



Ombudsman to give evidence on tax disputes

The Commonwealth Ombudsman, Mr Colin Neave, will appear before a parliamentary inquiry on Wednesday to discuss complaints made to his office on tax disputes.

The Ombudsman has identified the following areas of concern:

- the ATO's engagement with taxpayers prior to litigation
- perceptions of a power imbalance between the ATO and taxpayers
- unnecessary or unclear terms of settlement
- poor communication by the ATO during disputes
- ATO delays.

The Ombudsman has noted that the ATO has made some improvements, such as no longer requiring taxpayers to withdraw their complaint with the Ombudsman as a condition of settlement. The ATO is also more likely now to use alternative dispute resolution.

Prior to the Ombudsman appearing, the Committee will take evidence from a private individual about his experience of disputes with the ATO, including the garnisheeing of his bank accounts.

Committee chair John Alexander said the Ombudsman's submission told a similar story to that of other witnesses; the ATO is getting better at managing disputes, especially with alternative dispute resolution but that there are still areas for closer examination.

"Complaints are a key source of information about where problems lie and where the improvements are. The Committee looks forward to the Ombudsman's evidence."

**Wednesday, 24 September 2014
Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra**

4.10 pm	Mr Ian Hashman and BDO (submissions 27 & 1)
4.40 pm	Commonwealth Ombudsman (submission 14)
5.15 pm	<i>Adjournment</i>

The hearing will be broadcast live at: www.aph.gov.au/live

For media comment: contact Committee Chair, Mr John Alexander OAM MP, on (02) 6277 4804.

For further information: contact the committee secretariat by telephone 02 6277 4821, e-mail taxrev.reps@aph.gov.au, or visit the committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/taxrev>.