

Nuclear Safety Committee

an advisory body to the CEO of ARPANSA, established under the ARPANS Act 1998
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Summary of the meeting held on 19 April 2002 Stamford Hotel Sydney

OPENING OF MEETING

The Chair welcomed Members and reminded the Committee that the main purpose of this meeting was:

- to receive a briefing from Dr Loy, CEO of ARPANSA, on his rationale for issuing a licence to ANSTO to construct the Replacement Research Reactor;
- in particular, to be advised on the CEO's consideration of the NSC Report; and
- to present members with the opportunity to discuss the relevant issues with the CEO.

All Members attended with the exception of Dr Rob Lee who had tendered his apologies.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8 FEBRUARY 2002

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without amendment.

LICENCE TO CONSTRUCT THE REPLACEMENT RESEARCH REACTOR

Briefing on the reasons for the CEO decision to issue a licence to construct the Replacement Research Reactor

The CEO tabled the *Regulatory Branch Assessment Report of the Facility Licence Application F0118 to Construct a Controlled Facility, the Replacement Research Reactor April 2002 (RAR)* for Member's information.

Dr Loy highlighted several key issues regarding the licence and the conditions that had been placed on it. He advised that ARPANSA inspectors would be located on-site during the construction process and would be involved with checking safety items during construction.

Dr Loy outlined his consideration of the NSC Report and the recommendations of the three Working Groups. He explained his reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with a given recommendation. This information was given in detail in part twelve of *Decision by the CEO of ARPANSA on Application to Construct the Replacement Research Reactor at Lucas Heights — Reasons for Decision* (available at http://www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/rrrp/comm_on_issue.pdf). The Working Groups and the Committee as a whole then had the opportunity to question Dr Loy on his consideration of the recommendations in the report.

The Committee discussed the licence decision and the Reasons for Decision document in general terms including:

- the monitoring of overseas investigations into large aircraft accidents and the subsequent need for modification to the design arising from those investigations;
- the contract between ANSTO and INVAP included normal commercial insurance and there was a performance bond provision that deals with the financial viability of INVAP;
- the issue of emergency planning had been considered in the licence decision process; and
- that spent fuel processing in Argentina in the context of the Argentinian constitution would be discussed at the next meeting pending further information.

FUTURE AGENDA FOR THE NSC

The Members discussed potential future considerations of the Nuclear Safety Committee including the role of the Committee in:

- the structure of ARPANSA; and
- relation to the Radiation Health Committee and the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council.

Members were requested to forward any other suggestions for discussion at the next meeting.

It was noted that the current Membership of the Committee expired at the end of October 2002. Members asked if the Committee could be briefed on the appointment process at the next meeting.

REPORTS

General Report from the CEO

Dr Loy gave a brief report on his recent and proposed activities including:

- the recently released media statement regarding analysis of strontium-90 in ashed bone samples for nuclear fallout research from 1957-78 (available at http://www.arpansa.gov.au/mr1_160402.htm);
- that ARPANSA was represented at the second review meeting of the Nuclear Safety Convention; and
- that he was scheduled to chair a meeting at the IAEA in May 2002 to draft a Code of Conduct for the safety of research reactors.

Report on Council — Meetings of 30 November 2001 and 12 April 2002

The Committee was briefed on recent work of RH&SAC including a precautionary principle paper, the recommendations on adoption of the radiofrequency standard, a report to the CEO on radioactive waste, the proposed national ELF survey, the implementation of the Transport Code and a post-meeting briefing with a member of the Sutherland Shire Council. Summaries of these meetings can be found at http://www.arpansa.gov.au/rhsac_m2.htm.

Report on RHC — Meeting of 20-21 March 2002

The Committee was advised of several key issues discussed at the previous RHC meeting including the radiofrequency standard, mining radiation protection and radioactive waste management, intervention levels, the national register of major radiation sources, the progress of Codes of Practice and Standards, and the re-publishing of RHS 39 as Radiation Protection Series No. 1. A summary of this meeting can be found at http://www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/rhc_march02.pdf.

General Business

Two items of general business were raised, these being a letter from Greenpeace to Dr Loy regarding the financial situation of INVAP and the ANSTO assessment of exposure pathways from liquid effluent discharge.

These items were held over until the next meeting pending a reply from Dr Loy to Greenpeace and comment on the ANSTO report from the Members of the Committee.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 12 July 2002.