

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1287

### QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE (Of which some notice has been given)

Tuesday, 8 November 2011

Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment.

I refer to the Woodside and JV Partners' Browse LNG proposal and ask:

1. Are employees of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) or their contractors permitted to sign petitions opposing the proposal if they do so in their own private time?
2. Are employees of the DEC or their contractors permitted to attend events which are organised in opposition to the proposal if they do so in their own private time?
3. Are employees of the DEC or their contractors permitted to display stickers and banners opposing the proposal on their own private vehicles?
4. Have employees of the DEC or their contractors been advised to inform the Department if they are opposed to the Browse LNG proposal? If yes, how many employees of DEC or their contractors have done so?

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**I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.**

The Minister for Environment has provided the following response:

1. Advice to employees and contractors on signing of petitions and making public comment is provided in the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Code of Conduct, which requires employees and contractors to identify any conflicts of interest or perceived or potential conflicts of interest and to disclose this using DEC's Declaration – Conflict of Interest form. The disclosure is then assessed and advice given to the employee or contractor on whether the proposed activity is approved and any conditions that apply.
2. Attending an event in their own time opposing the proposal raises an actual or potential conflict of interest. Employees or contractors seeking to attend would be required to complete a Declaration - Conflict of Interest Form and receive DEC endorsement prior to attending. Restrictions may be placed on their level of involvement that may be dependent upon their role within DEC, with greater restriction for those directly involved in the assessment process for the site.

3. DEC does not seek to control what employees or contractors display on their own private vehicles, noting in particular that such vehicles would often be for family use not just that of the employee. However, dependent upon the role of the DEC employee or contractor and their involvement in the assessment process for the site, a declaration of a conflict of interest or perceived or potential conflict of interest and the identification of appropriate management measures may be the appropriate course of action.
4. Staff have been advised through training on conflict of interest to formally declare to the department, by way of a Declaration - Conflict of Interest form, any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and to put in place measures to manage the conflict of interest. To date no declarations have been received concerning the Browse LNG proposal.

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