

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2014 – 2015, 25 February 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000156

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** Maralinga

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Wright, Penny

**Question:**

1. Who is responsible for testing of radiation levels and other factors impacting human safety around the former nuclear test site at Maralinga, and specifically Maralinga Village?
2. Who is responsible more generally for radiation protection and nuclear safety in the area?
3. What testing is currently being conducted and by whom, and how are the results reported?
4. What are the current safety guidelines in the context of radiation and nuclear safety in Maralinga and Maralinga Village?
5. How are these guidelines monitored and enforced?

**Answer:**

1. In November 2009 the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments and Maralinga Tjarutja signed the Maralinga Nuclear Test Site Handback Deed, which gave effect to the return of the test site to traditional owners. Under the Handback Deed the Commonwealth Government is committed to periodic radiological monitoring of the test sites to confirm the safety of the land, and to conduct any maintenance of rehabilitation works that is required. Details of the monitoring program are set out in the Maralinga Land and Environment Management Plan, a subsidiary document to the Handback Deed.
2. The Maralinga Tjarutja is required to comply with the Maralinga Land and Environment Management Plan. The South Australian Environment Protection Authority (SAEPA) regulates the Maralinga site.

3. Under the Maralinga Land and Environment Management Plan, “radiation testing” is undertaken by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA). ARPANSA conducts, at regular intervals, field monitoring of radiation levels and radiation health impact assessments. All results are reported to the Department of Industry and Science and made available to stakeholders described in the Maralinga Land and Environment Management Plan. Dose assessments are published online by ARPANSA.
4. The safety guidelines, which are based on international best practice, and any additional radiation or safety requirement deemed necessary by the SAEPA, are detailed in the Maralinga Land and Environment Management Plan.
5. The SAEPA, as the regulator, is responsible for ensuring that the radiation or safety requirements are met. As required by the Handback Deed, the Maralinga Land and Environmental Management Committee oversees compliance with the terms of the Handback Deed, the Maralinga Land and Environment Management Plan and requirements of the SAEPA.