

Economics

National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment (Site Specification, Community Fund and Other Measures) Bill 2020 [Provisions] – 30 June 2020

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: Senate Economics Legislation Committee - 30 June 2020 - Q2 - Facility use - Patrick

Question reference number: 2

Senator/Member: Rex Patrick

Type of question: Spoken

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 31 July 2020

Question:

Senator PATRICK: Thank you. In relation to the use of the prohibited area, back in 2002, when the rebuttal came to the EIS that suggested Site 52 was a good site, Defence listed, basically in a sanitised form, the use of its land over the periods 2002 to 2003 and planned for 2004. Can you please provide this committee with a similar description of how often the facilities have been used over the last 10 years? This goes to the claims back in 2002 that things were going to increase. We're seeing a claim here now that activities are going to increase, so I'd just like some evidence that might ground whether that has actually occurred and whether it is likely to occur.

Air Vice-Marshal Roberts: I believe that we could provide you with a level of understanding about how the range has been used in the past 10 years, and indeed we did that recently in another report that was released—the 2002 report that I think you were referring to. However, there are some classifications associated with that, so if you're just asking for the broad areas—

Senator PATRICK: Yes, broad areas. I'm not after any details that would reveal matters that would harm national security.

Air Vice-Marshal Roberts: And we can take that on notice to provide that to you.

Answer:

Over the past ten years, Woomera Test Range has been used for the test, evaluation and employment of in excess of 500 activities, trials and exercises involving the use or release of multiple weapons and research vehicles. These activities directly support the introduction into service of new capabilities or inform future capability investment decisions for Defence.

During the previous period of 2001-2009, Defence used the WPA for the test, evaluation and employment of in excess of 75 activities, trials and exercises involving the use or release of multiple weapons and research vehicles.