

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates

2016 - 2017

**Division/Agency:** Australian Taxation Office  
**Question No:** 183  
**Topic:** Bell Group Inquiry - Direction from the Attorney-General  
**Reference:** Hansard – Page 65  
**Senator:** Watt

**Question:**

Senator WATT: [...] Was the ATO ever aware of a direction proposed by the Attorney-General's office, as opposed to the Attorney-General, at any stage of preparation which would have prevented the ATO from intervening in the Bell High Court case?

Mr Mills: I do not recall. I will have to take that on notice and find out whether or not the people who were involved in the case were aware of it.

**Answer:**

The ATO was not aware of a direction proposed by the Attorney General's office which would have prevented the ATO from intervening in the Bell High Court case. However, as mentioned at the 27 March 2017 hearing of the *Inquiry into the nature and scope of any agreement reached by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments in relation to the distribution of proceeds of the liquidation of, and litigation concerning, the Bell Group of companies*, we were aware of speculation within the wider Public Service.