

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10
21 October 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Pulp and Paper Industry Strategy Group

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 21 October 2009, E64-65)

QUESTION No.: SI-43

Senator BOB BROWN—I wanted to ask a couple of questions about the Pulp and Paper Industry Strategy Group. How is it progressing?

Mr Payne—The group has had several meetings. It has produced an issues paper, which is available on the department's website. And it is working towards preparing a final report to the minister by the end of the year.

Senator BOB BROWN—Can you tell me if the meetings are minuted?

Mr Payne—Records are kept of key decisions at the meetings.

Senator BOB BROWN—Could you make those records available to the committee?

Mr Payne—If you do not mind, I might just need to check the terms of which we advised members of the group about the privacy of the record of the meetings, just because there would be some commercially confidential material that is discussed at the meetings. So could I take that on notice and get back to you?

Senator BOB BROWN—Yes, but can you give a commitment to give the committee the records in so far as confirmation has been given that commercial-in-confidence information has been removed and why?

Mr Payne—Yes. I will seek to do that.

ANSWER

The Chair of the Pulp and Paper Industry Strategy Group (PPISG) undertook to seek the view of members regarding Senator Brown's request to provide the minutes of their meetings to the Senate Committee.

Prior to their appointment to the PPISG, members agreed to confidentiality provisions. These provisions state that PPISG members "have a duty to keep information confidential and are asked to ensure at all times that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard information from unauthorised use, access or disclosure".

PPISG members have agreed not to disclose information regarding the private deliberations and decisions which take place during meetings of the PPISG.

On this basis, PPISG members have advised that they do not wish to release the minutes of their meeting to the Senate Committee.