

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Supplementary Budget Estimates 1-2 November 2006)

Question	SBT 107
Topic:	SMALL BUSINESS DEBT INITIATIVE (NUMBER OF TAXPAYERS CONTACTED EITHER BY PHONE OR FACE TO FACE)
Hansard Page:	E92

Senator Sherry asked:

The 100,000 that there was no response from, what are some of the identifiable factors there?

***Ms Crawford**—I do not know that I have a precise answer to that. Certainly in the follow-up work that we have done, we have been able to make further contact with those taxpayers through initiatives like calling after hours when perhaps they are freer and more able to respond to our inquiry. The referral program focused primarily on small debt—under \$7,500. Again, that would have picked up some of those taxpayers. It is really about us trying different ways to re-contact people. We have also tried to find out more accurately people’s addresses, telephone numbers, those sorts of things. Over the last 12 months, we have put a lot of effort into trying to engage people as early as possible. All of those strategies are showing some promising signs.*

***Senator SHERRY**—Were a significant number of those 100,000 non responses simply not able to be contacted?*

***Ms Crawford**—The strategy under the SBD AI project was to write to those people and to make the concessional offer. Basically, they were asked to contact us and 100,000 failed to do so.*

***Mr D’Ascenzo**—Those people would have received a range of late payment notices prior to that.*

***Senator SHERRY**—Yes, I understand that. Perhaps you could take on notice for me the approximate number who could be contacted and whether it was by phone or face to face.*

Answer:

All offers under the Small Business Debt Assistance Initiative were made in writing. Around 295,000 letters were issued to eligible taxpayers at the address recorded on the ATO system.