

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 316
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Program: Clean Energy Regulator (CER)
Topic: Clean Energy Council
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 28 October 2016
Question Type: Written

Senator Back, Chris asked:

It is my belief that Clean Energy Council resources were used to access the personal details of ACCI's Chief Economist earlier in the year. The email originated from the Clean Energy Council office. The content of the email effectively discredited the ACCI's chief economist on a personal matter. The time at which the email was sent coincided with the release of the Renewable Energy Target Scheme Review – Report of the Expert Panel. Importantly, one of the 'balancing voices' that was referred to in the Report of the Expert Panel was that of ACCI's chief economist. The result of the email being sent was that ACCI's Chief Economist was discredited in the media and stood down by ACCI's CEO that same day. The email is referred to in the following article in the Australian:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/exchamber-of-commerce-economist-calls-cops-over-alleged-dirty-tricks/news-story/8b2a6876fcd58a050f173d70cbb38194>

1. Was the CER aware of the email sent by the Clean Energy Council on 28 August 2014, prior to the date of this question being asked?
2. If so, what action did the CER take to investigate the actions of the CEC in this instance?

Answer:

1. No. The Clean Energy Regulator can find no record that suggests the agency was aware of this email.
2. The Clean Energy Regulator did not investigate the matter. As stated in the answer to Additional Estimates 2016 Question on Notice 230, the Clean Energy Regulator does not regulate or investigate the behaviour of the Clean Energy Council or its staff.