

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
31 May 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION

TOPIC: OPAL Reactor

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 31 May 2010, E14)

QUESTION No.: BI-6

Senator HEFFERNAN—The cause of the leak of the light water into the heavy water was welding that destroyed a seal; correct?

Dr Paterson—No. It was a defect caused by a phenomenon called delayed hydride cracking, which resulted in cracks opening up in the weld itself.

Senator HEFFERNAN—It was an adventurous weld. It was a weld that was taken as a precaution but it was not technically the right thing to do.

Dr Paterson—I think all of the design reviews showed that the welding was indeed the correct procedure.

Senator HEFFERNAN—Did they X-ray it when they did it?

Dr Paterson—They did post welding inspections.

Senator HEFFERNAN—Did they X-ray it as soon as they had finished it? You may know that if you are doing a gas pipeline you X-ray every weld as you do it.

Dr Paterson—I would be very happy to brief you in detail on these matters and the background to them, but I am not certain I can explain all the details of the processes.

Senator HEFFERNAN—I will put all the questions of a technical nature on notice.

Dr Paterson—Thank you. We will take them on notice.

ANSWER

Refer to BI-7.