



Summary of the meeting held on 24 February 2006

ARPANSA – Miranda Campus

OPENING OF MEETING

All Members attended with the exception of Dr Tamie Weaver and Mr Ian Drinnan who had tendered their apologies.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 14 OCTOBER 2005

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed with a minor amendment.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee acknowledged the correspondence relating to the NSC Report on the application for a licence to operate the OPAL Research Reactor. Members felt that the response from ANSTO justified the value of the Report and noted that the organisational flowchart provided in the ANSTO response might not fully explain the relationships between the different ANSTO Committees. The CEO agreed to advise ANSTO that an improved flowchart should be provided.

Members also noted that ANSTO had developed more detailed organisational and business arrangements and forwarded them to ARPANSA in support of the Application and asked if these could be made available to the Committee for consideration.

Correspondence from ANSTO in relation to preferred option for the decommissioning of HIFAR was also tabled for Members' information. Several parts of the process could proceed under the existing operating licence but an ARPANSA licence would be needed to perform the main elements of decommissioning.

THE OPERATING LICENCE APPLICATION FOR THE OPAL REACTOR

Current state of the ARPANSA assessment and forthcoming developments

The ANSTO construction licence was virtually complete although there were still two items that required ARPANSA consideration:

- The control rod guide box hold down mechanism.
- The installation of a third hoist for lifting silicon blocks.

Pre-commissioning had been completed and cold-commissioning had commenced on 13 February 2006. Cold-commissioning would be used to test safety systems against each other.

ANSTO had addressed the comments arising from the peer review mission relating to operating arrangements and procedures.

Safety culture was important in such plants and safety culture indicators could possibly be placed on the licence as a condition. It was important that complacency did not set in as a result of any long term, incident-free operation of the plant and this was an issue for management to take into account. Experience across all industry has shown that those industries with the best safety culture usually have the best production.

Briefing on Public Forum of 8-9 December 2005

On 8-9 December 2005, the CEO held a public forum in Sydney to discuss the ANSTO application for a licence to operate the OPAL reactor. Representatives from Government Departments, ANSTO, environmental groups and other relevant stakeholders made presentations during the forum.

A panel was formed comprising Dr Loy, Dr Lars Hogberg, former Director General of the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate, and Professor Jim Falk, Director of the Australian Centre for Science, Innovation and Society, University of Melbourne. [Dr Hogberg](#) and [Professor Falk](#) each provided a report to Dr Loy, which were made available on the ARPANSA web site.

Update on the commissioning process and timetable

As already noted, the pre-commissioning phase had finished and cold commissioning of the OPAL Reactor had commenced. Members were reminded that cold commissioning was permitted under the construction licence, subject to certain licence conditions.

The commissioning group would comprise personnel from both INVAP and ANSTO and would report to the ANSTO Board. NSC would receive a briefing on the cold commissioning process from both ANSTO and ARPANSA staff and the cold commissioning report would be sent to Members before that briefing.

REGULATORY GUIDANCE ON RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Dr Loy informed the Committee that the **Draft Regulatory Guidance for Radioactive Waste Management Facilities: Near Surface Disposal Facilities; and Storage Facilities** had been placed on the ARPANSA web site for public comment. Public comment was requested by 17 March 2006. The structure of the document follows IAEA guidance and includes a safety guide on safe storage. The regulatory guidance would be an ARPANSA document.

REPORTS

Dr Loy advised that he had attended the 18th meeting of the IAEA Commission on Safety Standards in Vienna in November to progress the development of a single "Safety Fundamentals" document. This document would state the fundamental basis of nuclear safety and radiation protection, including waste management and transport.

The Committee asked if the safety documents, *Arrangements for Preparedness for a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency*, *The Management System for Facilities and Activities* and *Storage of Radioactive Waste*, approved during the meeting could be provided to them information.

Report on Council – Meeting of 25 November 2005

Members noted the tabled Web summary from the previous Council meeting.

Report on RHC – Meeting of 10-11 November 2005

Members noted the tabled Web summary from the previous RHC meeting.

Update on the ANAO audit report of ARPANSA

The CEO advised that this process involved a significant amount of ARPANSA resources and would ultimately be incorporated into the ARPANSA management system. Members discussed some specific aspects of the report including cost-recovery in relation to the licence process and the risk-based decision making process.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 16 June 2006 although this might be brought forward or back so that the Committee could be briefed on the outcome of the cold-commissioning process.