



Ombudsman to give evidence on tax disputes

The Commonwealth Ombudsman, Mr Colin Neave, will appear before a parliamentary inquiry on Wednesday to discuss complaints made to his office on tax disputes.

The Ombudsman has identified the following areas of concern:

- the ATO's engagement with taxpayers prior to litigation
- perceptions of a power imbalance between the ATO and taxpayers
- unnecessary or unclear terms of settlement
- poor communication by the ATO during disputes
- ATO delays.

The Ombudsman has noted that the ATO has made some improvements, such as no longer requiring taxpayers to withdraw their complaint with the Ombudsman as a condition of settlement. The ATO is also more likely now to use alternative dispute resolution.

Prior to the Ombudsman appearing, the Committee will take evidence from a private individual about his experience of disputes with the ATO, including the garnisheeing of his bank accounts.

Committee chair John Alexander said the Ombudsman's submission told a similar story to that of other witnesses; the ATO is getting better at managing disputes, especially with alternative dispute resolution but that there are still areas for closer examination.

"Complaints are a key source of information about where problems lie and where the improvements are. The Committee looks forward to the Ombudsman's evidence."

Wednesday, 24 September 2014
Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

4.10 pm	Mr Ian Hashman and BDO (submissions 27 & 1)
4.40 pm	Commonwealth Ombudsman (submission 14)
5.15 pm	<i>Adjournment</i>

The hearing will be broadcast live at: www.aph.gov.au/live

For media comment: contact Committee Chair, Mr John Alexander OAM MP, on (02) 6277 4804.

For further information: contact the committee secretariat by telephone 02 6277 4821, e-mail taxrev.reps@aph.gov.au, or visit the committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/taxrev>.