

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 21 February 2003 Stamford Hotel Sydney

OPENING OF MEETING including Introduction of New Members

The Chair opened the meeting welcoming both new and returning Members. As this was the first meeting of the second triennium Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC), each Member gave a brief overview of their qualifications and experience.

NOTING OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12 JULY 2002

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted without amendment.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

As little work had been done on the ANSTO Effluent Report, Members were asked to provide specific comment on the document for consideration at the next meeting.

PROCEDURES OF THE NSC

NSC Functions — ARPANS Act and Regulations, Relationship with Council/RHC

Dr Loy made a presentation to the Committee that highlighted its relationship to the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (RHSAC) and the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) and reminded Members that the role of NSC was to:

- advise and report on matters relating to nuclear safety and the safety of controlled facilities;
- review and assess the effectiveness of standards, codes, practices and procedures relating to the safety of controlled facilities;
- develop detailed policies and prepare draft publications for promoting uniform national standards relating to controlled facilities.

It was noted that NSC could submit requests or suggestions to RHSAC as appropriate and, under its Terms of Reference, could make recommendations to the CEO for consideration.

NSC Procedures — Working Groups, Web Summaries, Conflict of Interest etc

The Committee noted the paper relating to administrative procedures for NSC including the following concepts relating to NSC Working Groups:

- the need for a document development plan (DDP) for preparation of Codes of Practice and Standards;
- the possible need for a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) where a statutory document imposed a burden on stakeholders; and
- Working Group meetings could often take place by teleconference but sometimes face-to-face meetings would be required.

Members agreed to the draft operational procedures for NSC working groups, following some changes made at the meeting.

CONTROLLED FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS IN AUSTRALIA

The Committee received a presentation on the status of ARPANSA licensing that covered:

- how many licences for controlled facilities had already been issued;
- how many licence applications were pending; and
- the current priority regulatory issues of ARPANSA.

Discussion that followed the presentation covered the following topics:

- environmental protection under ARPANSA legislation;
- the decommissioning of HIFAR;
- the proposed National Waste Repository;
- the use of molybdenum fuel; and
- spent fuel reprocessing.

FUTURE AGENDA FOR THE NSC

The Chair noted that the previous Committee had achieved a great deal given that it is a part-time Committee. Dr Loy gave a presentation on matters on which he may formally seek NSC advice. In discussion, the issues identified for possible future consideration by NSC included:

- consideration of licence conditions arising from the *Regulatory Branch Assessment Report* (available for download at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/rrrp.htm>);
- lessons learnt from preparing the NSC Report to the CEO (available for download at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/rrrp/nsc150302.pdf>);
- Replacement Research Reactor (RRR) issues such as recommendations and ongoing issues arising from the NSC Report to the CEO, and advice on a review report on human factors;
- radioactive waste emissions to the environment and other waste topics;
- the regulatory procedures of ARPANSA;
- emergency planning as an ongoing issue as required. Specific issues such as emergency services responsibilities and accident consequences were recommended for inclusion on future agendas;
- NSC would be advised of international developments on spent fuel at the appropriate time;
- the low level waste repository including associated transport issues;
- progress on the proposed intermediate level waste store, where appropriate;
- briefing on miscellaneous health issues would be provided as appropriate; and
- NSC would have further involvement in matters relating to the decommissioning of HIFAR as the time approached (expected to be late in 2005).

Members appreciated that it was important for:

- RHSAC and the two Committees not to cover the same considerations; and
- the NSC to consider nuclear safety aspect of a given issue.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Dr Loy gave a presentation on the technical issues relating to emergency preparedness and emergency management including:

- the levels of Defence-in-Depth relating to reactor safety;
- the sabotage scenarios considered;
- the general consequences of a sabotage event;
- some of the parameters that would affect radiological consequences of an event;
- emergency planning issues, including accident and sabotage scenarios;
- the decision parameters for emergency actions;
- the role of ARPANSA in emergency planning and response; and
- the draft recommendations for intervention levels including those for sheltering, evacuation and iodine prophylaxis.

An ARPANSA technical report is under preparation and is expected to be released to the public soon and would be tabled for discussion at the June 2003 meeting of NSC.

REPORTS

General Report from the CEO

Dr Loy outlined his, and ARPANSA's, recent activities including:

- allowing the resumption of construction work following investigations into the seismic faulting on the RRR site;
- an update on the situation regarding spent fuel reprocessing in France following French Ministerial approval and a French court decision that dismissed the Greenpeace case against the landing of spent fuel;
- a baseline environmental radiation study that had been carried out by ARPANSA staff in residential areas near the Lucas Heights facilities (details of this study, including the results, are available at <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/baseline.htm>);
- the progress toward Australia ratifying the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; and
- an international conference on safety culture in nuclear installations held in Rio de Janeiro in December 2002;
- the chairing of a Working Group to draft a Code of Conduct on the safety of research reactors. The draft is due to go to the IAEA Board of Governors in March 2003 for endorsement; and
- attendance at an international conference on the safety of radioactive waste management in Vienna (December 2002).

Report on Council — Meetings of 9 August 2002 and 15 November 2002

The Chair of RHSAC drew the attention of the Committee to the tabled web summaries of the two previous meetings of RHSAC (<http://www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/rhsac/sum090802.pdf> and <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/pubs/rhsac/sum151102.pdf> respectively).

Some of the issues expected to be covered by RHSAC over the next triennium included:

- security of sources;
- radioactive waste;
- Radiation Protection Series publications;

- the precautionary principle;
- national uniformity;
- risk communication;
- exposure to non-human population;
- ultra-violet radiation; and
- emergency response.

Issues would be referred down to NSC for advice if appropriate.

The Committee was reminded that there would be opportunity for the public and the media to meet with RHSAC at the end of meetings as this process was considered important for RHSAC to communicate its work.

Report on RHC — Meetings of 31 July-1 August 2002 and 20-21 November 2002

The Committee's attention was drawn to the tabled web summaries of the two previous meetings of RHC (http://www.arpana.gov.au/pubs/rhc/rhc_jul02.pdf and http://www.arpana.gov.au/pubs/rhc/rhc_nov02.pdf respectively).

National Uniformity and NCP Review

The Committee was advised that:

- the National Directory for Radiation Protection had recently undergone a public comment period and that it was intended that the first version would be published later in the year; and
- the 12 projects identified in NCP Review Implementation Plan were progressing.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Committee was advised of an upcoming IGORR (International Group on Research Reactors) conference to be held in Sydney on 24-28 March 2003 (details at <http://www.frm2.tu-muenchen.de/igorr/igorr.html>). NSC would receive a briefing on the conference at the next meeting.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 20 June 2003 and would take place in Melbourne.