

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Budget Estimates 29 May 2007)

Question **BET 87**
Topic: **Dr Parker retained by ATO as consultant**
Hansard Page: **E18-19**

Senator **Bernardi** asked:

Senator BERNARDI—I would like to reference some material from Senator Fifield, who cannot be with us today because he is ill. He asked me specifically to follow up on a couple of issues related to his previous questions. Do you recall the substance of the conversation at estimates about Dr Parker and his removal from his office?

Mr D'Ascenzo—Yes. I remember those questions.

Senator BERNARDI—It was also referenced in a *Financial Review* article about Dr Parker's departure from the AVO, which is what prompted Senator Fifield's questions. My question specifically relates initially to how long you retained Dr Parker as a consultant to the AVO after his removal as head.

Mr D'Ascenzo—We had arrangements to maintain Dr Parker's expertise as a consultant. To my knowledge, I am not sure we have used those services so far.

Senator BERNARDI—So he would not have been paid anything in that time?

Mr D'Ascenzo—That is right. That is to the best of my knowledge, but if that is incorrect, I will correct that too for you.

Senator BERNARDI—I would be interested if he has been retained and used. You referred to perhaps a half a day a week or something.

Mr D'Ascenzo—Yes. I was hoping to maintain some of the skills, but I am not sure whether we have actually made use of those skills as at this time. But I will confirm that.

Senator BERNARDI—And if you have, I would be interested in what tasks he performed, the remuneration and those sorts of things that go with it. Following Dr Parker's removal as the general manager, Senator Fifield asked whether it was in response to the Cooney and Associates report. Has the Cooney and Associates report been tabled or is it a public document?

Mr D'Ascenzo—I do not think it is a public document. It is a report that indicates whether or not, in their view, the ability to get the AVO people more on board could occur under Dr Parker's leadership or whether a change of leadership would be beneficial to that end. It concluded that the level of difference between Dr Parker and some of the AVO staff members was such that it would be desirable and advantageous for a new beginning from someone

Answer:

From November 2006 to April 2007, Dr Parker has been paid \$17,109.90 including \$47.40 in incidentals for consultative services.

This constitutes 68.25 hours of consultancy, primarily on:

- Drafting advice for the ATO Market Valuation Guide,

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- Contribution to the Valuation Advisory Services Capability Development program,
- Research and advice on the feasibility of developing a computer assisted valuation tool; and
- Supporting the incoming General Manager to ensure continuity in management processes and to maintain momentum of initiatives underway and deemed to be of ongoing value by the new General Manager.