

Woodside confirms Gray's departure as preselection looms

25-January-07 by Andrew Hobbs

Woodside Petroleum Ltd's corporate affairs director Gary Gray will be leaving the company on January 31, the oil and gas giant confirmed today.

Woodside chief executive Don Voelte thanked Mr Gray for his contribution to the company, saying his political and diplomatic skills and connections had been instrumental to its success in dealing with foreign governments such as China, Libya and Timor-Leste.

The company has not yet made moves to find a replacement.

Mr Gray, who resigned as national secretary of the ALP eight years ago, is widely expected to seek nomination for the federal seat of Brand, currently held by Kim Beazley who will resign at the next election.

In an interview with a national newspaper last Wednesday, Mr Gray confirmed he was talking to people in the local electorate and the party to see whether he might be "a suitable candidate".

He has already won the support of Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd, who last week went public with his backroom push to place Mr Gray in the seat.

ALP preselections for lower house seats are expected to take place in mid-February.