

Sent/recd Sun 7 October 2018

To whom it may concern

I would like to make a submission.

I am one of the contractors caught up in the proceedings as described 4 years ago by Mark Fletchers submission #24 for the Inquiry into Tax Disputes. ([Link herehttps://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Tax_and_Revenue/Inquiry_into_Tax_Disputes/Submissions?main_0_content_1_RadGrid1ChangePage=2_20](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Tax_and_Revenue/Inquiry_into_Tax_Disputes/Submissions?main_0_content_1_RadGrid1ChangePage=2_20)).

As a result I am penalised with a huge debt beyond my means of repaying that in a foreseeable timeframe. For 4 years I have lodged numerous Release of Debt applications highlighting my financial and personal circumstances.

These are my observations:

- I am treated like a deliberate tax evader that hasn't been fulfilling his taxpaying obligations. As documented by Mark Fletcher, this is far from the truth, but once in the system with a debt, it is hard to escape that stigma.
- The ATO has been delaying my case again and again, even if it is clear that the delays don't lead to any significant increase of recovery but on the contrary only create more work and costs for all parties involved. This comes across as bullying and spiteful behavior just to punish people by keeping them under financial stress for years on end.
- The ATO is not adequately staffed for the tasks at hand. For example: I was refused an RoD application as the ATO claimed have inaccurate information: "my latest tax return was outdated". However that return was lodged just before my application. The ATO failed to respond within the nominated 55 days and by the time they finally looked at it, it was into a next tax period.
- Any medical advice is being ignored or not taken serious. My spouse was already chronically ill and suffering from depression. Due to ongoing stress of the huge debt and potential debt collection we got divorced, although I am still liable to support her. In days where mental health issues are continuously put in the spotlight, it beggars belief how ill-informed and prejudiced some of the ATO staff are when discussing the ramifications of these circumstances and the consequences of their actions. It is almost like they are under pressure to disregard them, all in the name of debt recovery.
- I have found on numerous occasions that the ATO is making false statements about my conversations with them. Incomes are extrapolated into projected figures that are simply not realistic. These irregularities are mentioned to the ATO but never has action been taken to correct the records. And so they remain on my file, only to be used against me by the next officer who deals with my case.
- These and various other complaints have been put forward to the ATO on two separate occasions. One reaction was that the ATO couldn't respond to complaints if the ATO didn't had the latest tax return. Totally irrelevant where the non-financial matters are concerned but a good excuse to once again delay. I am still waiting for the second reaction, 10 months(!) after lodgement and numerous reminders to the ATO. One would assume that complaints would be dealt with professionally, adequately and within a reasonable time frame.

Conclusion: In past 4 years, I have found the behavior of some of the ATO personnel arrogant, disrespectful and unethical. At this stage I don't have the feeling I am being treated fairly. It seems that taxpayers debt is just a figure on a screen, recovery is part of a target that has to be met; that they are dealing with the livelihood and the future of the taxpayer(s family), seems of lesser importance .

Furthermore, they can not be held accountable it seems and only have to answer to themselves. Their powers severely disadvantage the taxpayers that can't afford the legal backing like the large corporations or multi millionaires can.

Regards

