

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

31 May – 2 June 2011

Question No: BET 31

Topic: ATO Delays

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

On the 14th April 2010, Shadow Assistant Treasurer Sussan Ley issued a press release demanding an urgent update from the Australian Taxation Office in relation to delays. She has also stated that in a meeting in May 2010 ATO staff assured her that all the 'glitches' were resolved; however, the passage of time has clearly demonstrated that this was not correct.

1. At the time, was the information provided to Ms Ley correct?
2. Was additional information provided to Ms Ley as more 'glitches' became apparent?
3. How soon after the 'glitches' became apparent was this information provided?

Answer:

1. Yes, the information provided to the Hon Sussan Ley MP by ATO staff in the meeting held in March 2010 (not May 2010 as the question indicates), was correct at the time it was provided. The meeting addressed the first 'glitch' in detail, the second 'glitch' was not known at this time.
2. Additional information, following the meeting held in March 2010, was provided to Ms Ley and other members of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) at the hearing held on 22 April 2010.
3. At the JCPAA hearing on 22 April 2010, the ATO provided information on the two 'glitches' that resulted in delays to the progress of returns. The first was addressed in more detail with Ms Ley at the meeting held in March 2010. Additional information around the second 'glitch' was provided at the JCPAA hearing and was within two weeks of the problem being identified. In order to keep the community informed, several online updates around the processing status for tax returns were provided on the ATO's website throughout this period.