



Opposition questions Ken Henry's 'conflict-of-interest' role

THE Federal Opposition says former Treasury boss Ken Henry's appointment as special adviser to the Prime Minister could conflict with his role on the National Australia Bank's board.

Dr Henry was appointed in April as a special adviser to Prime Minister Julia Gillard, and in September was given the task of writing a white paper on Australia in the Asian Century.

The former Treasury chief, who is on paid long-service leave, has also been appointed to the board of the National Australia Bank starting November 1.

A Senate estimates hearing yesterday was told Dr Henry was appointed as a special adviser the day after he retired to ensure the Government retained his services.

When he starts work with the



SPECIAL ADVISER: Ken Henry is also on NAB's board.

white paper taskforce he is expected to work one or two days a week, on the same pay scale as the Treasury secretary.

Liberal senator Eric Abetz told the hearing the instrument of appointment stated that Dr Henry's terms and conditions of employment would be the same

as the current Treasury secretary's. He said the Treasury secretary would not be able to be on the board of a bank.

"Nothing could be clearer," Senator Abetz said.

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet deputy secretary Renee Leon said Dr Henry's letter of appointment indicated he would be bound by the Australian Public Service code of conduct.

She said the question of whether Dr Henry could undertake other work was raised in discussions with him.

The final arrangement included a note to Dr Henry saying he would have to consult the Government on any other work he took on and be "mindful of any real or perceived conflict of interest".