

Select Committee on the Perth Mint and Commonwealth Regulatory Compliance

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Agency: Australian Taxation Office
Topic: Suspicious Matter Referrals
Senator: Linda Reynolds

Question:

CHAIR: As the lead of the Serious Financial Crimes Taskforce, in terms of particular strengths or particular weaknesses, how would you describe the adequacy of Australia's anti-money-laundering and counterterrorism financing laws at the moment?

Mr Ford: There's a regulatory framework there that my colleagues have gone through in terms of that reporting. It operates on two levels: a cash threshold and suspicious transactions. From a tax office perspective, we get many, many suspicious matter referrals to us. So there is active reporting in terms of tax evasion in our context. In that sense, I would say we have a robust regime and a good relationship across the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce, which is underpinned by laws that allow us to share taxation information across the task force and to collaborate and build intelligence. So it's not just about the anti-money-laundering regime but about how we take that information and build it into actionable intelligence. So I would say it is robust.

CHAIR: Have we seen any discernible trends, positive or negative, in the number of suspicious matter referrals?

Mr Ford: I'd have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: Please do.

Mr Ford: But I think that would be relatively consistent, year on year.

CHAIR: To see a trend, would you provide that information for the last two years, three years or four years? **Mr Ford:** I can take it on notice, but I'd say we'd be able to provide it for at least the last two years

Answer:

Suspicious Matter Reports are made to AUSTRAC as the responsible agency and not the ATO. Trends on the total number of reports made is a matter for AUSTRAC.

AUSTRAC Suspicious Matter Reports are accessible to the ATO. The ATO finds significant public value in the access and use of Suspicious Matter Reports. In 2021-22, the ATO raised \$473m and recovered \$105m in revenue attributable to AUSTRAC data, which includes results achieved through the Serious Financial Crime Taskforce.