

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10  
01 June 2009

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** MINISTER FOR INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

**TOPIC:** Company relations

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard 1 June 2009, E117)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-94

**Senator CAMERON**—Minister, given some of the questions you have been receiving about involvement with companies, when Senator Abetz was raising this it drew my mind back to February 2000 and the National Textiles company that went belly up and had an involvement with the Prime Minister's brother in that company. The Australian editorial at the time spoke about favouritism, policy on the run and lack of probity in relation to the government's involvement. What have we learned since then in relation to proper dealings with companies who are under some financial stress?

**Senator Carr**—Senator Campbell—

**CHAIR**—Senator Cameron.

**Senator Carr**—Apologies, I was thinking of the year 2000, Senator Cameron. The matter you raise is actually very serious.

**Senator ABETZ**—So it seems.

**Senator Carr**—I would like to take that on notice and give the matter some thought.

**ANSWER**

The current government ensures that all assistance to industry is delivered transparently through programs with clear guidelines and rigorous procedures. In my portfolio, most of these programs are administered by AusIndustry. It observes the highest standards of probity. Firms seeking support are required to meet stringent conditions. They must demonstrate their financial viability and in nearly all cases they are required to match government assistance with contributions from their own resources. Through Enterprise Connect, the government provides advisory and other services to help companies deal with changing circumstances and hopefully avoid getting into the situation in which National Textiles found itself.