minimum wage
ATO Compliance	Record-keeping, reporting, payment obligations	Maintain accurate records, meet deadlines, respond to ATO inquiries

These rules cause complexity for HR processes related to management of payroll because it requires technical expertise and meticulous attention to ensure compliance while still keeping processes efficient.

Analysis

4.3 Process Flow Analysis of Payroll Management at A2Z Accountants

A2Z Accountants employs a straight-forward and tech-supported system when it comes to taking care of employees' payments for small to medium-scale companies. The company's system can be broken down into these steps:



Step 1: Data Collection – The clients can send employee and timesheet details electronically either through email or cloud sharing facilities.

Step 2: Verification of Awards and Hours – Payroll specialists verify types of awards and hours worked to ensure the correct rates of penalties are applied. For instance, hospitality clients receive time and a half on Saturdays and double time on Sundays under their respective awards.

Step 3: Payroll Processing and Calculation – Xero and QuickBooks will calculate Gross Pay, PAYG Withholding, Superannuation (12%), and deductions automatically:

Step 4: STP Submission to ATO - Single Touch Payroll (STP) reporting has a regular compliance cycle where updates are made to the ATO with every pay run.

Step 5: Payment and Record Keeping – Electronic Fund Transfer payments are made to employees' accounts, and records of payments are saved into the accounting system.

Technology Integration: It could offer calculation automation capabilities, real-time compliance features, leave management tools, and audit trail functionalities when using cloud software. Professional judgment can still be required when applying awards to difficult circumstances or dealing with atypical contracts or awards entitlements.

4.4 SWOT Analysis of Payroll Management By A2Z Accountants

This SWOT analysis considers how A2Z Accountants manages payroll, taking note of what works well and not so well and considering what may follow. It's necessary to discuss these aspects because “payroll management constitutes a critical element required for the survival of small to medium-sized enterprises” and Australia’s regulations on these matters are stiff.

Table 3: SWOT Analysis Table

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced cloud-based automation (Xero/QuickBooks) ensuring calculation accuracy and STP compliance Systematic quality control processes with multiple verification checkpoints preventing errors Deep expertise in complex award interpretation and Fair Work compliance across diverse industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy dependence on client data accuracy and timeliness, creating vulnerability to delays Manual verification processes limiting scalability as client portfolios expand Reactive rather than proactive approach to regulatory updates, creating temporary compliance gaps
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of AI-powered award interpretation tools to enhance efficiency and reduce interpretation time Development of client self-service portals for real-time payroll visibility and reduced administrative burden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly frequent ATO regulatory changes requiring constant system updates and staff retraining Cybersecurity vulnerabilities in cloud-based systems exposing sensitive employee data to breach risks Persistent human error risk in manual verification stages despite systematic processes

Strengths: What A2Z Does Well

A2Z Accountants has built strong capabilities that deliver real value to SME clients.

- Strong Technology Foundation**

A2Z relies on cloud accounting software called Xero and QuickBooks for automating difficult payroll jobs. While processing retail clients' payrolls, these programs automatically assign weekend penalties, calculate PAYG payments, and compute superannuation rates without requiring human intervention to work it out manually. It cuts down on errors and allows us to handle more customers efficiently. It benefits employees as well because now they can access their pay receipts instantaneously with an easily accessible 'Leave Balance' option.

- **Thorough Quality Checks**

A2Z tests various aspects of their pay system, from initial verification of data to final verification at the end of the calculation. During my internship experience at A2Z, I noticed that there were several potential cases of underpaying before it reached employees due to reports of underpay scandals and the increase in Fair Work audits in the media.

- **Expert Award Knowledge**

The details of new awards and regulations are known to the whole team. Since every award has different rates of penalties and terms of engagement, it's important to know these details. The hospitality client I helped wanted to operate on Sundays too. Since they needed to know details of every penalty rate obligation/requirement, I provided these details and calculated costs so that they could determine pricing and profit factors.

Weaknesses: Where Challenges Exist

Despite these strengths, A2Z faces challenges that limit efficiency and growth.

- **Relying on Client-Provided Information**

Our biggest challenge comes with relying on clients for accurate and timely data. Data quality can differ greatly. Some clients utilize an integrated system and provide clean data; others provide handwritten timesheets or miss deadlines. We had to make multiple calls to gain hours and penalty rates for one construction client because they always provided incomplete timesheets.

