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Tax disputes reviewed

Fair treatment and respect of taxpayers will be examined as part of a public inquiry into how tax disputes are handled.

The inquiry, by the House of Representatives Tax Committee, will cover all categories of taxpayers.

It will also consider whether there needs to be changes to the current legal framework which could help with dispute resolution and compliance strategies, and if another agency should manage ATO litigation.

The committee has also requested the Inspector-General of Taxation to conduct a formal review into tax disputes in relation to large businesses and high-wealth individuals.



The Inspector-General has not previously conducted an inquiry at the request of a parliamentary committee.

Committee chair John Alexander (Bennelong, NSW) said the ATO has made clear their efforts to promote taxpayer confidence and trust in the system.

“This inquiry will assist the committee to ensure these goals, particularly with regards to mechanisms for dispute resolution,” he said.

Although the committee will receive evidence of individuals’ experience with the tax system, it will not act on behalf of individual taxpayers in the inquiry. ■

 LINKS

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Online crime increasing

More than one million incidents of card fraud and related crime in one year



 OUT OF THE SHADOWS: Crackdown needed on dodgy lenders

Scammers and fraudsters are increasingly taking advantage of the digital space to launder money, commit fraud and steal people’s identities.

The Australian Bankers’ Association, which has 24 members nationally, has told a parliamentary inquiry while bank robberies are falling, online crimes are growing.

This is partly because Australia’s strong economy is attractive to organised criminals taking advantage of new products such as faster payments and customer self-service.

In its submission to the inquiry by the Joint Committee on Law Enforcement, the ABA notes that incidents of card fraud and related crime have risen from around 419,000 in 2008 to over 1,300,000 in 2013. The money involved in the same timeframe has almost doubled from \$150 million to \$280 million.

The number of suspicious transaction reports has risen from almost 30,000 in 2005 to 44,000 in 2013.

“The use of technology to interact with people everywhere and at all times has been embraced across the world leading to a change in the way business is conducted,” the submission said.

“Unfortunately the early adopters of this technology change have been criminal groups and individuals who are largely able to hide or take over identities and use the geographical constraints of the criminal justice system.”

The National Financial Services Federation represents 190 ASIC licensed short-term credit providers. Its submission said some people’s identities are being stolen by scammers posing as lenders purely to collect personal and financial information.