

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2009-10
10 February 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Research Reactor

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 10 February 2010, E40)

QUESTION No.: AI-95

Senator LUDLAM—..... Could you provide us with an update of the operation of the research reactor, which you have sketched out in the annual report. You said that it has operated as scheduled and it is working well. Given its troubled history, can you provide us with a breakdown of days that it was open and closed for the financial year covered by this report? Were there any unscheduled outages and is the reactor now working as designed?

Dr Paterson—We will take that on notice and provide a report on the days it powered, the availability of the reactor and planned and unplanned outages.

Senator LUDLAM—Presumably that will have a bit of detail. Is there anything you want to tell us about or anything that comes to mind? Was there anything unusual in the operation of the reactor during the period covered by this report?

Dr Paterson—There are no events that I would report to this committee now other than the ones we will take on notice.

ANSWER

OPAL Operation in 2008-09 Financial Year	
Number of days operating	222 days
Number of scheduled days of shutdown	96 days*
Number of unscheduled days of shutdown	47 days**
TOTAL:	365

After a successful return to service in May 2008, the OPAL research reactor operated for more than 200 days during the 2008-09 financial year.

This compares favourably with many other research reactors in their early days of operation. Operation continues to improve in the 2009-10 financial year.

*** This figure includes two longer planned shutdowns that were undertaken to address issues identified in the commissioning of the reactor.**

**** A number of shorter unplanned shutdowns occurred due to a variety of issues. Those types of issues are not unexpected for new complex facilities.**