



Australian Nuclear Association

PO Box 472, Engadine, NSW 2233, Australia

ABN 70 788 504 911

*Member of the Pacific Nuclear Council
Member of the International Nuclear Societies Council
Affiliate Member of the World Nuclear Association
Member, Science & Technology Australia*

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

Inquiry into: Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the French Republic Concerning the Reprocessing in France of Australian Irradiated Nuclear Fuel Elements

30/01/2018

The Australian Nuclear Association is an independent incorporated scientific institution with members drawn from the professions, business, government and universities who have a commitment to nuclear science and engineering. Many of our members are professional scientists and engineers with considerable experience and expertise in nuclear topics.

The Australian Nuclear Association strongly supports the responsible handling, reprocessing and disposal of nuclear waste. Much of the irradiated nuclear fuel elements generated in Australia was produced from the safe operation of the MOATA, HIFAR and OPAL research reactors. Although the amount of radioactive waste generated has been small relative to large nuclear power plants, care and thought must be taken in its secure disposal to ensure that public safety is maintained and non-proliferation risks are minimised.

Australia, working through its agencies ARPANSA, ASNO and ANSTO has already established a strong history for the safe handling radioactive waste. Spent fuel from Australia had been regularly shipped to the UK, France and the USA between 1963-2009 and Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) was safely returned from France to Australia for the first time in 2015.

Renewing the agreement with France concerning the reprocessing in France of Australian irradiated nuclear fuel elements is vital to the continued operation of the OPAL reactor which provides a reliable supply of essential medical radioisotopes and a neutron source for industrial and scientific research. The operation of the OPAL reactor maintains Australian expertise in the safe and successful operation of a research reactor.

The Australian Nuclear Association strongly recommends the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the French Republic Concerning the Reprocessing in France of Australian Irradiated Nuclear Fuel Elements be ratified.

30 January 2018