

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

23 – 24 February 2011

Question: AET 139

Topic: Price and Volume Assumptions

Hansard Page: E 27

Senator Brown asked:

Senator BOB BROWN—Thank you very much. I will not take too long. On the same matter of the minerals tax, the *Financial Review* story this morning, front page, refers to \$100 million forgone over the coming decade, under the price and volume assumptions that have not been released. Are those price and volume assumptions held by Treasury and, if so, can the committee have them?

Dr Henry—Obviously we have within the department the price and volume assumptions on which the MRRT revenue estimates in MYEFO were constructed. In previous committee hearings, I have indicated that the price and volume assumptions rely very heavily on information provided by the companies to the department. The companies tell us that they regard that information as being commercial-in-confidence. In fact, so far as we know, they have not shared the information among themselves. They have independently, that is, one by one, shared the information with us, on condition that it remain commercial-in-confidence, that it be protected. We have been through this before. Of course, the assumptions on which the revenue estimates are based can be aggregated in ways, I suppose, but we have not provided that information publicly. It would be a matter for the Treasurer, in my view, whether that information were to be provided to this committee or indeed provided publicly.

Senator BOB BROWN—I make that request.

Senator Sherry—We will take it on notice.

Answer:

The minerals price data underlying the MRRT estimates was provided to the Treasury on a commercial in confidence basis. Treasury has consulted the companies concerned and has been advised that the information is commercially sensitive and that its release would be considered a breach of confidence. Accordingly, the Treasurer confirms that this information is to be withheld on the basis that it is Commercial in Confidence information.