

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry and Science Portfolio  
2015-16 Budget Estimates  
3 and 4 June 2015

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

**TOPIC:** National Radioactive Waste Management Facility

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 4 June 2015, page 8)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-26

**Senator Ronaldson:** To clarify, for the sake of completeness for Senator Ketter in relation to the EDI: it is a tax offset as opposed to a government grant program. So in some respects Treasury might not have that information until well after the end of the financial year for the tax offset. I do not know whether it had been properly explained or whether I have explained it properly. It is a tax offset, not a program in the normally accepted sense of the word.

**Senator KETTER:** When will the site assessment process conclude?

**Mr Sheldrick:** The site assessment process is multifaceted. There is the initial site assessment, which we are doing now on the nominations that were received. We have allowed two months to conduct that assessment, at which time the government will need to make a decision on which sites to progress with. Then there will be another period of site assessment where some more detailed work will be conducted on which site to take forward at that point—that sort of middle of 2016 time when a preferred site will be identified. Even at that time, though, work is required on the site around the approval process under the EPBC Act and ARPANSA to get to the actual site selection, which is, under the act, where the site is selected and that is a site on which constructions can occur. That time period is more than the next two months; it is over the next two or three years, possibly.

**Senator KETTER:** Who is the final decision maker on selecting the site? Is it the minister? Would it require cabinet approval under the act?

**Senator Ronaldson:** That process is a long way off. It is not a matter for the officer to answer; it is for me. I assume it would be cabinet but I do not know that.

**Senator KETTER:** Could you take that—

**Senator Ronaldson:** I will take that on notice. Again, I ask anyone who is listening to go to [radioactivewaste.gov.au](http://radioactivewaste.gov.au). It is very comprehensive. It is constantly updated, from my understanding. It is a very significant resource. I encourage those who are listening or will be reading this, of whom I am sure there will be tens of thousands, to go to the website.

**ANSWER**

Under the provisions of Part 4 of the *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012*, the Minister for Industry and Science is responsible for selecting the site for the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility. This selection will of course include advice provided by the department through the nomination process and comprehensive consultation throughout with colleagues and other key stakeholders.