

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: ANSTO
Output Group: ANSTO

DEST Question No. E676_05

Senator Nettle provided in writing.

Question:

Can you provide details of all past & present contractual arrangements between Silex Systems Ltd & ANSTO?

Answer:

ANSTO has provided the following response.

Silex Systems Ltd

In 1990, Australian Nuclear Enterprises (ANE, which subsequently changed its name to Silex Systems Ltd) engaged ANSTO as a consultant to investigate and report upon a proof of concept of Laser Isotope Separation developed by ANE. Further contracts on similar lines were entered into in 1992 and 1993. As a result of the investigations undertaken under those contracts, ANE decided to further develop their research program. To that end, a series of agreements was entered into in 1994.

The principal agreements entered into at that time were entitled a Project Agreement, a Licence Agreement and a Hiring Agreement. Those agreements between ANSTO and ANE covered lease of laboratory space, the use of some ANSTO equipment and the secondment of Dr Horst Struve, who had been Project manager of ANSTO's laser enrichment and development project. They were accompanied by a Guarantee and Indemnity and a Deed of Acknowledgment. The former provided a guarantor to ensure that ANE's obligations under the principal agreement were carried out; the Deed of Acknowledgment recorded that in entering into the principal agreements, ANE and its guarantor did not rely, in a legal sense, upon previous work undertaken by ANSTO or upon any future assistance to ANE from ANSTO or the Commonwealth Government.

The major changes to the principal agreements came in early 1998, when the equipment previously leased to Silex Systems Ltd was sold to them, and Dr Struve retired from ANSTO and became an employee of Silex. The amount of laboratory and office space leased by Silex has also increased somewhat over the years. Other changes to the Agreements have related to increases in rentals and utility costs, provision of safety and security services and other minor matters.

ANSTO has also performed, on a commercial basis, a number of one-off jobs related to engineering support (e.g. installation of air conditioning and ventilation systems), security support (e.g. installation of security devices) and safety analysis.