

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2017 - 2018 Budget Estimates
31 May – 1 June 2017

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

REFERENCE: Questions on Notice (Hansard, 1 June 2017, page 103)

QUESTION No.: BI-55

Senator WATERS: Just one final brief topic in the short minutes left to me: the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which I understand Australia is looking to implement—it has a pilot but has not yet formally adopted it. Has the department or the government sought clarification on the US government's position? I understand they have indicated that they are thinking about withdrawing.

Mr B Wilson: Attendance at the international EITI board meeting is actually led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but we had a representative there. The department looks after the domestic implementation. I do not know the status of the US position.

Senator WATERS: All right. I can take that up with DFAT. I am interested in who the lead minister is for the domestic implementation. Would that be you, Minister?

Senator Canavan: I am certainly involved. Am I the only minister involved?

Mr B Wilson: No, there are a range of interests in this. There are the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Attorney-General, and we keep the Prime Minister's office abreast of it as well. It is an initiative that has whole-of-government support and involvement.

Senator WATERS: On that whole-of-government support: when were the last public statements made about this issue by responsible ministers or the department?

Mr B Wilson: I would have to take that on notice in terms of ministerial statements. The Prime Minister has written to ministers indicating that Australia intends to join this initiative. We have reconvened a multi-stakeholder group of stakeholders including industry, civil society and federal and state governments. They have had two meetings, and we are well underway in constructing the necessary documentation and things that we need to do in order to lodge our candidacy internationally.

Senator WATERS: Have any of the responsible ministers attended those—what did you call them—multi-stakeholder group meetings?

Mr B Wilson: That is done at the officials level. It is not normally a ministerial level forum.

Senator Canavan: There was a delegation here last year that I caught up with at the time, Senator Waters, but I will take on notice my interactions with the EIT Initiative and get back to you.

ANSWER

Australian Ministerial statements on EITI

The latest public statement by the Government on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was on 6 May 2016. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, and the then Minister for Resources and Energy, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, jointly announced the Australian Government's intention to join the EITI and implement the EITI Standard in Australia.

Minister's interactions with the EITI

The former Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan has had one formal meeting with representatives from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Minister Canavan met with Mr Jonas Moberg, Head of the EITI International Secretariat, on 16 September 2016 during his visit to Australia.