

Moore sticks by his guns in mines row

- **Tim Clarke**
- November 15, 2008 - 2:34PM

Under-fire Mines Minister Norman Moore says he still has the confidence of the mining industry despite the storm over allegations of a potential conflict of interest.

The issue is over a joint superannuation policy held with his wife, which included shares in BHP and Woodside.

Mr Moore was again forced to defend himself yesterday, after another call from the Opposition for him to comply with the ministerial code of conduct, be demoted or sacked.

Accused of "arrogant and contemptuous" behaviour by Opposition accountability spokesperson Ljiljana Ravlich, Mr Moore hit back, saying he had stepped aside from the superannuation fund on advice from the State solicitor.

And he said he also believed he was held in high regard by mining representatives, after an industry lunch in Leederville.

"I actually wanted to be the minister for mines, I have been the minister for mines before and actually know what I am talking about," Mr Moore said.

"And if you go and ask all of those people up there in that room (yesterday), they think I should remain ... 99 per cent would say yes, overwhelmingly.

"I am following that (State solicitor's advice) to the letter, and everyone in WA now knows I actually have some interest in what BHP and Woodside are doing.

"I have never kept that a secret, and the issue that is generally of concern is when someone has a conflict of interest that nobody knows about."

The row erupted after Mr Moore declared the shares on the financial interests register, lodged in Parliament after he was sworn in, prompting the Opposition to call for him to stand down, citing a serious conflict of interest.

Mr Moore said yesterday that despite his position, he did not think he would be involved in any major decision involving either BHP or Woodside.

"Most of the decisions on BHP and Woodside will be made by the Premier anyway, as Minister for State Development," he said.

“It is very unlikely I will be involved in any decisions of consequence with respect of those two companies.”

He also did not see much problem in both he and Environment Minister Donna Faragher sitting out decisions on Woodside.

Ms Faragher was also accused of a conflict of interest, as her husband works for the giant corporation.

She has said she will not be involved in Cabinet decisions involving Woodside.

“It is not out of the question no, and I don’t have a problem with it,” Mr Moore said.