



Edition 01 | July 2017



## Greetings from the IGT

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, *IGoT News!*, which we have managed to get underway in the middle of an office move and kicking off yet another review.

*IGoT News!* will more regularly inform you of our activities and what we are hearing from the community, particularly from our complaint handling service. We may also issue special editions from time to time to advise you of new or significant developments in our work or the administration of the tax system more generally.

Our Review program continues to deliver improvements for the benefit of all Australians. We have publicly released two significant reviews, announced a Work Program in January from which three reviews have been commenced and we have just announced a fourth review at the request of Senate Economics References Committee.

Our complaints handling service continues to flourish. A broad range of taxpayers and tax practitioners have sought our assistance in resolving their disputes with the ATO and the TPB and we have delivered positive results.

In addition to reviews and complaints, we have also:

- lodged submissions to Parliamentary inquiries into [Taxpayer Engagement](#) and [unpaid Superannuation Guarantee](#);
- engaged with our international counterparts on taxpayer rights issues;
- engaged with local and regionally-based tax practitioners; and
- joined the [International Ombudsman Institute](#).

Before I go further, a word of thanks is clearly in order. Our office has received tremendous support from you, our stakeholders, in the 14 years that we have been around and we are truly grateful for that. With your support the service that my team provides has grown enormously and continues to do so. I would also like to thank my team of dedicated specialist staff who take a great deal of pride in their work and often go well beyond the call of duty.

We look forward to hearing from you about our services and welcome your feedback on *IGoT News!* and how we can tailor it to suit your needs.

Wishing you a highly productive and successful 2017-18.



## Review commenced into the ATO's fraud control management

Community concerns surrounding recent fraud allegations linked to Senior ATO officers have reached a critical point and there is a risk that confidence in the tax system will be diminished.



The community's concerns prompted the Senate Economics References Committee to request that we undertake an independent review into the ATO's fraud control management with a focus on ATO staff conduct.

We have accepted the Committee's request and recently announced [Terms of reference](#) for the review. Submissions will close on 28 July 2017.

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## Other current reviews

Our [Future of the Tax Profession](#) review was commenced following a request from the Commissioner as well as in response to concerns that have been raised by tax professionals. Submissions to this review will close on 28 July 2017.



We have also commenced two other reviews which were identified in large part from the complaints that have been received by our office. These are the [Pay As You Go Instalments](#) and [GST Refunds](#) reviews.

More information on our review work is available on [our website](#).

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## Complaints handling service

During the past financial year, we have received 2,251 complaints and closed 2,196 complaints. Please note that these numbers have not as yet been reconciled with those of the ATO and TPB. The final reconciled numbers will be published in our upcoming annual report.



Feedback on our complaints handling service has been very positive. The preliminary results of a survey that we conducted in the last financial year indicate an almost 80 per cent satisfaction rate with our service. This includes feedback from complainants who did not obtain their desired outcomes. Some of the positive feedback that our officers have recently received include [names have been removed]:

- *I find J to be extremely helpful and knowledgeable and has assisted me with my enquiries to the highest level of satisfaction. It has been a pleasure dealing with J as I have found the ATO to be extremely painful to deal with. J is an asset to the IGT team and I am very grateful for his prompt assistance.*
- *I write to express sincere appreciation for your [staff member], N. N is courteous, conscientious and very helpful, and has a lovely public relations manner. She is clearly a great asset to your team.*
- *Thank you for assisting me with getting this complaint finalised...I feel confident I would not have been able to resolve this issue with the ATO without your assistance. So thank you for your efforts to help have it addressed.*

With 'tax time' now upon us, it is an extremely busy period for taxpayers, tax professionals, the ATO as well as the IGT. Our service is free to all and we are available assist you when required. If you run into trouble with the administration of the tax system or you're just having difficulty engaging with the ATO or TPB – we are here to help. Please contact us and we will do our best to support you in resolving your complaint.

You or your clients may contact our complaints service through [our website](#) or by telephone on 1300 44 88 29.

Moving forward, we'll have more to say about our complaints handling service.

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## Taxpayer engagement

We assisted the Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue with its [Inquiry into Taxpayer Engagement with the Tax System](#) through lodging a detailed [submission](#) as well as providing evidence at a public hearing.

We look forward to the Committee's report and are ready to assist it, and the ATO, in improving the administration of the tax system for the benefit of all Australians.



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## Unpaid superannuation

Our review into the ATO's approach to [employer obligations compliance activities](#) was recently released and is available on our website. That review sought to reduce the compliance burden for employers, especially small businesses in areas such as Pay as You Go Withholding, Fringe Benefits Tax and Superannuation Guarantee (SG).

Our work in that review enabled us to assist the Senate Economics References Committee in its inquiry into unpaid SG through written submission and evidence at a public hearing. [Our submission](#) is available on our website and it was pleasing to see the Committee's report picking up many of our recommendations.



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## Taxpayer rights and protection

We continue our ongoing efforts to promote and protect taxpayers' rights in Australia, both through our complaints handling service and our review function. Our report on the [Taxpayers' Charter and taxpayer protections](#) examined a range of issues including the current framework for taxpayer rights in Australia.



As part of our review we commissioned a report from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) on the status of taxpayer rights in Australia. The [UNSW report](#) is available on our website.

In addition to our report, we have also engaged with our international counterparts to discuss and promote taxpayer rights including by participating in the [International Conference on Taxpayer Rights](#) where the IGT spoke on issues of Privacy and Transparency as well as the challenges of external scrutineers. Moreover, we are assisting the [International Bureau of Fiscal Documentation's](#) Observatory on the Protection of Taxpayer Rights with their efforts to monitor and report on taxpayers rights issues globally.

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## Engaging with the tax profession

We have continued our work and engagement with local and regionally-based tax practitioners. In the past few months we have met with practitioners throughout New South Wales including Albury, Newcastle, Penrith, Parramatta, Campbelltown, Penshurst and Burwood. We are very keen to expand this program of engagement to every State and Territory of Australia.



If you know of any tax practitioner discussion groups that would benefit from a presentation delivered by members of our team, please [email us](#).

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## We've moved!

After nearly 14 years at Circular Quay, we have moved our offices to 321 Kent Street, Sydney.

Our phone lines, web services and mailing address will remain the same. The move will not affect any of our work or the services we deliver to the community.



## Feedback

We welcome your feedback on how we can make our newsletter more informative and interesting for the community, including any features that you would like to see in upcoming editions. Please [email us](#) with your suggestions.

