



## Committee foreshadows increased parliamentary scrutiny of the Australian Taxation Office

The need for greater parliamentary scrutiny of the Australian Tax Office during the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit's biannual hearings with the Commissioner of Taxation has been foreshadowed in a new report released today.

Committee chair Rob Oakeshott MP said the Committee intends asking the Tax Commissioner to respond to any concerns detailed by other review agencies, plus those of industry and consumer groups, at its next public hearing in September.

"The Committee will be enlarging future biannual hearings to include public evidence from external scrutiny bodies such as the Ombudsman, the Australian National Audit Office and the Inspector General of Taxation as well as peak industry and consumer bodies," Mr Oakeshott said.

He added that "integrity in tax administration is a critical foundation block of the Australian taxation system. Whilst evidence suggests in the majority of cases this is done well, the Committee is concerned about the increasing number of complaints about the ATO."

The report has made a number of recommendations aimed at increasing parliamentary scrutiny of the ATO. These include:

- that the ATO move to using a traffic light reporting system when reporting publicly on its achievements against benchmarks, in particular its achievements against its service standards;
- the next submission to the biannual hearing from the ATO to contain explicit consideration of, and reporting on action taken to improve complaint handling and address the underlying causes of complaints;
- that the ATO's submission to the next biannual hearing includes a report on compliance activities, specifically action taken to make compliance easier and improve communications;
- that the ATO details the process for developing implementation plans for policy, as part of its submission for the next biannual hearing;
- that the next submission to the biannual hearing details the status of the 900 current cases of compromised tax file numbers, including actions taken to resolve the issue and reasons for delay, should some remain unresolved; and
- that the next submission to the biannual hearing details the ATO's responses to recommendations made by external review agencies such as the Australian National Audit Office, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Inspector General of Taxation.

Copies of the report are available on the Committee webpage at

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jcpaa/taxationbiannual0311/index.htm>.

**For more information:** please contact the Committee Chair, Rob Oakeshott MP, on telephone 02 6584 2911 or the Committee Secretary on telephone (02) 6277 4615.