

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 4. Empire and Liberal Party donations

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 02 August 2021, Page 30)

QUESTION No.: 4

CHAIR: You talked about conflict of interest. Is it a conflict of interest for members of the board—that is, the chairperson of Empire Energy—to donate \$400,000 to the Liberal Party? Do you think that might be a conflict of interest?

Mr Trotman: Again, I think that goes to the court case in terms of the clear direction of where the court case is leaning.

CHAIR: It's going to be a very interesting court case!

Mr Trotman: If we can take it on notice, we will attempt to get back to you and answer that question before the end of the week.

CHAIR: Mr Trotman, were you aware that the chairperson of Empire Energy had donated such a significant amount of money to the Liberal Party?

Mr Trotman: I personally wasn't aware of any donations until the media articles became public.

CHAIR: So what kind of due diligence have you been doing then?

Mr Trotman: Again, it goes to the court case. If we can take that on notice—

ANSWER

Section 13.1 of the program guidelines establish the circumstances in which an applicant would need to declare a conflict of interest.

The advisory committee considered the application against the eligibility and assessment criteria established by the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, advised that the applications met established eligibility criteria and recommended that the applications be accepted.