

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Additional Estimates

15 February 2012

**Question:** AR6

**Topic:** Departmental Conflict of Interest Processes

**Proof Hansard Page:** 105

**Senator Waters asked:**

**Senator WATERS:** Does the department keep any records of how many staff leave the department and subsequently work for mining companies or for lobbying firms and other companies which have mining companies as their main clients?

**Ms Rose:** We do keep informal records about staff who have left the department but we do not maintain it. It is more anecdotal than about specifically where the departures are going to.

**Mr Clarke:** We conduct exit interviews with all staff.

**Ms Rose:** They do not necessarily disclose, when they are going to the private sector, exactly where they are going.

**Senator WATERS:** Is there a cooling-off period specified when staff are hired to avoid any potential conflict of interest?

**Ms Rose:** There are a couple of things around conflict of interest. We do not have a cooling-off period, but there is a probation period for employees joining the public sector for the first time. So if they are transferring from another Commonwealth agency, generally they have had a probation period elsewhere and that is more focused around suitability and performance than just

**Senator WATERS:** That is just your standard probationary period that anyone would be subject to, yes.

**Ms Rose:** In terms of conflict of interest, we have a few things in the department specific to identifying conflict of interest. We have a security clearance process where people have to divulge a range of personal information to achieve a security clearance. We then have a separate process where there is a declaration of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest with staff.

**Senator WATERS:** Could you table perhaps the forms of any processes and procedures that you have got that relate particularly to that declaration of potential conflicts of interest?

**Ms Rose:** No problem.

**Answer:**

The Department has several processes and procedures for addressing conflicts of interest.

Upon gaining employment into the Australian Public Service (APS), officials are required to adhere to the APS Code of Conduct, which includes a direction on the declaration and management of personal interests and conflict of interest (Section 4 – Personal Behaviour) and other APS Commission directions, including:

- Circular No 2007/1: Declarations of personal Interests: Revised Policy Guidelines; and
- Circular No 2007/3: Post Separation Employment: Policy Guidelines.

The Department also has several documents which deal with conflicts of interest, including:

- Declaration of Private Interest Procedural Rule (**Attachment A**);
- Lobbying Code of Conduct Procedural Rule (**Attachment B**); and
- Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (RET) Code of Conduct Framework (**Attachment C**).

Additionally, officials must seek approval and declare conflicts of interest prior to entering into outside employment while employed by the Department.