

Public Response to adverse comments made by Commissioner of Taxation at Senate budget estimates hearing on Wednesday 23 October 2019

Provided by Ron Shamir to Senate Economics Legislation Committee:

On 23 October 2019 the Commissioner of Taxation made adverse comments about me at a Senate budget estimates hearing. There has been some public discussion regarding the appropriateness of the Commissioner's comments. On 25 October 2019 the Senate Economics Legislation Committee offered me the opportunity to submit a reply and to indicate if I wished the reply to be published alongside the Commissioner's comments.

I appreciate the offer to respond. A public response would introduce some fairness and accuracy into the situation. However, that would still be far from an equitable outcome. A public response detailing why the Commissioner is incorrect is what anyone in my situation would be expected to do, to defend their reputation, under the protection of parliamentary privilege. However, to do that would be to engage in a public brawl, and as a former public servant I am not going to bring that role into disrepute by engaging in that conduct, particularly alongside a Senate inquiry.

I will do what I can to assist the inquiry, and continue to refrain from public comment and to decline media approaches, as I have done since well before appearing at the hearing or responding to the Committee's call for submissions.

It will be for the Committee to form a view about the Commissioner's statement. The statement was made to the Committee, and in response to witness statements provided to the Committee's inquiry. To assist, I will provide the Committee privately with information to inform the Committee's view about the veracity of the Commissioner's statement. After that, I will await the inquiry's final report in December.