



Appendix C — Correspondence

**Correspondence relevant to Audit Report No.46,
1999-2000, High Wealth Individuals Task Force**



Telephone: (02) 6163 3774
Facsimile: (02) 6263 3360

THE TREASURY

**Executive Director
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600**

7 January, 2001
File:

Margot Kerley
Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Kerley

Thank you for your letter of 20 November 2000 to the Secretary concerning the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit public hearing on 3 November dealing with, amongst other things, the Auditor-General's Report No 46 of 2000-2001, *High Wealth Individuals Taskforce*.

In your letter you note that the Vice-Chairman (Mr David Cox MP) made a request for information relating to Treasury advice to the previous government concerning high wealth individuals. My officers have examined the record of the hearing and the Vice-Chairman's request for advice given to a previous government as quoted in your letter is not immediately apparent.

However, the Committee would be aware that advice provided to governments (both current and previous) by their departments is confidential in order to facilitate an effective advising relationship. Treasury considers that maintaining this confidentiality is in the public interest and is critical for the maintenance of good government.

If you have any queries please contact Mr Rob Heferen on 6263 4489.

Yours sincerely

G.J. Smith
Executive Director
Budget Group
The Treasury



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DAVID COX MHR
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR KINGSTON

28 February 2001

209 Main South Road
Morphett Vale, SA 5162
Telephone (08) 8382 3333
Facsimile (08) 8326 6103
Free Call for country
callers 1800 813 138
David.Cox.MP@aph.gov.au

Mr Bob Charles MP
Chairman
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Bob

On January 17, 2001 the Treasury responded to a letter from the Secretary of the Committee requesting that it provide certain advice to the previous government in relation to the taxation of high wealth individuals.

Treasury declined on two grounds:

1. The request had not been made during the formal hearing; and
2. Treasury's belief that confidentiality is necessary for it to maintain an effective advising relationship.

Treasury's first argument defies the longstanding practice of the JCPAA to make requests outside of formal hearings for information in relation to inquiries.

In relation to Treasury's second point, I have spoken to the previous Treasurer who would be pleased to give Treasury permission to release the documents to the JCPAA. It is worth noting in this regard that the documents are not Cabinet documents.

I would like to request that the Committee advise Treasury accordingly and request that the documents now be provided.

Yours sincerely

David Cox
Deputy Chair

