

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3.2 – Assistance for science collaboration and innovation

DEST Question No. E468_06

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

Question:

Was there a mechanism by which the Woomera facility could be upgraded to take intermediate waste? If so what was that?

Answer:

Radioactive Waste Management

The facility proposed for Site 40a near Woomera was a near-surface disposal facility. As near-surface disposal is not considered an appropriate method for managing long-lived intermediate level radioactive waste, the proposed facility could not be upgraded to allow for disposal of that type of waste.

However, there is no technical reason why a store for long-lived intermediate level waste could not have been constructed at the same site. Regulatory approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* would have been needed to enable a store for long-lived intermediate level waste to be established at that site.

It should be noted that it was Australian Government policy at the time that such a store not be collocated with the near-surface repository.