- **Manual Verification Takes Time**

Our quality checks can't be said to lack comprehensiveness; however, they consume considerable amounts of time. Every payroll requires an expert analysis of definitions and computations. It's not scalable because with every increase in clients, time involved in verification will increase proportionately. We haven't introduced exception reporting; therefore, everything has to be verified manually, leading to scalability issues.

- **Reacting to Changes Rather Than Anticipating Them**

Responding to Changes Instead of Anticipating Them Since rules keep changing, we modify systems and inform clients; however, reactivity gives rise to gaps. For instance, when superannuation rates increased in July 2025, not all of the systems of clients were modified at the initial instance; thus, there was a need to correct discrepancies at a later date.

Opportunities: Paths Forward

The evolving payroll landscape offers opportunities to improve service and create value.

- **AI-Powered Award Assistance (QuickBooks and Xero Can adopt)**

These AI tools could assess current awards and offer which rates should apply based on employee positions. An AI system analysing more than 120 awards could easily identify which award applies to a new employee and offer classification levels and special provisions. It would create fairness and allow experts to handle difficult cases only.

- **Client Self-Service Technology (Integration with attendance ERP)**

Portals would allow SME business owners access to real-time payroll figures, create timesheets using templates, and receive reminders of future expenditures. It would reduce administrative tasks and communication between parties while allowing clients to budget for cash flow, which matters when running close-run concerns.

Threats: External Challenges to Navigate

Three external factors present ongoing challenges requiring careful management.

- **Constant Regulatory Changes**

Changes to employment law and taxation regulations occur constantly within Australia. Fair Work decisions, ATO rulings, updates to superannuation schemes, or new legislation introduce complexity every year. Every alteration requires system updates, training employees and informing clients – resource-intensive activities that consume time.

- **Cybersecurity Risks**

The cloud-based payroll system is efficient; however, it centralizes sensitive employee information on the internet with associated risks to cyber security. Sensitive payroll information such as tax file numbers, banking details, addresses, and amounts paid can easily attract fraudsters. There could be identity theft for clients with associated penalties under privacy laws and damage to reputation if such a breach happens to our organization. There can be phishing targeting employees with increasing sophistication, ransomware locking access to our information, and vulnerabilities within third-party software yet unknown to us that can attract unauthorized access.

- **Human Error Remains Possible**

Although there is automation and rigorous process work done, there can still be human error involved. Human error can occur when workers are too busy or dealing with multiple customers or if they come across an unusual case. It can occur when they choose the incorrect Award document or violate the penalty rate or if they overlook a special arrangement. It can occur because human beings can err despite stringent measures taken to prevent this or minimize it to almost

negligible figures. The new Wages Awards can be intricate with several tiers and industry-based rules when it comes to penalties.

4.5 Comparative Analysis: Ideal Standards vs. A2Z Practices

The table below compares what Fair Work and ATO require for ideal payroll practice and how A2Z Accountants actually does it – areas where we excel and areas where we need improvement:

Payroll Standard	Ideal Practice (Fair Work/ATO)	A2Z Actual Practice	Performance Assessment
Award Compliance	Correct award identification, accurate classification, complete penalty rate application	Systematic award verification with professional expertise; generally accurate but relies on manual interpretation	Very Strong
PAYG Accuracy	Correct tax table application based on current TFN declarations and pay frequency	Automated calculation through software using current ATO tables; regular verification of withholding amounts	Very Strong
Superannuation Compliance	12% contribution on OTE, paid quarterly by 28th following quarter-end	Automated calculation on correct earnings base; systematic quarterly payment tracking	Very Strong
STP Reporting	Real-time submission with each Period; accurate data transmission to ATO	Integrated STP through Xero/QuickBooks; submitted with each period as required	Very Strong
Record Keeping	Comprehensive records retained for 5+ years; easily retrievable for audits	Digital records maintained in cloud storage; generally well-organized	Strong
Processing Timeliness	Pay employees by agreed pay day; meet all lodgement deadlines	Generally timely but dependent on client data submission; occasional delays from client-side	Strong
Data Security	Robust protection of sensitive employee information; compliance with privacy legislation	Relies on software provider security; basic internal protocols implemented	Very Strong
Quality Control	Verification processes to prevent errors; systematic review before finalization	Multi-stage manual verification; comprehensive checking processes	Very Strong
Regulatory Updates	Immediate implementation of legislative changes; no compliance gaps	Reactive implementation; brief gaps between announcement and full implementation	Needs Improvement
Client Communication	Proactive advice on obligations; clear explanations of payroll matters	Responsive to queries; ad-hoc proactive communication	Strong

4.6 My Internship Journey: Challenges, Learning, and Growth

The internship experience at A2Z Accountants has altered my perception of accounting professionalism. University has provided me with knowledge and theories; however, at A2Z Accountants, I learned what it's like to apply accounting knowledge in practice. Completing those experiences has helped me determine my capabilities and passion for accounting work.

