

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2015 - 2016

Department/Agency: Treasury

Question: SBT 48

Topic: Breaches of the investment rules

Reference: Hansard page no. 111 - 21 October 2015

Senator: Wong, Penny

Question:

Senator WONG: In June 2015 former Treasurer Mr Hockey gave figures about the number of cases under investigation and the number of foreign investors who had voluntarily come forward to identify breaches of the investment rules. Can you update these figures?

Mr Lonsdale: The broad schema is that we have around 870 matters that the tax office are investigating.

Senator WONG: Is that the 195 figure adjusted? I am trying to work out if it is apples and apples, that is all. I am reading off the former Treasurer's press release and I am just trying to work out whether the 195 is the same category as you are giving me when you reference the 870 figure, or whether you are adding another category or more to that.

Mr Lonsdale: I think this is a broader category.

Senator WONG: Tell me what the 870 is and then you might be able to tell me what the 195 is now.

Mr Lonsdale: The 870 refers to matters that the tax office are investigating, in total; 400 of those have been finalised to date so that leaves about 500 that are still under investigation. I think there have been a dozen properties where the former Treasurer has provided concessional divestiture, and they were announced in the press releases of August and September. There are other cases that the tax office are examining where people have not come forward but where the tax office have identified possible unlawful foreign investment of properties which may result in forced divestiture.

Senator WONG: I am not sure whether that has given me what I was asking for. Can you give me the updated figures in the categories Mr Hockey gave the figures for?

Mr Lonsdale: I am happy to come back to you and tell you what is that pool—

Senator WONG: And then what it now is. I would appreciate your taking that on notice.

Answer:

The then Treasurer announced on 9 June 2015 that the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) had 195 cases under active investigation. As at 30 October 2015, the ATO had 532 cases under active investigation.

The reference to 870 cases, is a reference to both the active and closed cases with the ATO as at 2 October 2015.