

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

INQUIRY INTO FINANCIAL RELATED CRIME

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Question No. 9

Location: Canberra

Date: 10 September 2014

Mr Hayes asked the following question at the public hearing on 10 September 2014:

'I think it is fair to say that this committee previously—I cannot say that now but, certainly, previously—had a unanimous position on extending the role of the task force, particularly the ability for other agencies to share phone-intercepted information with the ATO as part of a joint arrangement in investigations. Is that something that you are looking at and something your department supports?'

The answer to Mr Hayes' question is as follows:

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS), in its June 2013 report on the *Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation*, recommended that the information sharing provisions in the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* (TIA Act) be reviewed to ensure the sharing of information where necessary to facilitate the investigation of serious crime or threats to national security (Recommendation 8).

In accordance with PJCIS's recommendation, the sharing of lawfully intercepted information obtained under the TIA Act with other Government agencies, including with the Australian Taxation Office as part of joint investigations, will be considered as part of possible broader reforms to the TIA Act.

Amongst other matters this would involve a consideration of applicable access thresholds. Currently access is limited to serious crime while use and sharing provisions operate at a lower threshold.