Key Challenges Faced

The Modern Award System in Australia: Australia's system of modern awards was confusing right from the start. There were more than 120 awards with different rules for penalties and allowances for each award. It was my duty to determine which award applies to an individual employee depending on their industry, job description, and qualifications or work done. Sometimes it was difficult to determine which award applied because it didn't always seem to fit into the category of work done or industry involved, which was important because incorrect application could result in legal troubles for me.

Balancing Many Deadlines: Managing multiple clients with different payment cycles and times for BAS lodgement and super payments was rather stressful and made it difficult to juggle their requirements. At one point, I was managing three concurrent payrolls, two payments, and month end-closing, and using Time in Lieu for a day off paid. The pressure meant the minute-by-minute prioritisation of time was constant, and always at the discretion of subrogated accuracy.

Incomplete Client Data: The most frustrating part of my internship was my clients' inability to provide complete information. The construction clients, for example, wrote out their time on the job in an illegible scrawl with no easily differentiable context. Due to time and payment pressures, they often omitted the details I needed most. I had two options: leave the data aside and work without them, at the cost of the pay day, or charge ahead and hope the errors were negligible.

Learning of New Technology: I had worked with the standard accounting software at university, but I was completely unprepared for the sudden need to learn at pace a suite of tools. Senior accountants could configure the tools' complex settings in minutes; I required significantly longer. While I was intuitively cautious with company data, I was sometimes too shy to interact with the software and understand how it worked better.

Learning a New Regulatory System: I had to unlearn everything about the Bangladeshi accounting system I had internalised and adapt to a completely new system in Australia. The GST, PAYG withholding, and modern awards taught to me in university had almost nothing in common with Australia's similar sounding but different system. For a long time, I found myself switching back to

“Bangladeshi-mode”: double-counting GSTs, forgetting definitions, and understanding and thinking in the English legal framework that regulated the system.

What I Learned from These Challenges

Independent Research and Problem-Solving: I mastered systematic research when struggling with complex awards. Instead of asking for help every time, I could structure my approach: identify the specific question, find the best resources such as Fair Work Commission determination, read carefully, cross-reference with examples and check if I understood correctly. However, my main discovery was that regulatory uncertainty is normal. Even experienced accountants deal with new scenarios all the time, researching and learning. Competent professionals know how to find reliable answers, not store all rules in their memory.

Time Management Under Pressure: Multiple deadlines clicked my common sense, and I obtained a set of practical criteria to prioritize my tasks. I could calculate the deadline’s urgency, the complexity of the task, the value of the client, the potential disaster of a delay, etc. I found that it is always useful to start a complex task as early as possible, even if the deadline is distant, because the human brain needs a pause from time to time, and processing a complex task gradually also reduces errors. However, the most critical lesson was that most disasters could have been avoided by open communication about my current workload with senior staff.

Building Genuine Client Relationships: I have realized that obtaining incomplete data is not simply the client’s responsibility and my professional failure. I have learnt to make genuine requests: to stop only asking for data, but explain what we need, why it matters, in which format and when with specific deadlines. When clients failed, I found the root cause. Some genuinely needed to use a simple time tracking system, and I showed them how. Some could not provide data because I asked them at the worst time due to their work routines.

Adapting Across Different Contexts: The most significant takeaway from bridging Bangladeshi and Australian accounting systems is strong fundamental knowledge ensures adaptability. From my previous study, I already understand fundamental tax and employment principles, and accounting theory. Then I could focus exclusively on the details of the Australian system, using my previous knowledge as a foundation.

