

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates 29, 30 & 31 May 2007

Question: Bet 43 (ACCC)

Topic: Complaint Inquiries

Senator FIELDING—To move away from policy, has the small business minister spoken to you with regard to retail tenants being concerned in this area? That is not policy.

Senator MURRAY—By the way—if I may say, through the chair, as a point of order—that instruction on policy is neither constitutional nor a Senate order; it is a convention. So do not ever accept it as law that we cannot ask questions on policy. We just observe the convention.

Mr Cassidy—Senator Fielding, the answer to your question is no, as best as we are aware.

Mr Samuel—We should take that on notice, though.

Mr Cassidy—We will check it for you. I am just relying on the recollection at the table.

Senator FIELDING—I do not have the annual report here but has this issue come up in there at all?

Mr Cassidy—Do you mean our annual report?

Senator FIELDING—Yes.

Mr Cassidy—Again, I would have to take that on notice. I could not say that it does not appear in some of the tables we have relating to complaints inquiries we receive. But that would be the only place that I think it would appear. If you like I can take that on notice and check whether there is any reference in those tables to the issue.

Senator FIELDING—Have you got the number of complaints in the last couple of years?

Mr Cassidy—I would have to take that on notice. We do not have that data with us.

Response: The number of complaints received on the issue of issue of retail tenancy was not covered in the 2005-06 ACCC Annual Report. In the 2004-05 the ACCC received 260 complaints in relation to retail tenancy. In 2005-06 158 complaints were received. In 2006-07 139 complaints were received.