

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Mr Andrew Liveris's financial and commercial interests in relation to investing in infrastructure for gas development

Senator: Whish-Wilson

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Question:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could you outline the financial and commercial interests of the task force members in relation to investing in infrastructure for gas development? Are you able to do that publicly?

Mr Thompson: Well, I'm not in a position to do it, because I don't know. The interest disclosures—

Senator WHISH-WILSON: It's been well published in the media. Five task force members have direct financial or commercial interests in the development of this infrastructure, including Mr Power. I'm just wondering why you can't put those on the record.

Mr Thompson: The interest disclosures that the commissioners signed were provided to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: I'm not talking about commissioners here; I'm talking about the members of the task force that aren't required to provide direct statements around their financial interests or conflicts of interest.

Mr Thompson: That's right, and I've answered that—that we did seek an interest disclosure from Mr Liveris but not from task force members.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could I ask why, considering that we know at least five of them have direct financial or commercial interests in seeing, for example, the Narrabri gas field developed or an east-west pipeline publicly funded, and so on and so forth?

Mr Thompson: As I said, the task force is attached to the commission and it reports through the commission. The commission took the position and the judgement that it was in the interests of the commission to have the chair of the task force provide a declaration of interest, but we did not seek that from other members.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Are you able to tell us what Mr Liveris's direct financial interest in this project is, then, if he's made a declaration?

Mr Thompson: I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: You're not aware that he owns shares in WorleyParsons, which is a major contracting company for gas infrastructure and development?

Mr Thompson: Senator, you're now asking me to disclose details of a private interest disclosure—

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Yes.

Mr Thompson: and I've said I'll take that on notice.

Answer:

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