

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
28 and 29 May 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION (ANSTO)

TOPIC: Spent Fuel Waste – communication and cost

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, Monday 28 May 2012, page 5)

QUESTION No.: BI-1

Senator MASON: Good. Over the past 50 years, how much low- and intermediate-level waste has been accumulated by ANSTO in total?

Dr Paterson: Over the 50 years we currently hold 427 cubic metres of intermediate waste and 1710 cubic metres of low-level waste.

Senator MASON: It is about 4,000 if you add it together. Is that right?

Dr Paterson: No; it is less than that. It is about 2,100.

Senator MASON: Do you think that perhaps ANSTO could do a better job communicating some of these base facts? I ask because recently you seem to be conducting a public awareness, or perhaps PR, campaign. How much is that costing?

Dr Paterson: I will go to the first question, which is whether ANSTO should be doing a better job communicating. We regularly communicate about the activities in relation to ANSTO's broad mandate. Included in that, of course, is the management of waste. The particular communication that is taking place at the moment is related to the start of a process of seeking a licence for the return of the spent fuel waste from France. It is an appropriate time to start that process. I will take the matter of what that process is costing on notice.

ANSWER

As at 30 June 2012, ANSTO had spent \$61,463 (GST inclusive) to enable consideration of ANSTO's plans by the community and all interested Australians.

ANSTO provides access to detailed information on its return of waste proposal through a number of communications channels including:

- A dedicated website managingnuclearwaste.gov.au which was produced to provide specific information in plain English about this proposal; and
- A public information line to enable the public to speak directly to someone with any questions about this proposal.