



Australian Government

Department of Resources,
Energy and Tourism

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11 June 2013

Dr Carl-Magnus Larsson
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency
PO Box 655
MIRANDA NSW 1490

Dear Dr Larsson

RE: Application Numbers A0277 and A0279 – Interim Waste Store (IWS) at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO); and

Application Number A0270 - ANSTO Nuclear Medicine Molybdenum-99 Facility (ANM Mo99).

I refer to the invitation of 7 May 2013 for submissions relating to the proposed siting and construction of an IWS and the proposed siting of a Molybdenum-99 facility at the Lucas Heights Science and Technology Centre in Lucas Heights, New South Wales.

The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (RET) has policy responsibility for the management of the Commonwealth's radioactive waste. As part of this work, RET is implementing the Government's policy to establish a centralised facility for the disposal of low level radioactive waste and the storage of intermediate level waste pending future disposal.

The *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012* provides the ability to site, construct and operate a national radioactive waste management facility subject to environmental and radiation protection regulatory approvals. The national facility will accommodate Australia's current and future waste arising from the medical, research and industrial use of radioactive materials. The national facility will incorporate a repository for the disposal of low level waste and a store for intermediate level waste pending future disposal in accordance with international best practice for the management of radioactive waste and Australia's legal obligations.

The IWS proposal by ANSTO is to allow the interim storage of radioactive waste arising from the overseas reprocessing of spent fuel from Australia's nuclear medicine and research activities pending the commissioning of a national facility. The IWS is an integral step in ensuring that Australia's radioactive waste is managed in accordance with international best practice and our legal obligations. It will provide for the safe and secure management of the returning waste pending the commissioning of a long-term management facility.

The Department understands that the proposal by ANSTO to site the ANM Mo99 facility, should it proceed to operation, will result in the production of additional radioactive waste requiring appropriate management. ANSTO has provided information on potential waste types, categories and quantities to the Department for consideration in the development of a national facility.

The small quantity and nature of the additional waste arising from the ANM Mo99 facility proposal will require no change to the current approach for constructing and operating the national facility. The Department understands that ANSTO will have arrangements in place for the management of this waste prior to the commissioning of the national facility.

It is anticipated that a national facility will be commissioned and ready to accept waste by the end of this decade. Planning work for a national facility has already commenced, with a contract for generic conceptual facility designs awarded to the Spanish radioactive waste management agency ENRESA. This work is scheduled for completion by the end of June 2013.

Additional funding for the national facility project was provided for in the 2013 Budget to secure a suitable volunteer site for the national facility, undertake site characterisation studies, establish a Regional Consultative Committee and develop a business case in accordance with the two stage approval process for Australian Government construction projects.

Should you have any questions in relation to this submission, please contact Mr Nicholas Vazenios, Manager, Radioactive Waste Management Section directly on 02 6243 7179 or at nicholas.vazenios@ret.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Sheldrick

General Manager

Uranium, Taxation and Radioactive Waste Management Branch

Resources Division