

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Additional Budget Estimates 2009

26 February 2009

Question: AR-23
Topic: Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute
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Senator Bushby asked:

Mr Clarke—We would say that we are being very successful and we are very pleased with the global response from both global participants and industry. We have, we think, a very strong list of organisations,

government and private, that have agreed to be founding members of the institute.

Senator BUSHBY—Are you able to provide the list of those who have agreed?

Obviously, you may still be in negotiations with some and I am not asking for that detail, but can you provide the list of those who have agreed?

Mr Clarke—The list will be announced in due course when we conduct the launch of the institute. A shortlist was announced in London in November, at that very first prep meeting. A large number of other entities have since signed. But in all cases, except one that I can recall, we have asked them to keep their signing confidential until such time as the Australian government announces the full list of founding members.

Senator BUSHBY—I presume, with your saying that, the minister is actually invoking one of the exceptions to answering questions to the estimates committee on the basis of commercial in confidence. Would that be fair, Minister?

Senator Carr—The officer has explained the circumstances.

Senator BUSHBY—I know, but—

Senator Carr—Did you ask me a question?

Senator BUSHBY—I am giving you the opportunity to say that you agree that information cannot be given because it actually falls in one of the exceptions to questions.

Senator Carr—That is what the officer has just indicated to you.

Senator BUSHBY—But it is not his call to do that; it is the minister's call to do that, if anybody is going to claim that they cannot answer a question.

Senator Carr—I think you can be certain that we will be supporting officers in this way.

Senator BUSHBY—I am just trying to make sure that everything is done properly. There is a list. Presumably, you are still in negotiations with other nations and organisations.

Mr Clarke—Yes. A number of parties have signed and a number of parties are still negotiating.

Senator BUSHBY—Have you approached any national governments that have said they are not interested?

Mr Clarke—There is one I can recall whose position is that they do not wish to join as a founding member at this time and for whom, therefore, we are not continuing discussions.

Senator BUSHBY—That is the only nation that you are aware of?

Mr Clarke—Yes.

Senator BUSHBY—Are you able to indicate which nation that is?

Mr Clarke—I do not—

Senator BUSHBY—I will ask you to take it on notice that I would like that and you can come back to me with the response, as it may be.

Mr Clarke—Thank you.

Answer:

It would be inappropriate to identify this country at a time when negotiations are ongoing with other governments and the full list of Foundation Members has not been announced.