

WASTE AUTHORITY — RESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN BARRY CARBON

30. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer the minister to the recent resignation of Mr Barry Carbon as chairman of the Waste Authority.

- (1) When did the minister find out that Mr Carbon was non-executive chair of Bauxite Resources Ltd?
- (2) Who instigated the inquiry into the possibility of a conflict of interest, and when was the inquiry instigated?
- (3) Will the minister make public all the advice, including the “further clarification” that she received from the Public Sector Commissioner; and, if not, why not?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for her question.

- (1)–(3) I was advised by Mr Carbon towards the end of last year—perhaps the end of November or the beginning of December—that he had taken on a new position with BRL. Subsequent to that, he raised concern about a potential or perceived conflict of interest with respect to his two roles, and it was agreed that I should seek advice. That advice was sought through the Public Sector Commissioner. The advice that was provided to me was also provided to Mr Carbon. While I was seeking some further clarification on some issues, Mr Carbon advised that he intended to retire. The advice provided was that there was potential for a perceived conflict of interest, in that as Chairman of the Waste Authority Mr Carbon had regular contact with me as Minister for Environment, and this may have led to a perception that he could also have regular access to me through those meetings in his capacity as BRL chair. There have been a number of referrals to the Department of Environment and Conservation, as well as the Environmental Protection Authority, which I think Hon Sally Talbot referred to previously—in a petition perhaps—and that means, undoubtedly, that decisions will come before me that involve BRL. Therefore, the advice that came back to me was there could be a perception that, through that regular contact, Mr Carbon, potentially, would have opportunities to raise matters with me in my capacity as a decision maker. That was the advice provided to me by the Public Sector Commissioner. That advice was also provided to Mr Carbon and, as I have said, I sought some further information because Mr Carbon had decided that he would stand down but not resign. In the meantime, I received a letter from Mr Carbon indicating that he intended to retire. There has been some suggestion by Hon Sally Talbot that I asked Mr Carbon to choose between the two positions.

Hon Sally Talbot: I have not suggested that.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I have seen it in the member’s press statements. I will state for the record that at no stage did I ask Mr Carbon to choose between the two positions.