

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018**

**Outcome: Skills and Training**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000608**

Senator Cameron, Doug asked on 31 May 2017, Proof Hansard page 94

***VET FEE-HELP***

**Question**

Dr Banerjee: As I mentioned, during the field work that was done by the ANAO—the audit office—it was brought to our attention that this practice had been occurring and that the ATO had been providing tax file numbers. We were concerned about that practice and we talked to the ATO immediately. It was particularly of concern given some of the practice that we had seen in the VET FEE-HELP program, so that was stopped.

Senator CAMERON: When did you find out about it?

Dr Banerjee: I would have to take it on notice, but it was during the ANAO's field work.

**Answer**

The Department of Education and Training became aware that the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) was providing Tax File Numbers (TFNs) to VET providers in August 2016. The provision allowing TFNs to be provided by the ATO has been in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* from the commencement of the VET FEE-HELP scheme. Following the department identifying the possible misuse of the practice, the practice was ceased in September 2016 and a new process implemented.