

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: ANSTO

Output Group: ANSTO

DEST Question No. E247_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Is construction of the new reactor still expected to be completed by September 2005? When will cold commissioning of the reactor commence? When will hot commissioning of the reactor commence? If there are delays, please provide details.

Answer:

Construction and commissioning of new reactor

ANSTO has provided the following response:

Completion of the construction of the OPAL reactor is now expected to occur in February 2006, at which time cold commissioning will commence. Hot commissioning of the reactor cannot commence unless and until an operating licence has been issued by ARPANSA. ANSTO hopes that that will occur in time to allow the commencement of hot commissioning in May 2006.

Reasons for the delays were discussed at the Committee's 1 June hearing by Dr Smith (see pages EWRE 42-44 of the Hansard). Briefly, those reasons related to delays in the construction of the reflector vessel and delays caused by what is a very complex and demanding regulatory process.