

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

AGENCY: Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

DEST Question No. E380_04

Senator Carr asked on 6 November 2003

Question:

ANSTO's 1999-2000 Annual Report stated:

"Significant progress was made in developing business opportunities for ANSTO's synroc technology. A subsidiary company, ANSTO Inc, was formed in the United States to develop strategic alliances with major engineering and technology organisations involved in radioactive waste management projects."

I take it that those business opportunities have now evaporated. Is that correct?

Answer:

ANSTO has provided the following response

Yes. The specific business opportunities at that time involved the immobilisation of excess weapons-grade plutonium. Following the change in US administration in 2000, the new administration decided that it would not, at least in the foreseeable future, immobilise its surplus plutonium. Rather, it would seek to incorporate that plutonium in MOX fuel. Consequently, this project was put on hold and eventually cancelled in January 2002. Since then, other opportunities have been pursued which do not require the specific business arrangements that were necessary for participation in the plutonium immobilisation project.