



## **Summary of the meeting held on 16 June 2006** **ARPANSA – Miranda Campus**

### **OPENING OF MEETING**

All Members attended with the exception of Dr Rob Lee and Professor Ian Polmear who had tendered their apologies.

### **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 24 FEBRUARY 2006**

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

### **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 24 FEBRUARY 2006**

The public comment on the [Draft Regulatory Guidance for Radioactive Waste Management Facilities: Near Surface Disposal Facilities; and Storage Facilities](#) was available on the ARPANSA web site and the Committee would consider ARPANSA's responses to the public comment at the next meeting.

The draft report on the activities of the Committee for the 2002-2005 triennium was close to being finalised and would be placed on the ARPANSA web site once completed.

Two ANSTO documents on **Safety Management** (OP08) and **Project Management** (OP10) relating to the OPAL Reactor were tabled for Members' information.

### **THE OPERATING LICENCE APPLICATION FOR THE OPAL REACTOR**

#### **Outcomes from Stage A Commissioning**

ANSTO personnel briefed the Committee on the outcomes of Stage A commissioning. The commissioning process involved an item by item check of the instrumentation and shutdown control system for the OPAL Reactor along with the testing of the measuring instruments at a system level. Uninterruptible power supplies were checked and one aspect of the testing involved the removal of the external power supply to OPAL in order to confirm that the UPS functioned as expected. The ANSTO emergency response plan had been tested during Stage A Commissioning.

As part of the commissioning process, the reactor underwent a 36 hour continuous cold run test to investigate the effects of shift changeovers. The transfer of shift responsibilities was checked for all four reactor states; shutdown, power, physics tests and refuelling. Shift operation was also tested on simulators.

The commissioning testing of the physical security system had been assessed and would be certified by the relevant agencies.

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues referred to in the Stage A Commissioning Report had now been completed.

Some procedures in the INVAP draft of the Stage B1 commissioning procedures were found to require modification by ANSTO. All punch lists would be finalised before Stage B1 Commissioning would commence, subject to the issue of a licence.

## **ARPANSA assessment of Stage A Commissioning**

ANSTO had viewed pre-commissioning as part of construction whereas ARPANSA had considered the pre-commissioning tests as important in demonstrating the safety systems as the Stage A Commissioning tests and therefore part of the overall commissioning program. Two key tests of particular interest to ARPANSA during commissioning were a loss of power test and an emergency response test with particular reference to the opening time for the flap valves. Stage A Commissioning was considered a validation of the commissioning process.

The Committee advised the CEO that based on the documentation provided and the briefing from ANSTO staff, the Stage A Commissioning appeared to have been adequately handled. Members indicated that there were some items in the Stage A Commissioning report that required clarification but the ANSTO briefing had generally resolved these issues with the Members.

## **Human Factors**

ANSTO had proposed that human factors issues be incorporated into the reactor design as the reactor was developed, ensuring that the reactor design was essentially error tolerant. This situation was agreed by ARPANSA.

ARPANSA was satisfied that the relevant licence conditions had been met during the process.

## **Current state of the ARPANSA assessment**

The CEO advised that the licence conditions relating to the construction licence had now been met.

ARPANSA was completing its assessment of the plans and arrangements for the reactor although there were still some detailed procedural documents under development and others that had not commenced. The CEO advised that it was likely that a licence decision would be made within weeks of this meeting rather than months.

## **REPORTS**


### **General Report from the CEO**

Dr Loy advised that ARPANSA and the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) had attended the second review meeting on the [Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management](#) at the Headquarters of the IAEA in Vienna, Austria from 15 to 24 May 2006. A summary report of the meeting was available on the internet.


The IAEA Commission on Safety Standards had agreed a new “Safety Fundamentals” document covering nuclear safety, radiation protection and waste safety, as well as transport.

A Prime Ministerial Taskforce had been established to undertake a review into uranium mining, processing and the contribution of nuclear energy in Australia in the longer term. The [details of and terms of reference for the task force](#) were available on the internet. Members noted that Ms Sylvia Kidziak, Chair of the RHSAC, and Dr Arthur Johnston, Member of the RHSAC, had been appointed as Members of the task force. Safety regulation of any nuclear power or fuel cycle industry in Australia was likely to be a significant issue.

### **Report on Council – Meeting of 28 April 2006**

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

### **Report on RHC – Meeting of 29-30 March 2006**

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

### **Update on the ANAO audit report of ARPANSA**

The ARPANSA Regulatory Branch had been restructured as a result of the ANAO audit report. The regulatory review consultative committee was scheduled to prepare a final report on actions taken by August.

ARPANSA had approached the IAEA suggesting that Australia might have an international peer review of its regulatory regime.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The General Manager of Safety and Radiation Services at ANSTO briefed the Committee on several recent incidents that had occurred at ANSTO installations and been reported in the press. The incidents had resulted in exposure to personnel and their clothing, although the exposures were well below the levels requiring immediate reporting under ARPANS legislation and licence conditions. She emphasised that HIFAR was not involved in any of these incidents.

### **CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 13 October 2006 at Miranda.