



Submission No 43

Inquiry into Australia's Relations with the Republic of Korea; and Developments on the Korean Peninsula

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Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
DEFENCE AND TRADE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE**

FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE

Australia's relationship with the Republic of Korea

**Questions taken on notice by DEST Science Group
31 August 2005**

1) Senator STOTT DESPOJA— . . . Is that relationship with North Korea being evaluated, perhaps in the same way I note that the CSIRO are talking about their relationship with South Korea? I think in the process of reviewing the bilateral science and technology agreement it would be interesting to get a sense of where we are heading with both.

Australia has an intergovernmental science and technology (S&T) Agreement with South Korea . This agreement is not currently being reviewed, having only been signed in 1999.

Australia does not have an intergovernmental S&T relationship with North Korea, and is not considering pursuing one at this time.

2) Mr WAKELIN—In terms of focus or emphasis, is there anything particularly between the two countries concerning the water issue which comes to mind?

CSIRO has provided an extensive submission on the focus of water research, both in its original written submission and then in verbal submissions. DEST does not have any further information on the potential focus of water research, other than to note the importance of research which contributes to Australia's National Research Priorities.

3) Mr DANBY— . . . Do you have any idea how many scientists in North Korea are working on the nuclear program? Do either of you have any knowledge of any other major scientific contributions that are being made in science in North Korea?

Information on the number of scientists in North Korea working on their nuclear programme is not available to DEST. Due to nuclear proliferation concerns, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) has maintained neither bilateral nor multilateral links with its North Korean counterpart since 1992.

We are not aware of any major scientific contributions being made by North Korean scientists. Australia's main science and technology involvement with North Korea in recent times has been in the area of agricultural aid, provided through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) Crawford Fund.