

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3.2 – Assistance for science collaboration and innovation.

DEST Question No. E119_06

Senator Carr asked on 1 June 2005, EWRE Hansard page 88.

Question:

I am saying though, that a decision was made, I think in the middle of last year, by the Prime Minister to change the policy, and it was announced last year. I would like to know what you have done to implement that change in policy since the middle of last year, and I would like it to be in detail. I would like to know: what progress has been made towards the establishment of a selection panel; what progress has been made on the identification of criteria for site selection; and whether or not there has been work done on the constitutional powers that the Commonwealth has at its disposal to impose such a policy, given that so many states have now said that they do not wish to have materials moved across their borders. These are all legitimate matters for a Senate Estimates Committee.

Answer:

Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility

Site selection criteria for a near-surface repository for low level waste, should this option be pursued by the Government as part of the Facility, will be those contained in the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Code of practice for the near-surface disposal of radioactive waste in Australia* and the International Atomic Energy Agency's Safety Standards Series No. WS-R-1 *Near Surface Disposal of Radioactive Waste*.

Site selection criteria for a storage facility for intermediate level waste will have regard to the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency's *Draft Criteria for the Siting of Controlled Facilities*.

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) has provided advice to the Government on the legal implications of state and territory legislation purporting to prohibit the transport of radioactive waste and on potentially suitable sites for the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

DEST has also undertaken work in relation to the composition of an expert scientific committee with a view to providing advice to the Minister.