

Senate Environment and Communications References Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Inquiry into Oil and gas exploration and production in the Beetaloo Basin
02 August 2021

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES

TOPIC: QoN 11. Departmental knowledge of Empire energy dealings

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 02 August 2021, Page 33)

QUESTION No.: 11

Senator McCARTHY: Was the department aware that Mr Espie and Mr Elphinstone are major Liberal Party donors and members?

Mr Trotman: I think I went to that question earlier. I personally did not have an understanding of that. But, again, I'll take that on notice because I can't speak for every member of the department. So, Senator, if you'll allow me to take that on notice, I'd be very grateful.

Senator McCARTHY: Thanks, Mr Trotman. Did the department advise the minister of a possible conflict of interest?

Mr Trotman: I'm not aware. Again, I'll take that on notice.

Senator McCARTHY: Was the department aware that the second-largest shareholding of Empire Energy is owned by Mr Tang, the man facing an arrest warrant for insider dealing in Hong Kong?

Mr Trotman: I will take that on notice.

Senator McCARTHY: Did the department advise the minister of concerns in relation to this information?

Mr Trotman: Minister Pitt is the designated minister who is the decision-maker for the program. I'm not aware of what advice may or may not have been provided to Minister Taylor. Again, if I can take that on notice we'll do an interrogation of the available records we have and come back to you.

ANSWER

There is no evidence that officials were aware of any relationship with the Liberal Party before a media article on 21 May 2021.

The Department did not advise the Minister for Resources and Water of any conflict of interest concerns as no grant applicants or advisory committee members declared any actual or perceived conflicts of interests.