

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3.2 – Assistance for science collaboration and innovation

DEST Question No. E143_04

Senator Carr tabled on 4 June 2003

Question:

- a) The Minister has committed himself to full consultation with the community. Consequently, will you provide the short list of sites that the Minister is considering to store intermediate-level radioactive waste?
- b) The Department has indicated that a preferred site decision is expected 'in a couple of months'. When will potentially affected communities be made aware of that fact? When will genuine community consultation commence?
- c) Has a budgetary allocation been made for this consultation?
- d) Is any region or site in the Northern Territory being considered as a site for this store?

Answer:

National store

- a) The National Store Advisory Committee, a group of experts advising the Government on site selection for the national store, has provided advice to the Minister for Science on potentially suitable sites for the facility on Commonwealth land. The Minister will announce a short-list of possible sites for further investigation in the next few months.
- b) Following the public release of the short-list of sites for further investigation for the national store, which is expected in the next few months, there will be consultation with relevant communities and stakeholders.
- c) The budgetary allocation made in 2002-03 for three years for "Australia's radioactive waste management strategy" covers all aspects of the national store project and includes provision for community consultation as part of the process for further investigation of short-listed sites.
- d) A number of states and territories, except South Australia, are under consideration for the national store. In May this year the Minister for Science ruled out siting the national store in South Australia as no sites in the state were identified as being highly suitable for the facility. He further indicated that no other states or territories were being ruled in or out at this stage.