

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Department of Defence answers to questions on notice

Budget estimates 2003–2004; June 2003

Mulwala environmental remediation

QUESTION W26—INITIAL RESPONSE

SENATOR: Evans

HANSARD: Written question

- a) What has happened to the \$63 million Mulwala environmental remediation project? When was this project first announced?
- b) What was the original schedule for this project? What is the current schedule? What is the explanation for the delay?
- c) Given that funding was approved in the 2001–02 budget statements, why was this project not mentioned in either the 2002–03 or 2003–04 PBS?
- d) How much has actually been spent on this project to date?
- e) When will the project start?

RESPONSE

- a) The project funding of \$63m is included in the capital facilities forward estimates in table 3.10 of the *Portfolio Budget Statements 2003–04* (page 133). The project was announced in the 2001–02 budget.
- b) There has been no delay. The schedule was dependent on the outcome of a range of environmental studies and the timing for the modernisation of the facility. The schedule needs to be coordinated with the modernisation of the facility as much of the contamination lies under the existing plant. It is expected that full-scale remediation will occur upon demolition of the current buildings, which is scheduled to commence in 2007–08.
- c) The project was not mentioned in either the 2002–03 or 2003–04 portfolio budget statements as no project expenditure was planned for these years.
- d) None of the \$63m allocated to the Mulwala environmental remediation project has been spent to date. However, since 1999, approximately \$12.6m has been committed towards implementing safety measures, pollution reduction initiatives and some small-scale remediation as part of a range of interim safety and environmental related initiatives announced by the Prime Minister on 17 December 2000.
- e) The project is currently planned to commence on the completion of a range of environmental studies. The bulk of the remediation works will coincide with the demolition of the buildings (see response to b) above).

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QUESTION W26—UPDATED ANSWER

SENATOR: Evans

HANSARD: Written question

- f) What has happened to the \$63 million Mulwala environmental remediation project? When was this project first announced?
- g) What was the original schedule for this project? What is the current schedule? What is the explanation for the delay?
- h) Given that funding was approved in the 2001–02 budget statements, why was this project not mentioned in either the 2002–03 or 2003–04 PBS?
- i) How much has actually been spent on this project to date?
- j) When will the project start?

RESPONSE

- f) The project funding of \$63m is included in the capital facilities forward estimates in table 3.10 of the *Portfolio Budget Statements 2003–04* (page 133). The project was announced in the 2001–02 budget.
- g) There has been no delay. The schedule was dependent on the outcome of a range of environmental studies and the timing for the modernisation of the facility. The schedule needs to be coordinated with the modernisation of the facility as much of the contamination lies under the existing plant. It is expected that full-scale remediation will occur upon demolition of the current buildings, which is scheduled to commence in 2007–08.
- h) The project was not mentioned in either the 2002–03 or 2003–04 portfolio budget statements as no project expenditure was planned for these years.
- i) None of the \$63m allocated to the Mulwala environmental remediation project has been spent to date. However, approximately \$12.6m has been committed towards implementing safety measures, pollution reduction initiatives and some small-scale remediation as part of a range of interim safety and environmental related initiatives announced by the then Minister for Defence on 21 December 2000.
- j) The project is currently planned to commence on the completion of a range of environmental studies. The bulk of the remediation works will coincide with the demolition of the buildings (see response to b) above).