

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2017 - 2018 Budget Estimates
31 May – 1 June 2017

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: National Measurement Institute move to ANSTO

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Carr

QUESTION No.: BI-90

1. Please elaborate on some of the NMI's physics, chemistry and biology activities that align with the work undertaken at ANSTO. Provide examples.

ANSWER

NMI and ANSTO both maintain national measurement standards, measurement capability and measurement services and represent Australia under the Metre Convention.

NMI authorises ANSTO under section 8 of the National Measurement Act to maintain Australian standards of ionising radiation on behalf of the Chief Metrologist, specifically for activity of radionuclides (the Becquerel). ANSTO represents Australia at the international Consultative Committee for Ionizing Radiation established under the Metre Convention.

In chemical and biological metrology, NMI and ANSTO have complementary capabilities including isotope dilution analysis and neutron activation analysis, and liaise to keep informed of each other's capabilities and related services. In this field, NMI and ANSTO jointly represent Australia at the Consultative Committee for Quantity of Matter.

NMI and ANSTO both work to promote best practice in measurement. For example, NMI and ANSTO have jointly run a proficiency testing program for neutron activation analysis to improve the reliability of this technique in regional laboratories, and both develop and market certified reference materials, which are quality control tools commonly used in laboratories.

More generally, both NMI and ANSTO see opportunity in combining their complementary capabilities, particularly in the environmental and clinical areas. Both organisations also provide specialist analyses for the Australian Federal Police and Australian Border Force. A combined organisation would also provide a broader range of integrated opportunities and career paths for science graduates, making the organisation a more attractive employer.