

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Budget Estimates 29 May 2007)

Question **BET 115**
Topic: **ATO ADVERTISING EXPENDITURE**
Hansard Page: **E89 (Official Hansard)**

Senator **Sherry** asked:

This question is for both revenue and the ATO. As to advertising expenditures, campaigns that are planned and underway, market research, attitudinal research, public opinion polling and the like, is there anything being undertaken in revenue, firstly? Is there any market research, public opinion polling, campaign communication services currently under way or planned to be under way in revenue?

Mr Callaghan—No.

Senator **SHERRY**—What about in the ATO? If we start with—and this may end very quickly—non-superannuation specific research, with respect to campaigns, advertising etcetera, is there anything going on?

Mr D'Ascenzo—We have the normal tax time, which is an annual process where we advise the community of a range of tax rights and obligations associated with annual reporting.

Senator **SHERRY**—What is the extent of that program? Can I have some detail, please.

Ms Granger—I do not think we have detail of it here. We will have to respond to that on notice. I am just trying to think how much I have been told at the moment. It is the usual round of campaigning we do where we do things like notify which occupations we are looking at more closely and what is new in Tax Pack or e-tax this year. There will certainly be some education around the pre-filing initiative and its expansion, and in general what risks we have. We roll it out progressively. The early phase of it is just reminding people that tax time has started. There will be a number of focuses this year on educating people, including around offshore bank accounts, the use of offshore credit cards and those sorts of things, as we go through the compliance risks that we are seeing; what things we think people are not getting right around their work related expenses and those sorts of issues.

Senator **SHERRY**—So what you are describing is nothing out of the ordinary from previous years?

Ms Granger—No.

Senator **SHERRY**—Will there be any public advertising expenditure between now and the end of the financial year and then in the six months following?

Ms Granger—I do not have detail with me. There will be some, I am sure, but we would have to take that on notice to be able to give you that detail.

Answer

The Tax Office undertook a range of advertising and research activities between May 2007 and the end of the calendar year. These are detailed below with the exception of Simple Super activities as requested. The final cost of these activities are detailed in the Commissioner of Taxation Annual reports covering this period.

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Advertising

Planned non-campaign advertising included Aggressive Tax Planning and Fuel Tax Credit, Tax Time Advertorials, Tax Time 2007 Strategy including eTax, Tax Help for low Income Earners, Small Business Alignment and Keeping your Tax File Number Safe.

Tax Time promotion

The Tax Time promotion is a recurrent activity undertaken by the Tax Office each year between June and November. It delivers messages to the community on basic lodgment and payment obligations, compliance activity centred on key risks such as work-related expenses and capital gains tax, tax obligations in relation to investments, as well as publicising any significant legislative and administrative changes. The 2007 Tax Time promotion included print and radio advertising to promote e-tax, its free tax preparation and lodgement software.

Public Opinion Polling

The Tax Office does not commission public opinion polls.

Market Research/Attitudinal Research

Market research, which includes attitudinal research, was commissioned by the Tax Office during the specified period. There was market research undertaken before the end of the year. This research included the Business Perception Survey, Community Perception Survey and the Professionalism Survey, which are all surveys designed to measure how the Tax Office is perceived by different segments of the community.