

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**TREASURY**

**Australian Taxation Office**

(Supplementary Budget Estimates 1-2 November 2006)

**Question**                    **SBT 104**  
**Topic:**                      **VISA HOLDERS & DIMA SUBMISSION**  
**Hansard Page:**            **E87**

Senator Sherry asked:

*There are a couple of issues around 457 visa holders. Are you aware that DIMA has made a submission to Treasury to be able to access ATO income tax data to assist with compliance checks in relation to 457 visa holders?*

*Mr D'Ascenzo—I know what the visas are, but I do not know about DIMA and Treasury.*

*Senator SHERRY—Have they made you aware they want to access your ATO income tax data?*

*Mr D'Ascenzo—I am not aware of that, Senator. They may have.*

*Senator SHERRY—That is, not you personally but any officers. You are not aware of that?*

*Mr Konza—No.*

*Senator SHERRY—Please could we have, on notice, the data being sought and what would be proposed for DIMA to apply protections to data and the required standards of secrecy—particularly given DIMA's record in recent times. The sorts of questions I have just referred to would be the types of issues you would be raising in such a request?*

*Mr D'Ascenzo—I think it is our role to put in the administrative perspective to any legislative change.*

*Senator SHERRY—Yes, but also there are issues of confidentiality and secrecy, aren't there?*

*Mr D'Ascenzo—I am comfortable with that.*

**Answer:**

Tax Office representatives attended an inter-agency forum, convened by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) on 23 August 2006, concerning the administration of the 457 visa program. DIMA canvassed views from the agencies present concerning implementation of information sharing arrangements.

The Tax Office advised DIMA that the taxation laws administered by the Commissioner contain secrecy provisions that, in the view of the Tax Office, prevent the provision of taxpayer specific information to the Department in this context.