

PREFACE

Background

The Government's tax package, *A New Tax System*, set out plans for comprehensive business tax reform involving:

- a framework of redesigned company taxation arrangements applied consistently to all limited liability entities; and
- consideration of the scope for more consistent taxation treatment of business investments with the prospect of achieving a 30 per cent company tax rate and further capital gains tax relief.

The Government indicated in *A New Tax System* that consultation would occur with business on the proposed reforms of business entities and business investments.

The Treasurer, the Hon. Peter Costello MP announced on 14 August 1998 the terms of reference for the Review of Business Taxation.

Consultation

The Review undertook its consultation task by:

- publishing a Discussion Paper, *A Strong Foundation*, on 23 November 1998 on the objectives and principles of taxation and the related processes of policy development, legislation and administration. Submissions were invited by 31 December 1998;
- publishing an Information Paper, *An International Perspective*, on 23 December 1998 detailing the taxation arrangements applying in a number of other countries;
- publishing a second Discussion Paper, *A Platform for Consultation*, on 22 February 1999 on specific design issues. Submissions were invited by 16 April 1999;
- holding public seminars in all capital cities in December 1998 and March 1999;
- holding focus group meetings on a range of issues from March to July 1999;
- meeting with the business community and taxation experts;
- participating in conferences and seminars; and
- providing information on the Review's website (<http://www.rbt.treasury.gov.au>).

Acknowledgments

The Review wishes to thank the many individuals and organisations who made submissions and participated in consultations and meetings. The comments and suggestions made in submissions and meetings have been a valuable input into the Review's deliberations. Details of submissions to the Review, public seminars, focus group meetings and other meetings are at Appendix B to the report.

A number of organisations provided assistance to the Review. The Review would like to thank the Department of the Treasury, the Australian Taxation Office, the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, the Office of National Assessments and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for providing staff and resources.

The Review would like to particularly thank Peter Simpson, Second Commissioner of Taxation, for his assistance throughout the period of the Review.

A number of consultants undertook research and other work for the Review, providing a valuable perspective on the range of issues considered. The consultants are listed at Appendix C.

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Finally, the Review would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of its Secretariat which consisted of members from both the private and public sectors, and which was very ably led and managed by Dr Alan Preston. Messrs Jim Wright and Wayne Mayo of the Secretariat and Messrs Tom Reid and Mano Manoranjan, who worked closely with the team, made particularly valuable contributions to the output of the Review. Members of the Secretariat worked extremely long hours and gave unstintingly of their time to accomplish a very demanding and complex task in a compressed timeframe. A list of the members of the Secretariat is at Appendix D.