



Australian Government
Inspector-General of Taxation

SENATE ECONOMICS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Public Hearing – Supplementary Budget Estimates for 2016-17
19 October 2016

Opening Statement

Thank you for the invitation to attend today's hearing of the Senate Economics Legislation Committee (Committee). The Committee's ongoing interest in key scrutineering agencies such as the Inspector-General of Taxation (IGT) and the improvement of the federal tax system is much appreciated.

Last financial year was one of the busiest and most productive years for the IGT since its inception in 2003. I am delighted to report that we have met the challenges of developing and establishing a 'single port of call' for addressing taxpayer complaints and conducting broader reviews into tax administration.

The complaints handling function was a significant focus for last year. Our primary goal was to provide high quality service to taxpayers and tax practitioners. The foundation for achieving this goal is the calibre and capability of our staff. Accordingly, the progressive recruitment and training of tax specialist staff has been a key part of our strategy.

Last financial year, we received 2148 complaints of which over 95 per cent were processed and finalised within the same period. Of the finalised cases, almost 80 per cent were finalised within 15 business days of receipt. Almost 40 per cent of all complaints were resolved by my staff without the involvement of the Australian Taxation Office or Tax Practitioners Board.

In the first quarter of this financial year, we have received over 600 new complaints and have finalised approximately 540 complaints.

In addition to embedding the complaints handling function and undertaking considerable project work to expand and improve our internal systems, policies and processes, we have continued work on four remaining reviews on the current work program. Two of these reviews, *Debt Collection* and *Services and Support for Tax Practitioners*, were publicly released last financial year whilst two others, *Taxpayers' Charter and Taxpayer Protections* and *Employer Obligations Compliance Activities*, are in their final stages of completion.

I am highly appreciative of my staff who have toiled hard to meet our goals, undertaking significant workloads and providing professional and consistent service to the community.

As the reviews from the existing work program are coming to an end, I have recently commenced the consultation process to develop a new work program of reviews for 2017. I will also draw on themes emerging from our complaints handling function.

Moving forward, the work program will be increasingly informed by the complaints handling function which can provide real-time insight into emerging issues and an opportunity to address problems before they escalate into major causes of taxpayer discontent.

My legislation provides for either or both Houses of Parliament as well as any of its committees to request that I conduct reviews on areas of their choosing. In closing, therefore, I would like to extend an invitation to the Committee members, either collectively or individually, to suggest review topics which may be based on feedback from your constituents. The closing date for submissions is 9 December 2016.

Ali Noroozi
Inspector-General of Taxation