

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Declaration of interest of commissioners and staff

Senator: Patrick

Question reference number: 0074

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Question:

Senator PATRICK: Mr Thompson, just in relation to the declarations, I didn't quite hear who the declarations were made to for commissioners and other staff.

Mr Thompson: For the commissioners, the declarations were made to Prime Minister and Cabinet, because the commission exists by appointment of the Prime Minister. For the working groups, we have three formally constituted working groups under the commission architecture: the manufacturing task force, the not-for-profits working group and the industrial relations working group. There have been other groups that we've convened and commissioners have convened, but in terms of formal constitution, those are the three formally constituted working groups. In terms of declarations that we have sought, that the commission has sought from participants in those working groups, declarations have been sought for the chair and all members—the chair is Greg Combet—but all members of the industrial relations working group; and from the chair, Mr Liveris, of the manufacturing task force. No other declarations have been sought at this time.

Senator PATRICK: The question really was to whom, and that's to PM&C, and it sounds like also to the NCCC itself. I note that the NCCC's website does have bios on key players in the organisation. I also note that things like share registries are publicly available information. Can you please table, provide to the committee, all of those declarations please?

Mr Thompson: I think that question was covered in the last hearing. There was a question on notice, and I think that was among the answers provided to the committee late last night.

Senator PATRICK: So you're saying the declarations have been provided to the committee?

Mr Thompson: No, I'm saying that the answer, I think, in that response to the question on notice was that they are private interests and it's not our intention to provide those on the record.

Senator PATRICK: So the relevant minister provided a public interest immunity statement? Is that what's happened?

Mr Thompson: We have not sought public interest immunity for that at this stage, as far as I know, but my colleague from Prime Minister and Cabinet might be able to assist there.

Senator PATRICK: Noting that much of it is public anyway—just to be very clear, I'm asking you to table the documents. I'm not asking questions about the declarations. You, of course, can take that on notice and advance a public interest immunity. But I will make the

point that there is a lot of information already available on the NCCC's website. Have a look at senators' statements and the way in which they disclose their private affairs, and note that things like share registries are public. I take that as a yes, Mr Thompson?

Mr Thompson: We'll take it on notice, yes.

Answer:

The arrangements for managing the potential for conflicts of interest relating to members of the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission (the Commission) are detailed in the answer to Question on Notice 0003.

The Commission members' declarations are provided in confidence and contain sensitive personal information related to themselves and members of their immediate families, the disclosure of which may unreasonably infringe the privacy of the individuals concerned.