

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3

Output Group: 3.2 – Assistance for science collaboration and innovation.

DEST Question No. E137_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

What will happen with the low-level waste at the OPAL reactor when it's up and running in 2006-07? The intermediate waste produced by OPAL will be taken off to US? Will all of OPAL's waste be taken to the US until 2016 or will some of it be part of the future waste repository before 2016?

Answer:

OPAL Radioactive Waste

Low and intermediate level radioactive waste generated by operations of the OPAL research reactor will be managed at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's Lucas Heights facility pending the establishment of the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

Under an agreement with the United States Department of Energy (DOE), spent fuel of US-origin, irradiated in OPAL before 2016, will be sent to the United States. Management of this spent fuel becomes the responsibility of DOE. The spent fuel will not be returned to Australia.