

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14  
3 and 4 June 2013

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION (ANSTO)

**TOPIC:** Deeds with 'gag orders'

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 3 June 2013, page 9,)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-8

**Senator LUDLAM:** Again, these next couple of questions may need to be taken on notice because they are a little technical. Could you indicate how many disputes with employees over the last five years have resulted in deeds with gag orders being signed to prevent comment to the press and that sort of thing?

**Dr Paterson:** It is a highly technical question because we do not use language like 'gag orders' in deeds that we complete.

**Senator LUDLAM:** What sort of language do you use?

**Dr Paterson:** We sometimes complete deeds as a matter of bringing to an end discussions in relation to disputes we have with employees, but I do not think that we intend to specifically gag people. It is just a matter of course that, when you have finished a matter, it should be finished and not of a continuing nature.

**Senator LUDLAM:** How many of those sorts of deed have been signed?

**Dr Paterson:** I will take it on notice and reply to you.

**ANSWER**

ANSTO operates in an area in which assets, research and information are of significant economic and security value to Australia. Due to the sensitive nature of some of such work we and other agencies undertake, Deeds of Release can be used as part of cessation of employment terms. In the past 5 years, ANSTO has signed 6 Deeds of Release with former employees. ANSTO uses Deeds of Release to record the legal settlement between the employee and employer and to protect both parties from further legal action or claim to monies regarding the resolved issues. There is also a clause reminding the former employee of the ongoing obligation to not disclose confidential information pertaining to the organisation.