



Monitoring a modernising Tax Office

The Tax and Revenue Committee today tabled its second report into the 2014 Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Annual Report. This follows the Committee's hearing in September with the Commissioner of Taxation, Chris Jordan.

The report covers a range of issues, including: the Tax Agent Portal, Single Touch Payroll, no-touch tax returns, measuring the tax gap, and tax implications of the sharing economy.

The Committee found that changes to the online Tax Agent Portal had led to access difficulties and service outages for tax practitioners, making it harder for them to lodge returns for their clients.

The Committee expressed concern that incidents like this affected the relationship between tax practitioners and the ATO.

Tax implications of the sharing economy were a new issue at the hearing. The ATO has established a view on the tax implications of this emerging sector, and has published guidelines to assist taxpayers with compliance.

The Committee continued to focus on taxpayer perceptions of fairness in disputes and performance measurement and reporting. The ATO advised they would now report performance indicators on a quarterly basis. The Committee viewed this as a positive development which will enable the ATO to better identify slippages in performance standards.

Committee Chair, Mr Bert van Manen MP, said that regular public hearings were an important part of the Committee's work in monitoring a modernising ATO.

"Bringing the ATO, scrutiny bodies and key stakeholders together in a forum like this ensures the ATO can explain the rollout of its change program as well as making sure that the ATO is responsive to the concerns of stakeholders, scrutineers, and accountable to the Parliament." Mr van Manen said.

The report also listed a number of other key areas that the Committee will discuss at its hearing into the 2015 ATO Annual Report, scheduled for early 2016.

The report can be found on the Committee's website: <http://www.aph.gov.au/taxrev>.

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