

[REDACTED]

From: Darren - Tax Services Australia [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 15 September 2015 3:12 PM
To: Committee, TaxRev (REPS)
Subject: Wednesday's ATO Hearing 4pm

Importance: High

Attention: Mr David Monk

Dear David

Your contact details were supplied to me by The Honourable Mr Bert van Manen MP's electoral office.

I am sorry for the length of this email and can speak directly if it assists, on 02 8007 7078. I would also appreciate any feedback/results that you can provide to me, following the hearing.

I am a tax professional, in practice, and I take an active role in taking care of my client sand referring matters of significance direct to the ATO, such as tax fraud / illegal minimisations schemes to help protect the tax system.

Our office, along with thousands around the country, have been significantly affected and compromised by the ATO's defective deployment of technology, most especially in recent months.

Basically, the ATO is maintaining a highly flawed and defective 'tax agent portal' that is variously and regularly unavailable, slow, and extremely costly for tax professionals to interact with.

Since around March/April this year the ATO commenced 'bypassing' tax agents, whom many taxpayers engage to be their intermediary ('agent') to be their interface with the ATO, by sending critical documents (such as Notices of Assessment and other legal/time-critical documents) via taxpayer 'myGov' accounts.

Incredibly, the notices display the name of the tax agent practice and the postal address, but (1) the tax agent is not supplied a copy to the service address nor (2) the tax agent is not notified of the issuance of the documents.

The ATO says these documents are 'available' via client correspondence on the unreliable Tax Agent Portal, but we have found this to be highly unreliable. For example, the search results for a previous day/week (etc) vary from time to time, depending upon when you conduct the search (more/less results appear). Also, the Client Correspondence list championed by the ATO Ois supposed to show all documents issued in the last 60 days, delivered via 'myGov' or 'paper'. We have an example of around 10 documents have issued to a client in the last 10 days, but only 6 documents appear on the Tax Agent Portal.

Tax practitioners generally are very supportive of using technology to improve efficiencies and improve service to taxpayers, but the ATO is effectively saving some dollars by passing on more dollars of cost to tax professionals.

The unreliable Portal and lack of integrity in the search results, and cumbersome access points / recovery of critical documents, is also compromising (1) client perception of our control/care of their affairs within the expectations of clients expecting tax professionals to take care of them and (2) tax agent complying with their ethical and professional obligations – including expectations being expounded by the Tax Practitioners Board – in staying across client tax affairs, maintaining 'complete' tax records and knowledge of client affairs.

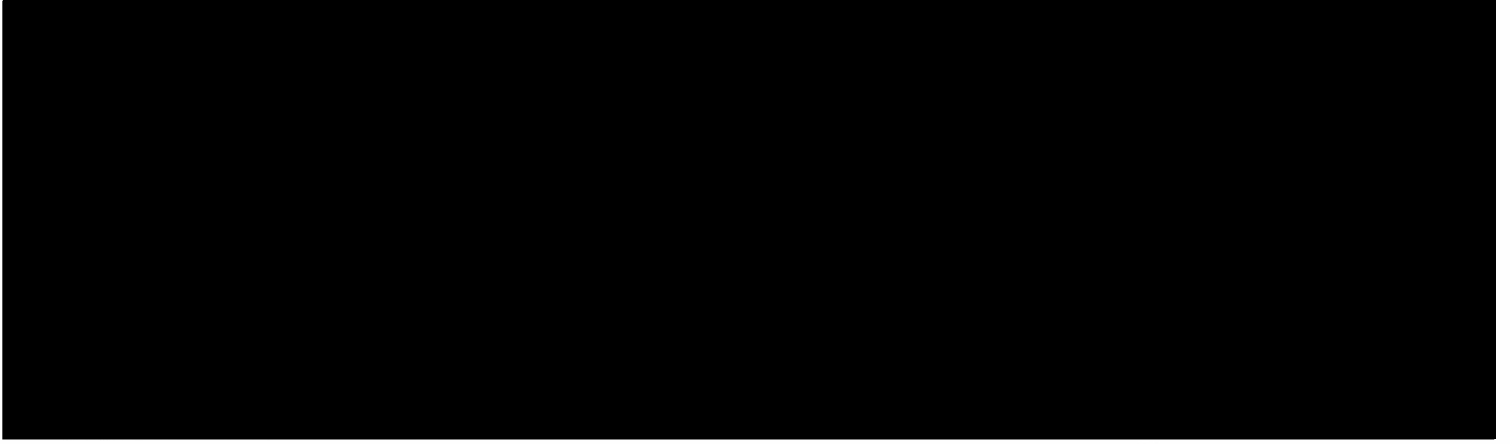
I implore the Hearing explore these significant issues and communicate to the Australian Taxation Office, that they must re-instate or establish immediately proper and appropriate communication channels so that tax agents can efficiently and reliably obtain with integrity, all relevant documents/correspondence/notices etc that are issued by their office, so that tax agents can stay on top of client matters and provide proper communication to our clients to help them understand the (almost) indecipherable and often incorrect notices that are issued by the ATO.

It does also make me wonder, if tax agents have a 'front row seat' at the ATO's pathetic engagement with technology, also via the various myTax debacles since early July 2015, what are they missing in terms of revenue for the Government, and what could be achieved if the ATO had the expertise/know-how to use technology to capture revenue being lost, and cost savings not being attained.

Regards

Darren Hooper

Upcoming events during which our office will be unavailable:



Darren Hooper CA
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