

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3. 2 - Assistance for science collaboration and innovation

DEST Question Number E359_05

Senator Ludwig provided in writing:

Question:

- a. What is the current status of the National Institute of Forensic Scientists Explosive Precursor Project?
- b. When did this project start and when will it finish?
- c. Who is in charge of this project?
- d. Has this project produced a report?
- e. Has DEST commenced funding of phase II of this project?

Answer:

National Institute of Forensic Scientists Explosive Precursor Project

- a. DEST is providing funding for a project titled "Phase 2 of the 'Improved Monitoring and Detection Capabilities to Minimise the Potential Criminal Use of Explosives in Australia' Pilot Project" under an agreement with the National Institute of Forensic Science (NIFS). Step 1 of the project, "Assessing the current range of technologies that may have application for the field detection of explosive residues both pre- and post-detonation", has been completed. The second step of the project, "Evaluating existing detection technologies and, where appropriate, develop and validate new technologies," is well advanced and the report on it is scheduled to be delivered in March 2005.
- b. The project started in December 2003 and is scheduled to finish in March 2005, with the final report submitted in April 2005.
- c. The Director of the NIFS, Dr Tony Raymond, is in charge of the project. A steering committee including representatives of the Australian Federal Police, Attorney-General's Department and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet oversees the project.
- d. A preliminary report on step 1 of the project was provided to DEST in June 2004. The final report on step 1 was provided in August 2004.
- e. The project funded by DEST is termed 'Phase II' of the NIFS Pilot Project. Phase I was funded by the Attorney-General's Department. DEST has provided all agreed funding to NIFS for the Phase II project.