

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

DEST Question No. E919_04

Senator Carr provided in writing

Question:

On 29 November 1999 Mr John Bellinger of ASNO informed the US Nuclear regulatory committee that ASNO had been informed by SILEX of the impending delivery of 15kg of UF6. US Nuclear Regulatory Commission export licence XSNM3113 and ASNO license number PN144 are referred.

What was ANSTO's role in the importation of radioactive materials and other equipment for use by SILEX SYSTEMS LTD?

The 2002/03 ASNO Annual Report states that "to assist with reporting for IAEA, a separate 'material balance area' was created this year for Silex Systems Ltd laboratories."

Prior to this, did ANSTO charge Silex Systems Ltd for the storage of radioactive materials held on their behalf?

Answer:

ANSTO has provided the following response:

ANSTO has played no role in the importation of radioactive materials and other equipment for use by Silex Systems Ltd. Nor has it stored radioactive materials on Silex's behalf, so no question of payment arises. Nuclear material held by Silex was entered into ANSTO's nuclear materials accounts for the purposes of IAEA audit. Silex was too small to constitute a separate facility and so, like the CSIRO facilities located at Lucas Heights, was counted as part of "ASC-, Research laboratories" for IAEA reporting and inspection purposes. ANSTO therefore included the material held by Silex and CSIRO on its accounts so that a consolidated inventory listing for the Material Balance Area (MBA) could be produced for inspections. This was done purely for IAEA reporting purposes, and did not indicate any ownership or control of the material by ANSTO. During 2002-03, ASNO determined in consultation with the IAEA that Silex was a large enough operation to constitute a separate MBA. Material held by Silex was consequently removed from ANSTO's accounts.