

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Estimates

28 May 2012

Question: BR10

Topic: Passage of Radioactive Waste Legislation - Materials to Stakeholders

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Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM: Can you tell me what your forward program of work is from here? We heard this morning that the waste, if it returns, if we are not renegotiating the shipments, will be parked temporarily in Sydney. What does that do for your work plan from here?

Ms Constable: It is a very strong work plan. We have been working on a number of issues at the moment the Federal Court matter; preliminary stakeholders updates on the passage of legislation; the review of international best practice for radioactive waste management facilities and waste management practices; and ongoing management in relation to Maralinga. There is a whole range of areas. We are also participating in international working groups. Last week there was a meeting of the joint convention on the safety of spent fuel management and on the safety of radioactive waste management. That was held in Vienna. I am pleased to say that the approach that Australia is taking on regulation is indeed in line with international best practice. That was confirmed in that meeting.

Senator LUDLAM: Even the bit about informed consent?

Ms Constable: Informed consent?

Senator LUDLAM: Informed consent. Was that in line with what has been discussed in Vienna? Free prior and informed consent?

Ms Constable: Yes, it was.

Senator LUDLAM: You must be doing very well. I am not sure exactly how you phrased it the stakeholder pack or some kind of stakeholder briefing. How did you put that?

Ms Constable: We have been having preliminary stakeholder updates on the passage of the legislation.

Senator LUDLAM: Got it. Could you provide us with one of those, if you could contemplate this committee as a stakeholder? Can you provide us with the materials that you are providing to other stakeholders?

Answer

Since its enactment in April 2012, the Department has responded to enquiries about the *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012*. Stakeholder engagement has been in the form of correspondence outlining the status of the legislation rather than the provision of a 'stakeholder pack' of information. The Department's information on radioactive waste management is publicly available at: http://www.ret.gov.au/resources/radioactive_waste/Pages/RadioactiveWasteManagement.aspx.

This includes information on: the *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012* with links to the Act; quantities and categories of radioactive waste in Australia; radiation safety including transport; and links including to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.