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Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

Media statement

24 February 2009

Meeting for Illawarra residents in NSW

A shipment of used nuclear fuel will be sent overseas during the first half of 2009 and may pass through the Illawarra en route to a port.

This will be the ninth shipment of its kind and will be conducted under strict international and national security and safety standards. There have been thousands of such shipments around the world and there has never been an incident of radiation release which has harmed an individual.

Because of expansion works at Port Botany State and Federal authorities have advised that Port Kembla should be considered as an option for shipment.

The management and escort of the convoy from Lucas Heights will involve police and emergency services as well as other regulatory agencies whose approvals have been required.

The 159 used fuel elements in this shipment represent about five years of reactor operations, and during that time around 2.5 million life-saving nuclear medicine treatments were produced. For national security, safety and international contract reasons however, the route, time and date will not be disclosed.

Relevant local councils, all NSW Members of Parliament and the media were notified of the shipment in November 2008. As a publicly-owned agency ANSTO has been as informative as is possible given the security considerations that apply.

Illawarra Public Information Meeting Tuesday 3 March 2009. If residents want to find out more they can attend a public briefing hosted by the South Coast Labor Council at:

- Wollongong Golf Club, Cnr of Corrimal and Bank Street, Wollongong
- Time: 6:00pm, Tuesday 3 March 2009
- For information venue contact: (02) 4222 3111

For media information please call ANSTO Communications Manager, Nadia Levin (02) 9717 3199 or 0400 394 085.