

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Supplementary Budget Estimates 1-2 November 2006)

Question **SBT 102**
Topic: **GST BENCHMARK**
Hansard Page: **E85&86**

Senator Sherry asked:

Do you have data on the length of time taken to conduct GST audits?

Mr Jackson—*I do have some information I can give you on that. It does vary, of course. We have all sorts of different audit products ranging from a simple walk-in where we check whether a business is registered for GST. The CVC checks you were talking about earlier are the checks for high-risk refund payments. In large corporate there may be an issue or two that can take quite some time and be quite sophisticated, so at the larger end of the market our normal audit product has a benchmark time of 260 days. I understand that about 80 to 82 per cent cases are resolved within the 260 days. Where cases are not resolved within that time frame, they are referred to a case leadership group, which is a group of senior officers that assist the auditor and the audit team leader concerned with information—whether it be that there is a technical issue which is difficult to resolve, a procedural matter that needs to be resolved or whatever else it might be to facilitate the urgent actioning of the case. At the very small end we have the high-risk refund checks. We undertake to contact any taxpayer affected by those within 48 hours. We virtually contact 100 per cent of people within 48 hours. We then endeavour to finalise the matter, as Ms Crawford mentioned a moment ago, within 14 days. A very high percentage, in excess of 90 per cent I think, are finalised within 14 days. For the micromarket we have the single issue audit. That is increasingly an area of focus for us. We identify a particular problem and we go in and deal with that. Our benchmark for those is 90 days.*

Senator SHERRY—*Is the benchmark being met?*

Mr Jackson—*The benchmark is generally met but not always. I do not have a percentage of the ones that are met within that benchmark with me at the moment. I would have to have a look at that.*

Senator SHERRY—*Could you take that on notice.*

Mr Jackson—*I will do that.*

Answer:

The Tax Office finalised 68.5 per cent of micro market single issue audits within the benchmark of 90 days during 2005/06.