

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Treasury Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates
2014 - 2015

Department/Agency: ACNC

Question: SBT 4297

Topic: ACNC complaints

Reference: Hansard page no. 121 - 22 October 2014

Senator: Edwards, Sean

Question:

CHAIR: ... Finally, I have an email from a Mr Edward H Cooper, honorary secretary of St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, West Tamworth. It is to advice@acnc.gov.au, for the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Melbourne:

Dear recipient.

I am the Honorary Secretary of the Parish of Tamworth, Manilla. To my knowledge, all information required for the 2013 annual information Statement has been submitted. To my knowledge this is your third letter and the fourth communication with you.

Our Church is now in receipt of your letter of the 22 September 2014. This letter asks me to disregard this letter if the information has been submitted. Unfortunately that is not possible, because I would suspect that these letters are computer generated and if that is the case then the computer information is sensing that something is missing.

Instead of sending me these indefinite letters, with no specification of a problem, please be specific.

I have contacted your phone contact person after the previous letter, who assured me that all information had been completed and received and that I should ignore the letter and now another is received and in addition you are now threatening penalties for failure to lodge. Why?

Your organisation would have to be the most exasperating government body that I have ever dealt with. Is it because you are so under- resourced that you just hit the button to send another letter so that you can report to the Minister that you are doing your best?

Yours in exasperation ...

Comment?

Mr Locke: I will take that particular issue on notice. What I can say is that obviously we take any complaints very seriously. We also receive a very high number of compliments. In the last two months we have had 269 compliments. Many of these are in writing. I could sit here and read those out to you but I will not. What we will do, though, is take that issue on notice. We do take it seriously. If people have been sent letters by mistake or they have not had the service that they should receive then obviously that is a matter of significant regret for us. We will get back to you on that.

Answer:

We take all complaints about our service, including the issue raised by Mr Cooper, very seriously.

In this instance Mr Cooper confused the voluntary *form: AB Confirm your registered charity details* (AB form), with the 2013 Annual Information Statement. The charity had completed

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the *form AB Confirm your registered charity details* but not the 2013 Annual Information Statement (the subject of the reminder letter).

The AB form was sent to charities in early 2013 and offered an opportunity to confirm or update their details. The AB form was voluntary and this was detailed on the form and in the letter that accompanied it.

Unlike the AB form, the 2013 Annual Information Statement is a statutory obligation, and a requirement to maintaining registration status with the ACNC.

Members of the ACNC's Advice Services team spoke with and emailed Mr Cooper to resolve the issue. The team member provided a new password to Mr Cooper and also sent Mr Cooper a hard copy 2013 Annual Information Statement as he was having troubles logging into the Charity Portal.

The charity's 2013 Annual Information Statement was submitted in hardcopy on 14 November 2014 and is now available on the charity's [ACNC Register listing](#).