

Moore's wife sells conflict row shares

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Besieged Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore's wife Lee has bowed to mounting pressure over the conflict of interests saga which has plagued the State Government, with Mr Moore revealing yesterday that she had sold her shares in BHP Billiton, Woodside and Wesfarmers.

Mr Moore said his wife felt she had been forced to make the move because of "constant media speculation". He claimed she had made a loss of \$100,000.



"She is not prepared to sit back and see us and our Government attacked, unfairly in her view, on a daily basis," Mr Moore said. "By taking this action, which will see her lose \$100,000 from her superannuation fund, she has put the Government's interests ahead of her own. Naturally, I am very grateful to her."

Opposition Leader Eric Ripper said Mr Moore's announcement was overdue.

He said other Cabinet members addressed the problem immediately and the Minister's delay had compromised the Premier's position.

Health Minister Kim Hames, Energy Minister Peter Collier, Planning Minister John Day and Treasurer Troy Buswell promptly sold shares they believed could have been seen as presenting conflicts of interests after they were sworn in.

"It's taken some time to drag Mr Moore to this position," Mr Ripper said. "Mr Moore has had to be dragged kicking and screaming to an acknowledgment that his public duty requires him to resolve the question of this conflict of interest."

When releasing a copy of the legal advice from the State Solicitor, which the Government had refused to make public, Mr Moore said his wife's decision to sell the shares was made independently and was not an admission of any wrongdoing.

He said he had not come under any pressure from Colin Barnett or his Liberal colleagues, admitting he had considered stepping down from his portfolio as part of his reflection on the matter.

"My wife and I have discussed this matter, the Premier has not talked to my wife about it," Mr Moore said. "The Premier has been very supportive of me and

indeed what he said to you is what he said to me — you have not done anything that's wrong."

A spokesman for Mr Barnett said the Premier had not told Mr Moore to ask his wife to sell her shares in any of the three companies.

Greens MP Giz Watson said Mr Moore's involvement in a Cabinet decision this week to lift the ban on uranium mining proved the problem had moved beyond perception.

"It actually had happened. He didn't absent himself from the Cabinet decision," she said.

"And his wife still had her shares and those shares could have gone up in the 24 hours after that announcement.

"I think the underlying problem is that the code has got no teeth. If the Premier of the day doesn't act, then there are no consequences, so it's a fundamental problem."

Mr Moore maintained he did nothing wrong and had been offended by the suggestion that shares his wife owned in her superannuation fund would influence his duties under the mines and petroleum portfolios.

YASMINE PHILLIPS and PETER KERR