

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2014-15
2-3 June 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: Renewable Energy Target Review – Stakeholder Discussions

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 3 June 2014, page 38)

QUESTION No.: BI-63

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Has the minister, secretary or any level of the bureaucracy had meetings with either Origin, AGL or Energy Australia in relation to the RET and the RET review—prior to or after the Warburton review commenced?

Ms Beauchamp: I will let other officers add to this, but we meet with our stakeholders on a regular basis and talk about a range of matters, including the RET.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Can you tell us when you had those discussions?

Ms Beauchamp: I would have to take on notice when I have had discussions with those organisations. As I said, we do talk about a range of matters.

Senator Ronaldson: You do understand that this is an independent review and that we cannot pre-empt the outcome of those independent review discussions. I want to put a framework around what can and cannot be answered by the officers at the table. I am sure they will take that on board.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: With the scrapping of the Million Solar Roofs Program from the budget—without any reference or announcement—how actively were incumbent generators engaging with the department or the minister in relation to this policy?

Mr Hoffman: I struggle to answer that question in the sense that it was, I believe, discussed in the context of the Emissions Reduction Fund and the Direct Action Plan, which are the responsibility of Minister Hunt and the Department of the Environment.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: We have asked similar questions of Minister Hunt. He has taken those on notice, but we were told to also put the questions to Minister Macfarlane in terms of the industry fund. I suppose what we are looking for is whether you can confirm or deny that coal and gas generators, or their industry lobby groups, have been lobbying the government to drop this specific policy.

Senator Ronaldson: There is an independent review underway at the moment, and it is certainly not appropriate to discuss what matters may or may not have been raised with the minister. I cannot rule in and rule out what discussions may or may not have been had. In a general sense, we will take that question on notice and see whether we can provide you with any further answers.

Mr Hoffman: I will add to that. As the secretary said, we meet regularly with companies and industry associations across the whole range of views—clean energy companies, energy efficiency associations, et cetera—and they all put a perspective to us. One of the tasks of the Public Service advising the government is to take all those perspectives into account.

ANSWER

The Minister and the Department of Industry meet with stakeholders on a regular basis and talk about a range of energy policy matters including issues raised in this question. This includes meetings with companies and industry associations who hold a range of views. Details on meetings regarding the Renewable Energy Target with Origin, AGL or Energy Australia in the period 7 September 2013 to 30 June 2014 is provided below.

No.	Date	Company	Minister/MO/DOI Representatives
1	29/10/2013	Origin Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA)	Secretary
2	5/12/13	EnergyAustralia	Minister for Industry Head of Energy Division
3	05/12/13	Origin	Secretary Head of Resources Division
4	10/12/13	Origin	Minister for Industry Deputy Secretary Head of Energy Division General Manager, National Energy Markets Branch General Manager, Governance and Demand Side Policy Branch
5	05/12/13	Origin	Secretary Head of Resources Division
6	1/5/2014	Origin	Minister for Industry Deputy Secretary Associate Secretary Head of Energy Division Head of Resources Division Manager, Electricity Market Development Manager, Retail Policy Senior Policy Officer 3 x COAG-EC Secretariat Officers
7	1/5/2014	Energy Australia	Minister for Industry Deputy Secretary Associate Secretary Head of Energy Division Head of Resources Division Manager, Electricity Market Development Manager, Retail Policy Senior Policy Officer 3 x COAG-EC Secretariat Officers
8	15/04/13	AGL	General Manager, Energy Productivity Branch
9	17/06/2014	Origin	Minister for Industry Deputy Secretary