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Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs

Secretary
16-18Mort Street, GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6240 8940
Facsimile: (02) 6240 8960

Mr David Hawker MP
Chairman
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics,
Finance and Public Administration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hawker

INQUIRY INTO TAX FILE NUMBERS

Thank you for your letter of 8 December 1999 in which you invite the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs to make a submission to the above Inquiry.

I do not propose to make a formal submission to the Committee. However, I have noted the Australian National Audit Office's recommendation that the Australian Tax Office (ATO) seeks this Department's support to obtain the cooperation of peak school bodies for the use of the ATO's Schools Education Program (SEP).

The ANAO report suggests that this could be achieved through a "high level, systemic agreement" to access schools. Australian schools do not have centrally determined curricula and the decision to introduce a particular programme into schools is ultimately a matter for principals. As the ANAO has noted, in States where the ATO has obtained letters of support for SEP from the Directors-General of State school education systems this has been of assistance in securing cooperation from some State schools.

I believe that the most fruitful approach to encouraging cooperation from schools is through peak organisations such as the Australian Secondary Principals Association, the National Catholic Education Commission and the National Council of Independent Schools Associations. This Department is happy to facilitate any approach to these organisations which the ATO may wish to make.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Yours sincerely

S T Sedgwick

10 January 2000