Overall Reflection: My Professional and Personal Growth

The internship has confirmed that I have made the right choice. I entered with some knowledge from the textbooks but no practical experience and uncertain whether I had made the right career choice. I left feeling passionate about accounting because I now understand that accounting is essentially about business. I can understand now how accurate information, strong compliance, and good advice can keep small to medium-sized businesses strong and thriving. It’s become apparent to me that this

internship has opened my eyes to how much I didn't know and how much I was able to learn within just 12 weeks. It's reinforced that I can overcome problems and succeed at a difficult and diverse job. The experience at my company has been that professional development is for life. While it can be terrifying at times, I am looking forward to it. I am committed to obtaining professional certification and developing expertise in payroll services, compliance, and ultimately business advisory services. I understand that accounting is not static and constantly evolving; I am eager to develop with it. I am grateful that the knowledge I will develop at work will provide foundational knowledge for my practice.

Chapter 5:

**Key Findings, Recommendation and
Conclusion**

5.1 Key Findings

- Cloud-based accounting systems such as Xero and QuickBooks offer complex payroll processing functionalities, real-time Single Touch Payroll reporting capability, and minimize human errors associated with these processes for their SME clients' portfolios.
- A2Z Accountants carries out quality checks at every step of their payroll process to identify and rectify underpayments before they impact employees or lead to penalties with Fair Work.
- We think that A2Z Accountants demonstrates a level of 'Very Strong' compliance with awards, PAYG withholding payments, superannuation guarantee payments, data security measures, and quality processes relative to Fair Work Commission and Australian Taxation Office standards. The quality of client data varies significantly across the SME portfolio—while several clients submit accurate, timely information through integrated systems, many have incomplete, handwritten timesheets, creating processing delays and limiting accuracy beyond the firm's direct operational scope.
- Manual verification at multiple points is cripplingly time-intensive and has limited capacity scalability, potentially limiting the client portfolio's growth as a signal in the workforce size requires proportional increases in professional review time without automated exception-reporting systems' efficiency.
- Rapid implementation of regular regulatory changes including Fair Work rulings, Australian Taxation Office amendments, and superannuation guarantee rate updates will create periodic compliance gaps between the announcement and full systemization across clients.
- While A2Z Accountants cannot efficiently provide permanent troubleshooting assistance to clients outside the email support line's scope, rapid-implementation system vulnerabilities create full-scale cybersecurity risks for cloud systems containing sensitive employee data such as tax file numbers, bank accounts, addresses, and salaries. Breaches could lead to identity theft exposure, privacy legislation fines, and client—firm reputation damage.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the key findings of the study, it is suggested that A2Z Accountants implement the following to improve practices in payroll management:

- Use standardized, industry-specific timesheet templates which have built-in validation and at least some prompts for mandatory fields to improve client data quality - the source point of a large proportion of incomplete submissions.
- Incorporate into A2Z system processes for exception reporting that assure accuracy and identify potential errors rapidly with no breaks of more than ten minutes. Unusual patterns include large volumes, absence of penalty rates, or incorrect classification.
- Develop an official monitoring system with senior management members' oversight to monitor shifts in Fair Work and ATO regulations, at both policy and operational levels. The aim would be to make these updates prior to regulations becoming operational and address eventual compliance loopholes with more lasting solutions.
- Hold annual external cyber security audits. Mandate multi-factor authentication and quarterly cyber security training to increase employee awareness of cyber threats and enhance defences against more complex cyber-attacks targeting valuable employee data.
- Provide customers with self-service interfaces so that customers can track their payroll status directly at any time, input their timesheet entries with guidance and verification, and get reminders before every deadline expires. It ensures that customers find the service experience manageable and enjoyable for themselves and other parties involved.

5.3 Conclusion

This report examined how payroll services were provided at A2Z Accountants Australia for small and medium-sized businesses. This means that the attention to detail and accuracy are essential for effective remuneration management, especially for small businesses operating in such challenging and tight regulatory environments. This study indicates that effective remuneration management requires the use of cloud-based software, effective quality control, and expert knowledge regarding intricate salaries and regulations. Having the “Very Strong” capability regarding fundamental pay regulation, such as the meaning of awards, PAYG withholding, superannuation guarantee schemes, and managing remuneration schemes according to the regulations and guidelines of the Fair Work Commission and the Australian Taxation Office, makes the services provided by A2Z Accountants robust. Cloud software such as Xero and QuickBooks assist with calculations, rapid Single Touch Payroll payment solutions, and the elimination of errors during payment processing. Payroll Checkpoints provide warning indicators for such errors to be corrected before the payment and penalty problems are faced by the employee.

