

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
28 and 29 May 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION (ANSTO)

TOPIC: High Level Waste

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, Monday 28 May 2012, page 5)

QUESTION No.: BI-104

Senator MASON: Dr Paterson, how much high-level radioactive waste has been generated by ANSTO's activities in Australia in the last 50 years?

Dr Paterson: High-level waste is generated in the course of activities, particularly the activities in reactors. The high-level waste generated in the HIFAR reactor is currently being reprocessed in France. All of the high-level waste associated with that reprocessing will remain in France.

Senator MASON: The minister knows my bad habits. Could you just answer the question? How much high-level radioactive waste has been generated by ANSTO and its activities in the past 50 years?

Dr Paterson: My understanding is that when the reprocessed waste has completed its reprocessing in France, we will be advised of the high-level waste that will stay in France. At that time I will be in a position to inform you of the amount of high-level waste that was produced during that period.

ANSWER

ANSTO does not generate high-level radioactive waste.

High level waste is defined in the *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012* as "material which has a thermal energy output of at least 2 kilowatts per cubic metre". It is typically generated from the disposal or reprocessing of used nuclear fuel from nuclear power reactors. Australia does not have such reactors, and therefore has no high level waste.