

## 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. E128\_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

Has the Department investigated if Commonwealth legislation could be introduced to overrule this? In terms of policy options, would it be possible to establish onshore location for the waste store and repository in these states? Has the Department investigated if Commonwealth legislation could be introduced to overrule state prohibitions on waste storage sites?

The following response was given last time by DEST:

**Senator CARR**—*It would have to be geologically stable. How many sites offshore from Australia meet those criteria?*

**Mr Walters**—*This is work still in progress and it is forming the nature of policy advice to the minister, so we do not feel it would be appropriate to go into any more detail at this stage.*

**Senator CARR**—*Mr Walters, I have asked you for a straight policy response to this committee, not advice to the minister. I have not asked you about your advice to the minister. I would like to know how many islands there are offshore that meet this criteria.*

**Mr Walters**—*You are asking a question about an assessment process which is intended to provide cabinet-in-confidence advice, and that process is still in progress. So it is not possible to give you an answer. (EWRE, p. 63, 16 February 2005)*

Please re-answer the question. If still cabinet-in-confidence, why the delay in the assessment process?

#### Answer:

##### *Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility*

The Department of Education, Science and Training has provided advice to the Australian Government on the legal implications of state and territory legislation relating to the transport and storage of radioactive waste.

On 15 July 2005 the Minister for Education, Science and Training announced that three sites in the Northern Territory had been identified for detailed consideration of their suitability as the site for the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility.