

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. E383_04

Senator Carr asked on 6 November 2003:

Question:

What are the current prospects for these applications?

Answer:

ANSTO has provided the following response:

In relation to external customers, over the last three years, our strategy has been to seek opportunities to exploit our expertise in the development of waste forms and processing technologies to address specific waste problems. Customers with whom we have had discussions for more than 10 years have been convinced to move away from loose "research collaborations" to contracting us for particular tasks. We are currently involved in a number of projects including:

- construction of a demonstration facility for the immobilisation of plutonium containing residues in an ANSTO-developed glass-ceramic. In addition to licensing IP, ANSTO is contracted to provide expertise in the design and implementation of this facility.
- evaluation of options for immobilisation of multiply-recycled plutonium.
- establishment of a facility in Russia to demonstrate the commercial feasibility of immobilisation of high level wastes in ceramic-type matrices. This will include the supply of equipment for front end processing, integration with Russian melting technology and wastefrom optimisation. As with the plutonium residues project, ANSTO will also participate in the eventual commercial exploitation of the technology developed and demonstrated.

After consideration of a number of options, ANSTO itself has recently committed to the construction of the first stage of a mini-synroc plant for immobilising our legacy intermediate-level waste.