

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 – Q3 - Koolymilka - Brockman

Question reference number: 3

Senator/Member: Slade Brockman

Type of question: Written

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

Question:

1. In respect of the pre-conditioning and re-packaging waste at Koolymilka:
 - a. Please provide a general description of that work? E.g. what has been done and when?
 - b. Who has conducted the work?
 - c. How much did that work cost?
 - d. What further work is planned?

Answer:

- a. No pre-conditioning or re-packaging of radioactive waste has occurred at the Koolymilka Radioactive Waste Storage Facility. In May 1995, 126 drums of radioactive waste from other Government agencies were transferred to Woomera from a site located at St Marys in New South Wales. This radioactive waste underwent conditioning at St Marys prior to transport to Woomera.

The work includes; treating the waste to minimise its volume, then conditioning it by stabilising the waste into a solid, immovable and contained form.

About half the radioactive waste consisted of a mix of 20 and 60 litre drums and were classified as Low Level radioactive waste. They were prepared in a manner that was suitable for disposal, based on the specifications at that time. The larger 60 litre drums were opened and all voids were filled with a cement grout; the smaller 20 litre drums remained ungrouted. Each drum was then individually encapsulated in concrete in the centre of a new 200 litre drum.

The remaining inventory at St Marys was classified as Intermediate Level radioactive waste and was only prepared for storage. The waste was packaged in a form that was reversible, as far as practicable, and placed into a mix of Type A High Integrity Containers and Type B overpacks.

- b. All work was conducted on site at St Marys by specialists from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, in early 1995.
- c. Defence has no knowledge of the costs of the work as the treatment and conditioning was contracted to the Australian Defence Industries Limited and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation.
- d. Until an approved Waste Acceptance Criteria for the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility is available, Defence does not plan to conduct any work on pre-conditioning or packaging of its radioactive waste.