



Summary of the meeting held on 20 June 2008
ARPANSA – Miranda Campus

OPENING OF MEETING AND CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

All Members attended. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed without further amendment.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee noted the outwards correspondence and Dr Shields particularly thanked Members for their input and comment on the ANSTO submission requesting approval for the redesign of the OPAL Reactor fuel plate assemblies.

BRIEFING ON THE OPAL REACTOR

Report on progress of the OPAL Reactor, including ongoing regulatory issues and the displaced fuel plate event

The CEO had approved the ANSTO submission for a modified design of the OPAL fuel assemblies. In his decision, he proposed three additional licence conditions for the OPAL facility licence authorising operation and gave ANSTO an opportunity to make detailed submission on the proposed licence conditions. ARPANSA accepted an ANSTO submission to not impose licence condition three as there was no internationally accepted test for longitudinal strength.

Members noted that:

- the decision to approve the modification to the design of the OPAL fuel assembly did not allow ANSTO to return OPAL to service;
- OPAL only returned to full power service on 23 May 2008 following an inspection by ARPANSA Nuclear Safety (Reactors) inspectors on 2 May 2008;
- ANSTO had not carried out all commissioning tests on OPAL before the fuel plate event occurred; and
- there were still some outstanding issues to be finalised and ANSTO would need to forward ARPANSA a report on the outcomes of commissioning before ARPANSA could approve OPAL to go to full power service.

ARPANSA was still waiting for further information on a proposal to modify twenty CERCA fuel assemblies in situ at ANSTO. ANSTO had three types of fuel available for OPAL – CNEA, CERCA (unused but the same design as CNEA) and the new modified fuel.

ARPANSA was monitoring two issues at ANSTO:

- The impact of the redundancy program that ANSTO was undertaking.
- ARPANSA would require assurance that ANSTO was carrying out the management of contractors appropriately.

PREPARATION FOR THE DECOMMISSIONING OF HIFAR

On 30 April 2008, ANSTO had provided ARPANSA with a schedule of what was expected to occur with HIFAR. ANSTO had already removed the fuel from HIFAR and would need to “possess and control” HIFAR to protect people and the environment.

ANSTO also had DIDO reactor decommissioning reports for reference purposes and there was much international decommissioning expertise available for consultation.

MOATA DECOMMISSIONING

Moata was different from HIFAR in relation to decommissioning as it predated the ARPANSA licensing regime. ARPANSA was expecting ANSTO to forward a request for permission to dismantle Moata shortly after this meeting. The process for decommissioning Moata was more straightforward than for HIFAR as ANSTO already had a licence to decommission Moata. ARPANSA expected that waste from Moata would be stored on-site although ANSTO had not supplied details of the storage plans yet.

DISPOSAL OF AUSTRALIAN LONG-LIVED INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WASTE

NSC discussion

The CEO had requested RHSAC to provide advice on disposal of intermediate level waste and he would, in turn, ask the Committee to comment on the paper once it had been prepared.

A change in the IAEA classification of radioactive waste, and new IAEA guidelines proposing that intermediate level waste could be buried at intermediate level depths, while high-level waste would require deep geological disposal made it timely for Council to advise on this issue.

REPORTS

General Report from the CEO, including the Commission on Safety Standards (CSS)

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

- Several regulatory bodies including Commonwealth, State/Territory and others regulated the uranium mining industry in Australia. DRET had employed a consultant to review regulation of the industry.
- The National Dose Register for the uranium industry would enable tracking of doses as a person moved from one mine to another. A Safety Guide on dose assessment was in preparation.
- International information on radiation protection standards for the environment would need to be reviewed for possible application in Australia.
- The Commission on Safety Standards (CSS) met in May 2008 and covered such issues as:
 - Future directions of the IAEA safety series documents.
 - Revision of the Basic Safety Standards;
 - Preparation of guidance material for countries moving towards nuclear power generation;
 - The possibility of the integration of safety requirements and security requirements into the same documents;
 - The approval of several safety guides; and
 - The independence of the regulator from political processes.
- ARPANSA's appearance before a NSW parliamentary committee investigation into the radium contamination of Hunters Hill dating back to the early part of the twentieth century.

Report on Council – Meeting of 11 April 2008

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

Report on RHC – Meeting of 20-21 March 2008

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

Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS)

The Committee was briefed on the April review meeting for contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Issues discussed during the review meeting included:

- Future IRRS missions;
- Emergency preparedness, including for non-nuclear power countries;
- Security issues; and
- The merits of publishing the findings of regulatory inspections on the internet.

Nuclear Safety Standards Committee (NUSSC)

The NUSSC meeting was a good opportunity for ARPANSA personnel to discuss nuclear safety issues with peer countries and outcomes from the recent meeting included:

- Many draft safety publications were in various stages of production, including several that were approved for publication during the meeting;
- Several document preparation profiles were also approved;
- Seismic assessment would be considered in more detail at future meetings.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A Committee Member who attended the 2020 Summit in Canberra on 19 and 20 April 2008 and was in the topic group considering “Sustainability and Climate Change” briefed the Committee on the outcomes of the summit.

The general view of the Sustainability and Climate Change group was that there should be:

- an energy mix; and
- more funding into alternative energy sources, including nuclear fusion.

It was noted that the carbon-trading scheme should ensure that there would be no future coal-fired power stations.

- Members discussed the role of the Nuclear Safety Committee as the October meeting would be the last of the third triennium. Members viewed the role of NSC as one of overview and not necessarily to provide the CEO with detailed technical advice. As ARPANSA would most likely obtain detailed technical advice from overseas experts, the Committee could have an important role in reviewing that advice.

Potential issues for future Committee consideration could be:

- looking at the way ARPANSA regulates its stakeholders;
- assessment of safety culture in a licensed organisation; and
- waste repository issues that could possibly arise in the next triennium of the Committee.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 17 October 2008 at Miranda.