

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 3

**Output Group:** 3.2 – Assistance for collaboration and innovation

#### **DEST Question No. E549\_07**

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

According to an answer provided by The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) in answer to Senate estimates questions ARPANSA says Australia currently exports roughly 11,000 tons of uranium and that if it were all enriched it would produce 1000 tons of exportable enriched uranium and 90% or 10,000 tons would be depleted uranium waste.

It further states "The shallow ground burial facilities currently proposed in Australia are intended for the disposal of smaller quantities than this. Disposal of waste from a uranium enrichment facility would require a disposal facility of a different type than those that have been proposed to date. (ARPANSA Senate estimates answer EO6-259)

Why wouldn't the proposed dump be suitable and what sort of facility might be needed?

#### **Answer:**

*Depleted uranium*

The statement by ARPANSA is correct in that the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility is not intended for disposal of large volumes of depleted uranium.

The Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility will be designed and constructed to manage relatively small volumes of low and short lived intermediate level radioactive waste generated by historical and current Australian Government activities. As these activities do not involve uranium enrichment, the facility will not be designed to accept large volumes of depleted uranium. (The sources of uranium in the Commonwealth waste inventory are contaminated soils owned by CSIRO and small amounts in alpha sources owned by ANSTO, CSIRO and Defence.)