

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Additional Budget Senate Estimates

10 February 2010

Question: AR6
Topic: Radioactive Waste
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Senator Minchin asked:

Senator MINCHIN—Could you confirm that the policy of the Howard government latterly was that only commonwealth waste would go to the national repository because of the lack of cooperation of the states and that they would have to build their own repositories? has that policy persisted? is it the policy currently that this new repository will only take commonwealth generated waste?

Mr Davoren—Once again, that is a matter for the minister's announcement. But I think he is on record as saying that he favours a national approach.

Senator MINCHIN—You think he is on record as saying he favours a national approach.

Mr Davoren—That is right.

Senator MINCHIN—Meaning?

Mr Davoren—A national facility.

Senator MINCHIN—You think he thinks that waste from all the state should be able to go to the national repository.

Mr Pierce—We might take that on notice, just to be sure.

Senator MINCHIN—I am happy for you to do that, but I would like that clarified.

Answer:

The policy of the former Howard Government was that only radioactive wastes produced by Australian Government agencies would be managed at a Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility; States and Territories would be responsible for the management of the radioactive wastes produced within their jurisdictions.

When responding to questions on this matter, the Minister for Resources and Energy has indicated that he was considering an appropriate way forward to achieve a holistic, national approach to radioactive waste management (e.g. as reported in the Northern Territory News on 30 May 2008).