

Senate Standing Committee on Economics  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Treasury Portfolio

**Inquiry into the Offshore Petroleum (Laminaria and Corallina Decommissioning Cost Recovery  
Levy) Bill 2021 [Provisions] and Treasury Laws Amendment (Laminaria and Corallina  
Decommissioning Cost Recovery Levy) Bill 2021 [Provisions]**

**Division:** Corporate and International Tax Division  
**Topic:** Other options considered  
**Reference:** Spoken (8 November 2021)  
**Senator:** Rex Patrick

**Question:**

Senator PATRICK: I want to understand this in relation to the Northern Endeavour. There were other options put up in response to the circumstances—a levy being one of them. Did you consider any other options?

Mr Winckler: You're correct in that other options were considered—sorry, if I take your question in terms of Treasury's role in developing the levy legislation, other options were considered by government. Treasury did not necessarily lead on options outside of the levy. As Ms Bultitude mentioned at the start, Treasury is responsible for the levy legislation because it is tax legislation. To the extent that there are non-tax options available, those are not necessarily options that Treasury would lead.

Senator PATRICK: But what were those options?

Mr Winckler: I just have to consider that. Obviously, there were considerations around different options for dealing with the Laminaria and Corallina fields that were considered by government at the time. I'd have to confirm whether I'm able to disclose what those options were. As I say, our area of Treasury is not responsible for leading on those policy matters.

Senator PATRICK: I wouldn't ask for further information, just what's within your knowledge.

Mr Winckler: If it's okay, I might just have to quickly defer and come back to you in the course of this discussion.

Senator PATRICK: Perfect, we can come back to that. If you're not able to answer that, I would expect you to refer the matter to a minister for public interest immunity. This committee may seek to have another hearing to see what other witnesses may say, and that's the context in which I ask that question.

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Senator Patrick: You were going to get back to me with another answer.

Mr Winckler I was.

Senator Patrick: Are other options considered?

Mr Winckler: We would like to take that on notice, Senator, so that we can consult with the department of industry as well. I appreciate they've just been on but, as I was saying, Treasury was not a lead agency. Senator PATRICK: Sure, and again I don't want to probe into the details of those options; it was really just what Treasury was aware of because clearly you were part of the decision-making in terms of going down this particular pathway.

**Answer:**

The decision to impose a levy to pay for the decommissioning and remediation of the Laminaria and Corallina oil fields and associated infrastructure, together with consideration of any alternatives, was a decision of Cabinet.