



Summary of the meeting held on 22 February 2007
ARPANSA – Miranda Campus

OPENING OF MEETING

All Members attended with the exception of Professor Marcela Bilek and Dr Tamie Weaver who had tendered their apologies.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed with minor amendments.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 OCTOBER 2006

The ARPANSA [Regulatory Guidance for Radioactive Waste Management Facilities: Near Surface Disposal Facilities; and Storage Facilities](#) document had now been published along with responses to public comment received on the document.

A draft Regulatory Guidance Document on Decommissioning had also been sent to ANSTO for comment.

BRIEFING ON THE OPAL REACTOR

Progress with Hot Commissioning

The Committee was briefed on the progress of hot commissioning of the OPAL Reactor. The operating licence for the OPAL Reactor was issued on 14 July 2006. Full power (20 MW) for the OPAL Reactor was achieved on 3 November 2006.

The Committee was briefed about several points of note that had occurred during commissioning.

CLOSURE AND DECOMMISSIONING OF HIFAR

Decommissioning Conference – 11-15 December 2006, Athens

The Committee received an overview of the [decommissioning conference held in Athens in December 2006](#). The five-day conference covered many aspects of decommissioning including:

- Global Overview;
- Regulation of Decommissioning Activities;
- Planning for Decommissioning and Implementation of Decommissioning Activities;
- Waste Management Issues and Technology Aspects;
- Social and Economic Impacts and Decommissioning of Small Facilities; and
- Presentation of Findings

Update on HIFAR closure project

The Committee discussed aspects relating to the ANSTO's closure project in relation to HIFAR with a view to eventual decommissioning of HIFAR. The first stage of the project had occurred with the final shutdown of HIFAR. The first Part of the HIFAR closure project was being carried out under the existing operating licence. ARPANSA would continue to monitor staffing levels at HIFAR and ANSTO's adherence to the operational limits and conditions under the HIFAR operating licence.

The next stages of the project would require an application for a new facility licence from ARPANSA to “possess and control” HIFAR.

The Committee was advised that there were many reactors around the world in a “controlled” state similar to what HIFAR would be during this process.

ARPANSA would provide regulatory guidance for the ‘posses and control’ application through a letter to ANSTO about the form of the application that would be required.

Planned application for a licence to possess and control HIFAR – proposed NSC role

Dr Loy expected public interest in the application from ANSTO for a licence to possess and control HIFAR. ARPANSA would be seeking public comment on the application, although a major public forum as with previous licence applications was not planned to be held. Some form of public participation might be arranged in conjunction with the Sutherland Shire Council.

The Committee would be asked to provide advice to the CEO on particular aspects of the licence application.

URANIUM MINING, PROCESSING AND NUCLEAR ENERGY

UMPNER final report

The Committee was briefed on the [final UMPNER Report](#) including the following points:

- Nuclear power in Australia would not be able to compete with coal fired power stations without carbon emission controls.
- Fuel cost was a small component of the overall cost of providing nuclear power and in many countries, nuclear power is the cheapest form of power.
- Disposal of waste was a significant issue.
- The technology for nuclear power was available in Australia but there would be regulatory issues between the States/Territories and the Commonwealth should nuclear power be approved as some jurisdictions currently prohibited nuclear power.

Other issues requiring regulatory infrastructure would be likely to include pre-qualification of sites and the acceptance of foreign licensing of nuclear power plant designs.

The Hon Ian MacFarlane, Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, had been asked to bring forward a Cabinet submission in the first quarter of 2007.

Uranium industry framework and ‘Prosser’ report

The Committee was briefed on the outcome of the Prosser report and a report by the Uranium Industry Framework steering group. The Terms of Reference for the enquiry were to investigate the demand for Australia’s uranium along with nuclear fuel cycle issues.

The Prosser report made fourteen key recommendations in six categories:

1. Australia’s resources, production and exploration;
2. The safety of the nuclear fuel cycle;
3. Global non-proliferation regime;
4. Uranium industry regulations and impacts on Aboriginal communities;
5. Impediments to the uranium industry's development; and
6. Value adding – fuel services industries, nuclear power, skills and training in Australia.

The uranium information framework report focussed solely on uranium mining. The Report contained twenty recommendations under five headings:

1. Sustainable Development and Long term Stewardship;
2. Competitiveness;
3. Regulation;
4. Indigenous Engagement and Land Access; and
5. Communication

OTHER ISSUES FOR NSC CONSIDERATION

Progress on Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility

The three sites nominated for consideration were being characterised.

Regulation of Australian Radioisotopes (focussing on new molybdenum production process)

The Committee was briefed on the ARPANSA regulation of ARI including such key issues as radioactive gaseous discharges, doses to the operators and radiation incidents.

REPORTS

General Report from the CEO

Dr Loy advised of several issues of interest to the Committee including:

- The new MOU that had been reached between ARPANSA and ASNO that recognised the relationship between safety and security issues for nuclear installations.
- ARPANSA had licensed a further three neutron beam instruments at the Bragg Institute at ANSTO up to and including hot commissioning.

Report on Council – Meeting of 8 December 2006

Members noted the tabled [Web summary](#) from the previous Council meeting.

Report on RHC – Meeting of 25-26 October 2006

Members noted the tabled [Web summary](#) from the previous RHC meeting.

Research Reactor Conference – 5-9 November 2007, Sydney

Australia would host an IAEA conference on research reactors in Sydney during November 2007. ANSTO and ARPANSA staff were expected to make presentations at the conference including regulatory aspects relating to the construction of the OPAL Reactor.

Integrated Regulatory Review Service Mission

A team of technical and regulatory experts would comprise the IRRS team including four IAEA staff. The IRRS team would identify good regulatory practice as well as areas that needed improvement. A draft report would be given to ARPANSA when the team left Australia and there would be a chance for ARPANSA to discuss the draft with the IAEA before the final report was prepared. The final report would then be placed on the web site.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee had a tour of HIFAR and Australian Radioisotopes on the morning of Friday 23 February 2007.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 22 June 2007 at a venue to be decided.