

PETER OATES — APPOINTMENT AS CONSULTANT

**276. Hon SHELLEY EATON to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the appointment of Mr Peter Oates to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

- (1) What special projects will Mr Oates be responsible for in the minister's office?
- (2) How does the minister intend to manage Mr Oates' clear conflict of interest as director and shareholder of Eneabba Gas Ltd?

**The PRESIDENT:** Before the minister answers the question, I invite members to read chapter XII of the standing orders before framing their questions.

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

- (1)-(2) If I were to answer this question honestly, I would say that I could probably employ Mr Oates for the next two decades on special projects within the energy portfolio. At the moment, quite specifically, I am asking Mr Oates to assist me with the Gas Supply and Emergency Management Committee. He is representing me on that committee, looking at future gas security. Specifically, I have asked Mr Oates to assist me in overcoming the debacle surrounding Verve Energy. I need to make it quite clear that the situation with Verve has nothing to do with the management of Verve. It has to do with the flawed disaggregation process. This corporation is losing hundreds of millions of dollars, and that is due entirely to a flawed disaggregation process. As minister, I have to ensure that we do the right thing and put that corporation back on track, and ensure that we do not say to the taxpayers of Western Australia that we will continue to watch hundreds of millions of dollars go down the drain. Mr Oates is very clear about his role as a consultant in my office. He has an enormous amount of experience, as I said in my previous answer to Hon Kate Doust, in diversification of roles in the energy sector over the past 25 or 30 years.

**Hon Kate Doust:** How much are you paying him?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I have been through that. I will be using his experience and expertise to assist me in presenting a pathway forward to ensure that we overcome the debacle that is the current financial situation of Verve.

In terms of his perceived conflict of interest—he does not—he has made a declaration of interests in line with the code of conduct that regulates public sector employment, and he will follow the appropriate protocols. I am very, very confident that we will not have a problem in that area.