

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearings 2006-2007, 21-22 May 2007



Question: PM 83

Outcome 1, Output 1.1 (Economic and industry policy)

Topic: Generation IV Nuclear Reactors

Direct on Notice

Senator Siewart asked:

1. Has a commitment to Australia's participation in the Generation IV advanced nuclear reactor research programme been made?
2. If yes, to whom?
3. If no, when and how is such a commitment going to be made?
4. Will any commitment be made public?
5. Has an assessment been undertaken of the costs of Australia's participation in any such research programme?
6. Has an allocation been made for the research programme in the Budget?
7. If so how much and over what time frame?
8. If not, how can the government make such a commitment without foreshadowing the Budget implications?
9. Which agency or Department is responsible for carriage of this matter?
10. Which agency has/or will have carriage of this research development in Australia?
11. If actual dollars are allocated which is the likely programme or agency to fund such research?
12. On what scientific basis is the Prime Minister's announcement based?
13. Has an assessment of this technology been undertaken?
14. Has an assessment of the proliferation risks been undertaken?
15. In what ways is Australia involved in Generation IV reactors?
16. Will the Lucas Heights Research Facility be involved in the development of Generation IV reactors?

Answer:

1. Yes. The previous Prime Minister stated on 28 April 2007 that the Howard Government was "making a firm commitment to Australia's participation in the Generation IV advanced nuclear reactor research programme."
2. See answer to question 1.
3. Not applicable.
4. See answer to question 1.
5. Yes.
6. ANSTO would provide in-kind research contributions managed within its existing appropriation.
7. Not applicable

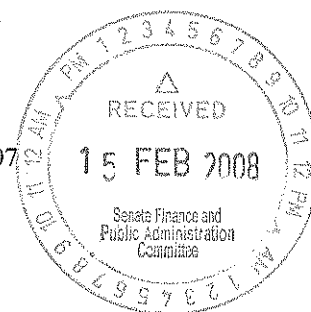
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8. .See response to question 6.
9. ANSTO.
10. ANSTO.
11. ANSTO.
12. The Uranium Mining, Processing and Nuclear Energy Review (UMPNER) Taskforce that was commissioned by the previous Coalition Government and which reported to the previous Coalition Government concluded there are significant opportunities for Australia to leverage its research expertise through various existing international forums for R&D collaboration.
13. Yes. The Generation IV roadmap, developed by the Generation IV International Forum, identified the six advanced reactor designs that are the most promising next generation technologies.
14. Yes, as part of the Generation IV roadmap.
15. Australia has not joined the Generation IV International Forum.
16. See question 10 and response.