

NUCLEAR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Summary of the meeting held on 3 April 2000

1./2. PRESENT and APOLOGIES

All appointed members were in attendance.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 13 DECEMBER 1999 AND WEB PAGE SUMMARY

Minor amendments were made to the minutes of the previous meeting. Subject to these amendments being made, the Committee accepted the minutes.

The Committee also considered draft Web Summary of the previous meeting. Two minor amendments were suggested and subject to these amendments being made and the amendments suggested for the minutes being reflected in the Web Page summary, where appropriate, the Committee approved the summary for placing on the Web site.

4. KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

ATSB Approach to Systemic Investigations

Dr Rob Lee addressed the Committee on the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) approach to systemic investigations. Dr Lee described the INDICATE program adopted by ATSB. This program is designed to identify potential hazards in civil aviation, investigate the process and identify modifications to the process that would minimise the risk of recurrence of the hazard.

A copy of the full BASI-INDICATE Evaluation Report on which this talk was based may be obtained from the ATSB Web site at <http://www.basi.gov.au/sprog/indeval.htm>.

Discussion on the presentation included:

- applicability of FOI to information collected in investigations;
- that information ATSB collects cannot be used as the basis of legal actions;
- importance of feedback and use of systems such as intranet in dealing with small groups; and
- the importance of a confidential reporting system.

National Radioactive Waste Repository

Dr Caroline Perkins of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) addressed the Committee on the history and current status of the proposed National Radioactive Waste Repository (NRWR). Dr Perkins' talk outlined the process for identifying a site for the proposed Repository, including the consultation process and current stage of progress.

The Committee discussed issues to do with the proposed NRWR and store. The Committee queried the radioactive material capacity of the NRWR. Once the final site was selected, better modeling using "real life" disposal scenarios would be performed for both activity concentration and total site activity. Transport of material to the NRWR would be consistent with the Transport Code in operation at the time of transport and covered by the ARPANSA licensing process.

5. REPORTS

Reports from ARPANSA

Dr Loy summarised three aspects of ARPANSA's activities that had been carried out since the December 1999 meeting of the Committee including updates on:

- Maralinga: ARPANSA's activities in the clean-up of the Atomic Bomb test site at Maralinga are drawing to a close.
- Licensing: Work is continuing on ANSTO's licence application. Public involvement in the process is important and ARPANSA will call for submissions via the Web page.
- Conference on Radioactive Waste Disposal: Dr Loy reported on the **International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management** that he had attended in Spain in March 2000. Three hundred delegates representing regulators, disposal site operators as well as the World Health Organisation attended.

Report from RH&SAC

The Radiation Health & Safety Advisory Council Web site summary document **Summary of the meeting held on 10 December 1999** was tabled for the member's information.

Report of Radiation Health Committee meeting of 21/22 March 2000

The representative of the Radiation Health Committee on the NSC addressed the Committee in relation to the Radiation Health Committee Meeting 21-22 March 2000. There was some discussion regarding the revision of current Codes of Practice and the rebadging of some of these publications. The Committee requested that the template for Radiation Protection Series publications be sent to members for their information.

6. CONSIDERATION OF ARPANSA LICENCE PROCESS

Review of Facility Licence Application Pack

The **Facility Licence Application Pack** was written prior to the ARPANSA legislation and was therefore aimed at existing facilities. A proposal was made that ARPANSA prepare a timetable for review of the document and advise the Committee accordingly.

Review comments on Facility Licence Applications

Review of Public Participation in the Licence Application Process

The Committee queried what controls were in place before a licence is issued. The question of site security was also discussed and there was some concern that ANSTO had not provided all of the information required by ARPANSA at this stage.

ANSTO is a complicated site consisting of some 800 employees. It has 6-7 complex facilities, each of which will require a licence. It was felt that an out-of-session meeting of some members might clarify the public participation aspect of ARPANSA's licensing process and the Chair, the CEO, the member representing the interests of the general public, the member representing a local government area and one other member nominated.

