
Question on Notice

House of Assembly Select Committee on Caretaker Conventions

Question:

During the 2025 Caretaker Period, the borrowing limits for TT-Line were increased. As to this, the Committee has:

Mr WINTER - ... received a submission that outlines that, in terms of the borrowing limit increase, the [then] Treasurer contacted the [then] Shadow Treasurer, and rather than consulted, simply told the [then] Shadow Treasurer that the decision had been made and then announced it.

Is this a breach of caretaker conventions?

Answer:

The incumbent Government received advice during the Caretaker period from the Department of Treasury and Finance on 25 July 2026 that TT-Line's borrowing capacity ought to be temporarily increased to support TT-Line's Vessel Replacement Program.

Clause 2.5 of the *Guidelines on the Caretaker Conventions* provide:

If circumstances require the Government to make a major policy decision during the caretaker period that would bind an incoming government, the relevant Minister, after agreement with the Premier, would usually consult the relevant Opposition spokesperson(s) beforehand. The requirement to consult does not require the Government to obtain the endorsement of non-Government parties.

In accordance with the Guidelines, I am advised that Mr Josh Willie MP, the then Shadow Treasurer, was consulted regarding the decision to increase the borrowing limit by the then Treasurer, Mr Guy Barnett MP, on 26 July 2025. Following this, I am advised the Government decided later that day to provide a temporary \$410 million increase to TT-Line's borrowing capacity.

Professor Anne Twomey, the leading expert on Caretaker Conventions in Australia has stated that it is acceptable for the incumbent Government to have formed a view about how they want to proceed with the major policy decision before they undertake consultation. Accordingly, it is not a breach of the Caretaker Conventions to have formed a view about the major policy decision to be made prior to consultation, and to run this specific view past the Opposition spokesperson during consultation.

An Opposition spokesperson is able to ask questions or raise an alternate position during consultation.



Kathrine Morgan-Wicks
Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Date: Friday, 26 April 2024