

Scottish Independence Referendum – the chat today



A selection of remarks and comments and pointers to articles about the Scottish Independence Referendum.

People living in Scotland are invited to vote in the referendum on independence from the United Kingdom on 18 September 2014. The referendum question is “Should Scotland be an independent country?”

Whether you intend voting Yes or No to that question, your views, and those of others, have a place here. We invite comments and we also invite you to write about what you think by using our Submit your Story feature [here](#).

An Edinburgh renewable energy company has resigned its membership of the CBI following a move by the industry body yesterday to register with the Electoral Commission as a backer of the NO campaign against independence for Scotland.



Martin McAdam CEO
of Aquamarine Power

Martin McAdam, Chief Executive Officer of wave energy company Aquamarine Power (a member of the CBI) said:-“Businesses do not vote, people vote. The CBI has registered with the Electoral Commission as a NO campaign backer without consultation with its members.

As a business Aquamarine Power has been firmly neutral on the matter of independence. We have adopted this view after

consultation with our Board and Management Team and as a consequence we can no longer remain members of the CBI. Although Aquamarine Power's staff and Board Members may have personal views on the matter of independence, this has no influence on our agreed company position."

The CBI have long made it known that their stance was anti-independence. They have a range of 'fact sheets' on their website which make their position evident. For an organisation which has been issuing daily press releases on a breadth of other issues their press area is silent today.

Their move to become registered as a backer of one side of the referendum would allow them to spend £150,000 on campaigning from 30 May when the 'regulated period' opens until the date of the referendum, should they wish to do so. The CBI chair, Iain McMillan, appeared at a fairly rough session of a Holyrood committee a couple of weeks ago, when his opening remarks as a witness were too lengthy for Mike Mackenzie SNP MSP for Highlands and Islands who broke in to ask how long "this polemic" was going to continue. In addition, Chic Brodie SNP MSP for South Scotland, was scolded by the chairman of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee for 'badgering' Mr McMillan, although he actually went on to be even more adversarial with the witness afterwards.

When questioned during the same session by Lothians MSP Alison Johnstone about whose views he represented in a paper published at the end of March, Mr McMillan said:-"The view that we represent in the paper is the broad collective view of the CBI. We do not claim that it is identical to the view of every individual business and organisation that is a member of the CBI. It is a collective view that has been determined by the council of CBI Scotland, which, in the main, is elected by the members."

During later questioning it became clear that one of the members of the CBI, Tony Banks of Balhousie Care home group, a business based in Perth, had already expressed his view that the body had not consulted him on his views on independence and he did not know any members who had been asked. Mr Banks is one of the founders of Business for Scotland which supports independence.

The BBC has reported today that Select a body which represents 15,000 electrical contractors has questioned the CBI over the move, claiming that they do not reflect the views of the electricians' body.

[Business for Scotland](#) which has around 1700 members claims the CBI move as a victory for them. They say that they applied pressure on the business organisation which has resulted in the Electoral Commission registration. Business for Scotland state that the CBI ought to have remained neutral in their view.

In 2012 Iain McMillan was forced to change his statement saying that the CBI wanted an early date for the referendum.

Some of the firms involved publicly questioned what he had said apparently on behalf of the membership.

Scottish Enterprise have also resigned their membership of the business organisation. A spokesman said:- "In light of CBI Scotland's decision to register with the Electoral Commission and take a political stance, Scottish Enterprise have had no choice but to immediately resign from the membership which we have enjoyed for many years. We have made this decision as we must remain politically neutral at all times."

The Edinburgh Reporter rounds up the variety of views we find across all media as often as we can.

This may be a daily article if there is a lot of chat about

the independence referendum, or less frequently if we have too much else to do. If you would like to write about your views on independence then please feel free to submit your article using the Submit your Story feature [here](#). The Edinburgh Reporter does not have a stance on the independence question, but hopes to help you make your mind up about the vote on 18 September 2014 by providing as much unbiased coverage as possible.

There are two main websites where you can obtain further information:-

Yes Scotland can be found [here](#)

Better Together has a website [here](#)