ARPANSA was requested to provide a briefing on the current status of ANSTO safety systems and licensing, and the process of ARPANSA review. This was to be placed at the front of the agenda for the next meeting.

Review comments on the *Guide to the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Licencing Framework*

Mike Allen tabled the document **Comment on draft ARPANSA document**. The CEO indicated that the licence decision process could include testing of the information provided in the licence application by an independent expert. The comments of members were noted.

Time frame for review of ANSTO replacement reactor licensing process

The ARPANSA Regulatory Branch made a presentation for the Committee regarding the timetable for review of the replacement reactor licensing process. In July/August 2000, ANSTO would tender for the replacement reactor. Once an application for a licence was received, ARPANSA would like to make the application available for public comment immediately.

The members queried whether ARPANSA was independent of the application process and at what stage in the process the Safety Assessment Principles (SAP) would apply. ARPANSA involvement would be to oversee the safety analysis and the SAP applicable at the time would apply when ANSTO goes to tender. The licence would in turn be conditional on the replacement reactor meeting the design criteria.

7. HIFAR/ANSTO

Safety case for the HIFAR research reactor

The ARPANSA Regulatory Branch made a presentation to the Committee on the safety case for the HIFAR research reactor. The contents of the former Nuclear Safety Bureau document, **The Authorisation – HIFAR Operation**, included requirements for quality assurance, accreditation of personnel, security, design, operation and maintenance of the reactor, testing and inspection, health and safety, irradiations and experiments and emergency arrangements, were made conditions on ANSTO's authorisation.

The members were requested to notify the Secretariat if they want this issue placed on the agenda at the next meeting.

Results of ANSTO review into criticality safety arrangements

Following the information provided to the Committee at the 13 December 1999 meeting of the NSC on the criticality accident at Tokaimura, Japan, a report was given regarding ANSTO's criticality safety arrangements.

ANSTO only had one process where fluids were used. ANSTO was able to demonstrate that even in the worst case, criticality would not be achieved. Nevertheless, ANSTO had processes in place to audit the concentration in the storage tanks. ARPANSA was satisfied with ANSTO's response.

8. SAFETY ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES FOR CONTROLLED FACILITIES

Report on Working Group meeting held on 10 March 2000 to Review SAP

The Chair of the Working Group addressed the Committee in relation to the meeting of 10 March 2000. The ARPANSA Regulatory Branch expressed some concern that there may have been too much iteration in the review process and that maybe the review by the public and the Working Party could be carried out concurrently.

The process should also be streamlined to ensure that once ARPANSA makes changes to the document in response to the NSC processing the Working Party report, the document would be made available for public comment.

Notwithstanding these suggestions, the Committee felt that the review process should be done properly and that ARPANSA should not be rushed into a decision. Ultimately, the Committee should be confident in the process.

9. PROPOSAL ON THE REVIEW OF THE CRITERIA FOR THE DESIGN OF NUCLEAR INSTALLATION

The ARPANSA Regulatory Branch proposed that the document **Criteria for the design of new controlled facilities and modifications to existing facilities** be next in line for review. This document was essentially a statement of items against which the Regulatory Branch of ARPANSA would assess a licence application and was therefore next after the SAP in the hierarchy of ARPANSA documents.

The proposal to establish a Working Group was put to the Committee and was agreed. Four members nominated and a meeting arranged for mid-May. The Working Party would need the actual document and timelines for review would be established once it had been provided. The Terms of Reference would be similar to those of the SAP Review Working Party.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

Draft Transport Code

The draft **Code of Practice for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material 2000** was tabled for the members' information. The Committee requested that a briefing on progress be provided at the next meeting.

Draft Working Group Procedures

The document **Draft Working Group Procedures** was tabled for the Members information. This document had arisen from a need to establish how Working Groups for all the Committees operate. Members were requested to provide any comments on the document to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Development of National Standards

The document **Proposed MOU with Standards Australia** was tabled for the Members information. The Committee noted this item.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

Dr Lee indicated that his Keynote address (Item 4.1) would be available on CD Rom and on the ATSB Web site for information.

12. CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 7 July 2000 at Miranda.