There are several large-scale problems at A2Z work Process. First, inconsistencies with client information cause numerous delays and errors. Second, manually confirming complex calculations takes too much time and prevents growth of client bases. Third, while responding to numerous regulatory updates leads to immediate gaps in regulations. Additionally, using cloud-based technologies with large amounts of protected employee information, such as taxation numbers, poses serious risks of cyber-attacks. Lastly, we were able to provide recommendations for different parties: utilizing time sheet templates with set rules to evaluate these, an automatic system for alerting deviations, an established system for monitoring regulations, conducted annual cyber audit with tighter regulations, and development of a client-self-service system displaying status updates and facilitating submission of client information.

The internship provided evidence that professional payroll management services can benefit SMEs greatly because they ensure that compliance remains at its highest level and beyond that; they allow business owners to focus on growing their businesses instead of struggling with difficult Labor regulations. More importantly, accounting goes beyond following rules; it’s an intelligent business guide that helps businesses succeed, especially small and mid-sized enterprises which form most of the Australia’s economy.

Chapter 6:

Implications

Applicability of Academic Learning

The internship experience proved that a strong foundation of fundamental accounting knowledge can easily adapt to various regulatory systems worldwide. The Australian regulations were different from what was previously learned in Bangladeshi educational institutions; however, basic accounting principles learned previously related to double-entry accounting systems, taxation regulations, employment principles, and principles of professionalism applied well too. The only aspect that could still be improved with more knowledge was related to employment and payrolls. Specifically, educating institutions should cover payrolls mathematically but cover award systems and system usage too; teach using cloud-based systems; increase real taxation practice under supervision; reinforce professional communication techniques systematically; and introduce more international accounting units to ready students for an internationally diverse work environment.

Organizational Impact

I provided tangible value to A2Z Accountants and their customers too. Being the primary person for more than 15 customers for their payroll processing, taxation compliance, and bookkeeping related activities allowed other senior accountants at A2Z Accountants to focus on more high-value tasks and helped avoid hiring additional senior accountants, which would've been costly for A2Z Accountants. For the clients, the most observable direct benefit was evident in my ensuring accurate payroll, which translates to employee satisfaction, as well as successful compliance with Fair Work requirements. Additionally, no BAS payments were late; automatized records and systematised monthly reconciliation services ensured systematic oversight and decision-making; lastly, my communication was noted and appreciated by several clients who stated that my unhurried and readily accessible deposits of critical background information and explanation of requirements into practice meaningfully reduces the anxiety of compliance.

Industry Relevance

Perhaps most evidently, such a role provided a close-up perspective of some of the paramount trends shaping modern Australian accounting practice. Namely, cloud technology is no longer an advantage on the market but a significant operational necessity: efficient service provision is impossible without platforms allowing for real-time reporting and calculation automation. The integration of cloud software with the ATO exacerbated the pressure for near-100% accuracy. Second, the increasing complexity of modern awards implies that accounting practices will always require expert payroll knowledge, as many SMEs cannot afford to establish such capacity in-house. Crucially, the

development of such knowledge is far from easy, as it requires time, real-world experience, and substantial expertise in the area.

Skill Development and Professional Growth

On the level of skills, the internship developed several: the ability to think systemically and manage workflows required for a great number of tasks; research skills invested into achieving original and independent problem-solving of arising issues; time management skills necessary under conditions of genuine pressure; communication skills informing the ability to translate technical considerations for a lay audience; and cloud-platform proficiency. However, the greatest skills developed were those concerning judgment: over the course of my employment, I learned when I could safely manage matters myself and when an issue was complex enough to require outside assistance. Finally, I have developed vastly increased respect for the complexity of the area and the level of knowledge required to understand it well.

Lessons for Future Practice

There are several profoundly important lessons learned that will determine my future practice. First, the inerrancy of an accountant is not a joke: our decisions have real-world repercussions that are often tangible to the people affected. People rely on their correct pay packets for access to rent, mortgage, food for their children. Business rely on their financial information to cut losses on unprofitable times. The Fair Work and the ATO rely on professionalism to ensure businesses and employees are treated fairly. Second, successful service is not just about technical competence. Empathetic information relay and proactive guidance are as important to clients as being strictly correct. Third, constant learning is a non-negotiable demand of the job. The rules are always changing, the technology is constantly updating, the needs of your clients are a moving to a new life stage or static in financial strife. You must always improve.

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