

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

2014 - 2015

Department/Agency: ATO

Question: AET 66

Topic: ATO Compliance Program

Reference: written - 05 March 2015

Senator: Williams, John

Question:

For over a decade, from 2002, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) published a detailed and comprehensive annual Compliance Program, focusing on all aspects of the tax and superannuation systems. This was of great benefit to all Australian taxpayers and their advisers.

The annual published ATO Compliance Program, appearing each July, told taxpayers and their advisers – openly and transparently – precisely and in detail what activities were attracting the ATO’s attention, precisely and in detail what risks the ATO was seeing, and precisely and in detail what remedies the ATO was adopting.

The ATO stated in the ATO corporate plan 2014-18 – released on 1 July 2014 – that it was “committed to maximizing voluntary compliance with a balanced and targeted compliance program based on transparency, risk and behavior.”

However, the ATO has not published a Compliance Program for 2014-15.

66. Why has the ATO abandoned publication of its annual Compliance Program, while saying – at the same time – in the ATO corporate plan 2014-18 that it is “committed to” such a Compliance Program?

Answer:

The ATO’s annual work program including high level priorities and activities is outlined in the *ATO corporate plan 2014-18*.

On 2 March 2015, the ATO released *Building Confidence*, an online resource developed as part of our commitment to being transparent in our approach to our compliance activities. *Building Confidence* complements the *ATO corporate plan 2014-18* and replaces the previous compliance program and compliance in focus annual publications.

Building Confidence will be updated throughout the year and provide the community with an up to date, central location to access information on the risks we are seeing, the activities we are doing and the results we are getting.

The ATO is aware of some references to the publication of an annual compliance program on the ato.gov.au website. As part of a review of the website content, these references are being progressively updated or deleted as appropriate.