

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 – Q4 - WPA General - Brockman

Question reference number: 2

Senator/Member: Slade Brockman

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 July 2020

Question:

1. During the hearing a defence witness stated that “a NRWMF on non-Commonwealth land within the WPA would remain subject to evacuation during the exclusion periods determined by legislative instrument”. Would this be the case for a NRWMF on Commonwealth land within the WPA?
2. Is there any Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) at Koolymilka? If so, noting APANSA evidence at hearing in relation to it, what is Defence’s plans in relation to storage of this waste into the future, including planned removal and timetables.
3. The ARDU –Range Operation Plans 1990 – 2001 observed:

“In the past ten years Defence has used the WPA for the test, evaluation and employment of in excess of 600 individual weapons and research vehicles”

Please provide a similar high level description of activities for the period up to 2010 and up to 2020.
4. What is the planed commercial activity for the WPA?
5. It is understood that “targets and attack directions used at Woomera are specifically selected to ensure correct weapons performance and operation and to also ensure satisfactory tracking of weapons and launch aircraft”. Are any airborne assets ever launched from the range head near Evett’s Field towards Woomera?
6. Replacing the question taken on notice at the hearing in relation to safety templates (for the purpose of limiting scope), are there any areas within in the WPA east of the longitude of the range head where a safety template has not overlaid the areas since Woomera Prohibited Area Rule 2014 came into effect.

- a. If so, please indicate those areas (Please also note the answer to Senate QON 1127 which states that standing permission for access to the Olympic Dam Highway and the Woomera Village Standing has never been suspended (since the rules came into place))
7. Noting the standing permission for access to the WPA has never been suspended for Lake Cadibarrowirracanna road (since the rules came into place), what is the closest point of approach (distance and position) a safety template has come to this road.
8. Noting the standing permission for access to the WPA has never been suspended for William Creek Road (since the rules came into force), what is the closest point (distance and position) a safety template has come to intersecting this road.

Answer:

1. Yes. A NRWMF on Commonwealth land would remain subject to evacuation during exclusion periods determined by legislative instrument.
2. No, there is no any Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material at Koolymilka.
3. For the period 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.

For the period 2010-2020, Defence has used the WPA for the test, evaluation and employment of in excess of 500 activities, trials and exercises involving the use of release of multiple weapons and research vehicles.

4. Planned commercial activity for the WPA is a question for South Australian Government.
5. Yes.
6. Yes, there are areas within the WPA east of the longitude of the range head where a safety template has not been overlaid since Woomera Prohibited Area Rule 2014 came into effect.

The attached diagram shows overlay of the cumulative safety templates since Woomera Prohibited Area Rule 2014 came into effect. The vertical blue line indicates the longitude of range head. Thus the land to the east of this line that is not coloured red, are the areas relevant to this question.

Noting that whilst templates have not extended to those areas they may in the future for new capability testing.

7. The closest point is approximately 21km south of this road as indicated on the attached diagram.
8. The closest point is approximately 14km south of this road as indicated on the attached diagram.



