Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing
26 February 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Petnet

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: AI-4

1. Last estimates you had advised the Committee of your decision to partner up with PETNet to start building a cyclotron to produce the tracers used in PET scans. Could you provide us with an update as to how this partnership is turning out and where the project is at?

2. What is the value of current demand for this product in Australia and how much of that does ANSTO see itself providing?

3. Is there any possibility of expanding into overseas markets?

ANSWER

1. The partnership with Siemens has operated smoothly. The construction of the new PETNet twin cyclotron facility at ANSTO is near completion, with the cyclotrons installed in December 2008. Commercial production of Fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG), used in Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanning, is expected to be fully under way by mid-2009, subject to regulatory approvals.

2. ANSTO's current estimate of the size of the Australian market is of the order of 50,000 patient doses p.a ($20 million p.a.), and patient requirements are expanding at an annual rate of around 20 per cent. Business projections in a rapidly expanding market are hard to quantify, but a reasonable expectation would be to service 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the available market.

3. Fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) has a short half-life (110 minutes). That rapid decay makes it unsuitable for export.