

## SENATE QUESTION

### Standards of Ministerial Ethics

#### Question No. 401

**Senator Siewert** asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister in the Senate on 7 April 2008: In regard to: (a) the Prime Minister's 'Standards of Ministerial Ethics' dated December 2007; (b) the appointment of the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia, the Honourable Gary Gray AO MP; and (c) Mr Gray's former employment by the Woodside group of companies:

(1) While not stated, do the Standards of Ministerial Ethics apply to parliamentary secretaries.

(2) Given that ministers are required to divest themselves of all shareholdings, other than through investment vehicles, such as broadly diversified superannuation funds or publicly-listed managed or trust arrangements, has Mr Gray complied with this requirement.

(3) Did Mr Gray accompany the Prime Minister on a tour of the Woodside offshore oil and gas platforms; if so, in what capacity.

(4) Given that, as reported in the *West Australian* on 22 January 2008, after touring Woodside's offshore oil and gas platforms: 'Mr Rudd said a slice of the revenue from large resources projects such as Woodside's new Pluto development would be returned to the State over time' and the 'Prime Minister pledged to work side-by-side with Federal Resources Minister Martin Ferguson and Infrastructure Minister [sic] Gary Gray to ensure the economic powerhouse of the nation continued to thrive', will Mr Gray, having had a past personal association with Woodside, be allowed to make decisions that affect that enterprise or will this responsibility be passed to a senior minister or a minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

(5) Given the arguments between Australia and East Timor over maritime boundaries, the former Government's role in encouraging Woodside in its efforts to overcome the constraints of the American sanctions law that sought to limit worldwide investment in Libya and the role Mr Gray, as director of corporate affairs for Woodside, played in these negotiations, will the Prime Minister ensure that Mr Gray takes no part in negotiations or deliberations pertaining to the oil and gas exploration and production industry.

(6) Given the role Mr Gray, as director of corporate affairs for Woodside, played in the negotiations on behalf of Woodside with Ms Clare Martin, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory in 2002, is it appropriate for him to be the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia.

**Senator Evans** – The Prime Minister has provided the following answer to the honourable senator’s question:

- (1) Yes. The *Standards of Ministerial Ethics* states: “All references to Ministers should be read as including Parliamentary Secretaries”.
- (2) Mr Gray has advised the Prime Minister he has fully complied with the requirements of the *Standards of Ministerial Ethics*.
- (3)
  - (a) Yes.
  - (b) In his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia.
- (4) - (5) Mr Gray will continue to discharge his responsibilities as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia.
- (6) Yes.