

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT — CONFLICT OF INTEREST

**17. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:**

My question relates to the minister's conflict of interest arising from her husband's employment with Woodside Petroleum Ltd.

- (1) Given the importance of maintaining and protecting the openness and transparency of the environment approvals process in Western Australia, can the minister explain to the house which current issues she will not handle because of her conflict of interest?
- (2) Has the minister identified issues likely to arise in future because of her conflict of interest?
- (3) If yes to (2), what are these issues?
- (4) If no to (2), what assessment process will the minister use to identify issues she cannot handle because of her conflict of interest?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:**

I thank the honourable member for her question. Before I answer the question, I place on record that I have been open and transparent on this issue from day one. At the time the Premier asked me to become Minister for Environment I immediately advised him of my husband's employment. I have taken all actions necessary to ensure that there is neither a potential nor a perceived conflict of interest in this matter.

- (1)-(4) The only issues I am required to not make decisions about are matters surrounding Woodside Petroleum Ltd. My husband works for Woodside; he does not work for other companies or customers, as the honourable member has reported in the media. There is a quite clear response when a matter involving Woodside arises. I have written to the Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority and the acting Appeals Convenor to let them know about the conflict of interest and how it should be managed. If, for example, an approval matter involving the EPA should arise, the EPA will not come to my office; it will go straight to Hon John Day, the Minister for Planning. He will deal with all decisions and approvals involving Woodside.