

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Australian Taxation Office

Bi-annual Hearing – 3 October 2008

Submission No: **3**.....

Question 2
Topic: Tabling of Tax Havens Steering Committee Charter
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CHAIR—I am sorry—a lawyer. I will not comment any further! You were criticised by the ANAO for your key steering committee on tax havens not having met in the time of their audit. Could you tell us a little bit about its activities, its strategy and its strategic approach now, and perhaps why that occurred?

Mr BRADBURY—You do not hold meetings in tax havens!

Mr D’Ascenzo—No. The reason I am smiling is that it is it is an interesting answer. I think Jennie will give it to you.

Ms Granger—The committee was meeting informally. *We accepted the criticism and we have now put it on a formal basis with a charter, which I am happy to make available to the committee.* A number of my deputies and I have a number of different meetings and they also meet in the margins of that. Their focus overall is to coordinate tax haven strategy across the tax office. The risk, as the Commissioner has already painted, is different across different market segments. We have now got to the point where, having that kind of expertise needs to be part of the skills set of all of our compliance officers, not a specialty. The challenge of having that coherent and prioritised is their job. It is also necessary to build the capability of our staff at the same time. So they are basically coordinating the entire strategy. They are now meeting on a regular basis every four to six weeks, or as needed in between that, with formally documented minutes—

Australian Taxation Office response:

The current Tax Haven Steering Committee Charter is attached.

As from September 2008, the Tax Haven Steering Committee meets formally every fortnight.