

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2014-15
2-3 JUNE 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: Medical Procedures Involving Radioactive or Nuclear Material

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 3 June 2014, page 39)

QUESTION No.: BI-65

CHAIR: So one in three people will receive some treatment relying on radioactive or nuclear material.

Mr Sheldrick: That is my understanding, yes.

CHAIR: What percentage of medical procedures would involve the use of those materials?

Mr Sheldrick: Generally in Australia, as an advanced society, we estimate that about one-third of the procedures used in our hospitals—paediatric work, cardiological work and so on—rely on radiation or some form of nuclear medicine.

CHAIR: So one-third again. You mentioned Australia as a developed country; is that particularly high for developed countries or is it fairly standard across the board?

Mr Sheldrick: I would estimate that it is fairly consistent with advanced countries like Australia where there is an expectation and an ability to be able to deliver fairly advanced medicine. I would say that it is average.

Senator DI NATALE: Can I ask for some evidence on that one-third figure.

Mr Sheldrick: I would have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) states that “Today, about one-third of all procedures used in modern hospitals involve radiation or radioactivity. These procedures are safe, effective and don't require anaesthetic. They are useful in a broad spectrum of medical specialties, from pediatrics to cardiology to psychiatry.”

www.ansto.gov.au/NuclearFacts/BenefitsofNuclearScience/HumanHealth/index.htm.

The American Nuclear Society has also stated that about one-third of all procedures used in modern hospitals involve radiation or radioactivity – see www.ans.org/pi/matters/isotopes/medical.