



Public hearing on tax treaties with Belgium and Jersey

Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee will hold a public hearing in Canberra on Monday 14 September 2009 on tax treaties with Belgium and Jersey that will significantly expand the information available to the Australian Taxation Office in its efforts to prevent tax evasion.

The Australian Government has been negotiating Exchange of Information tax treaties with a number of countries over recent years. These treaties represent the world's best practice for exchange of information, containing provisions approved by the OECD and the G20.

"Importantly, the treaties place limitations on the reasons why a request for information from Australia can be declined," the Chair of the Committee, Kelvin Thomson MP, stated. "This is particularly important in relation to Jersey. Jersey is one of more than 40 low-tax jurisdictions working with the OECD to develop international standards of transparency and effective information exchange to eliminate harmful tax practices. AUSTRAC indicates that a significant amount of funds flow between Australia and Jersey," Mr Thomson continued.

The new agreements will:

- require Belgium and Jersey to provide tax information to Australia that is foreseen to be relevant;
- oblige Belgium and Jersey to collect information at the request of Australia; and
- allow for information to be obtained from banks and other financial institutions in Belgium and Jersey.

"These Agreements are important in combating offshore tax evasion. They will broaden Australia's ability to enforce its domestic tax laws and make it harder for taxpayers to evade Australian tax. The Treaties Committee will be making sure these agreements are as thorough and effective as they need to be," Mr Thomson concluded.

The Committee will also be examining a treaty for the allocation of taxing rights with Jersey.

PUBLIC HEARING PROGRAM
11.00am – 12.00pm, Monday, 14 September 2009
Venue: Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

- 11.00am Agreement with Jersey for the Exchange of Tax Information
Agreement with Jersey for the Allocation of Taxing Rights
11.30am Agreement with Belgium for the Exchange of Tax Information

This hearing will be broadcast live on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/> (audio only)

Further information is available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/jsct

MEDIA CONTACTS

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