

ANSTO Opening Statement - Budget Estimates 2017

Thank you chair and committee members.

I would like to advise you of an Australian collaboration being coordinated by ANSTO to address a global health problem and strengthen Australia's regional ties. I am very pleased to advise the Committee that last week a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ANSTO and the Sri Lankan Presidential Taskforce for Prevention of Chronic Kidney Disease, focused on developing a better understanding of chronic kidney disease of unknown aetiology. Following the signing, I was honoured to welcome Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena, and Minister Sinodinos, to ANSTO's Lucas Heights campus to tour our landmark research infrastructure and discuss our partnership further.

I am very passionate about the potential for this partnership. Chronic kidney disease of unknown aetiology, also known as CDKu, is a major public health concern for many countries and is linked to thousands of deaths a year. There is still however a great deal that is not understood about CDKu, and we hope that through this new partnership Australia and Sri Lanka will produce new insights and develop a greater body of knowledge. ANSTO's expertise in nuclear science and technology and our landmark research infrastructure, including the Australian Synchrotron and the Australian Centre for Neutron Scattering, together with our links into the broader Australian research community, will be used to help researchers identify the causes of and potential treatments for this insidious disease, which affects around 100,000 people in developing countries every year.

ANSTO has fully embraced this opportunity for collaboration between Australia and Sri Lanka, having already convened the first meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss the approach towards addressing CKDu through the application of world leading science, research and innovation.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate my invitation to you all to join us at ANSTO's Parliament House Breakfast Event on the 14th of June. The breakfast event will focus on innovation precincts, and lead into a discussion of the proposed ANSTO Innovation Precinct to be located at our Lucas Heights campus in southern Sydney. I hope you can join us.