

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Estimates

3 June 2013

Question: BR5

Topic: Radioactive Waste Facility - Breakdown of Funding over the Next Four Years

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Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM: Some external as well, thank you. Now I am going to jump halfway across the country to Muckaty. There was quite a significant amount in the budget, an additional \$35.7 million over four years, to secure a suitable volunteer site and for initial scoping and design work to establish a regional consultative committee and so on for the national radioactive waste dump. Has the department met with NLC executive members, full council members, TOs or any other NLC representatives regarding the nomination of a second site?

Mr Sheldrick: The department has not specifically met with, I think you said, the Northern Land Council.

Senator LUDLAM: I listed a range of stakeholders, but the key to the question is regarding a second site and who you have met with regarding a second nomination.

Mr Sheldrick: We have not met specifically about an additional nomination. We have had correspondence from the Northern Land Council about their proposal to nominate an additional site.

Senator LUDLAM: Okay. They contacted you, you did not contact them?

Mr Sheldrick: They contacted the minister.

Senator LUDLAM: Could you provide for us the location of that second site, either a map or reasonably precise coordinates of the proposed location?

Mr Sheldrick: We do not have coordinates for the additional site. We understand it is on the station but we do not have any specific details with regard to coordinates.

Senator LUDLAM: So, the Northern Land Council has not provided the government with precise details of a second site?

Mr Sheldrick: That is correct.

Senator LUDLAM: But they have indicated that there may be one and that a nomination could be forthcoming?

Mr Sheldrick: That is correct.

Senator LUDLAM: Could you provide us, again on notice, some indication of how the sum of \$35.7 million over the forward estimates is to be broken down, whether it is all departmental costs or whether some of that includes payments to, for example, traditional owners, or the land council, or overseas trips such as the one that, I believe, just occurred in Spain?

Ms Constable: There are a range of initiatives, which sit both in administered and departmental, across the issues you have raised. We are certainly happy to provide you some estimates broadly.

We cannot give you specifics because a number of consultancies will need to occur over the next few years. That is a matter of procurement.

Senator LUDLAM: Consultancies, because presumably if you after a second site, all the work that Parsons Brinckerhoff et al did is now invalid.

Mr Sheldrick: If an additional site is put forward there will need to be some site characterisation work undertaken.

Senator LUDLAM: Understood. So a rough breakdown would be good with particular regard to payments to traditional owners either through the Northern Land Council or directly for further nominations.

Ms Constable: We are not able to give you figures on that. We do not have a second site nomination at this particular stage.

Senator LUDLAM: So that would not be budgeted for yet?

Ms Constable: That is correct.

Answer:

A total of \$13.7 million (excluding \$0.1 million to the Department of Finance and Deregulation) has been allocated for the National Radioactive Waste Management Project for 2013-14.

\$7.5 million has been allocated in administered funding.

\$6.1 million has been allocated for Departmental expenses.

Funding allocation in 2013-14 will include the following expected activities:

- Site characterisations for any additional volunteer sites;
- Establishment of a Regional Consultative Committee; and
- Development of First Stage Business Case.

A further \$22 million has been allocated between 2014-15 and 2016-17.

None of this funding is capital expenditure for a construction phase of the project.

No arrangements have been entered into for a potential package of benefits for an additional site nomination.