



NUCLEAR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Summary of the meeting held on 16 March 2001

The Committee congratulated the Chair on her receipt of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Day honours.

ATTENDANCE

All members, with the exception of Dr. Lee, were in attendance.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10 NOVEMBER 2000

The draft minutes were confirmed with minor amendments.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Radioactive Waste Repository: The Committee noted the announcement of the preferred site and alternatives for the low-level radioactive waste repository.

Spent fuel reprocessing: The Committee noted the items tabled for information on spent fuel reprocessing. The Committee was advised that the shipment of ANSTO spent fuel bound for reprocessing at Cogema in France had been held up at the French port of Cherbourg the previous evening.

Seismic Modelling: The Committee was advised of the progress with the seismic modelling study. The results of the study were expected by the end of May 2001.

ANSTO application information: The Committee was informed that this information has now also been lodged in the State library.

Site-wide airborne discharge authorisation: The Committee was advised that the ANSTO discharge limits would be placed as conditions on the relevant ANSTO licences. The discharge authorisations would be reviewed after six months.

MAJOR ISSUES

Safety Assessment Principles and Regulatory Assessment Criteria — process for finalisation

The Committee was updated on the status of the review of the Safety Assessment Principles for Controlled Facilities (SAP) and the Regulatory Assessment Criteria for the Design of Controlled Facilities and Modifications of Existing Facilities (RAC). Both documents had been through a public comment period and, following incorporation of the public comment by ARPANSA, both would be forwarded to the Committee by the end of April for any further comment out-of-session.

If any further comment arose from the NSC review, the documents would be forwarded to the respective Working Groups (WGs).

NSC Role in Construction Licence Application

The Committee was notified of the expected schedule relating to the ANSTO Replacement Research Reactor Project licence application. ARPANSA anticipated that the application for a licence to construct the replacement research reactor would be received by ARPANSA in May 2001. Committee advice on three specific matters was being sought:

1. adequacy of seismic design as related to safety systems;
2. consideration of the accident analyses in the Preliminary Safety Analysis Report; and
3. spent fuel and waste disposal.

The full Committee would need to meet soon after the ARPANSA review receipt of the licence application. WGs would be appointed where it was considered necessary although, ultimately, consensus opinion of the Committee was what ARPANSA required.

The Committee considered that the three matters for deliberation, as outlined above, provided adequate coverage of the licence application process and would be a good basis for its work and of particular interest to the NSC. The Committee discussed the issue of the public perception of the licence application process and pointed out that a clear and open process was required. The CEO indicated that he would be willing to consider including some form of public hearing process, chaired by the CEO, at a suitable stage of the overall process. The Committee agreed unanimously with the suggested public hearing process and emphasised that the wording relating to such hearings must stress that they are “a public hearing process and that they are not a judicial process.”

Transport of Spent Fuel — ARPANSA’s Role in Safety Arrangements

Staff of the ARPANSA Regulatory Branch made a presentation to the Committee on the requirements for the transport of spent fuel from ANSTO to the port in Sydney detailing the packaging and paperwork requirements and some safety requirements for the road and sea transport of the shipping containers. The Committee noted the presentation with interest.

Briefing on the “Reference Accident” for NPW visits

Staff of the ARPANSA Regulatory Branch made a presentation to the Committee on the revised reference accident for Nuclear Powered Warship visits and outlined the main changes to the models, parameters and assumptions used to calculate the consequences of the reference accident. The Committee noted the presentation with interest.

REPORTS

General Report from the CEO

Dr Loy addressed the Committee about his trips to both North and South America in December 2000. On these visits he attended an IAEA safety conference in Buenos Aires and visited INVAP in Argentina, the Chalk River laboratories in Canada, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Report on Council — Meeting of 1 December 2000 and likely issues for discussion at meeting of 9 April 2001

The **Summary of the meeting of 1 December 2000** was tabled for Members reference. The Committee noted that Council had reports from WGs on radioactive waste and precautionary principle, had discussed interventional cardiology, the replacement reactor process, and considered means of improving involvement of the public.

Report on RHC — Meeting 1-2 November 2000 and agenda for the meeting of 29-30 March 2001

The Web summary of the December 2000 meeting and the provisional agenda for the March 2001 meeting of the RHC were tabled for Members information. The Committee noted that Professor Roger Clarke, ICRP Chairman, was due to address the RHC and requested a copy of any papers relating to his presentation.

Progress with ARPANSA licensing of existing ANSTO facilities

Applications for nuclear installation licences and source licences had been received and were being reviewed by ARPANSA. Some source licences had been assessed and it was hoped that decisions on facility licences could be made in May. The Committee was advised that submitting parties, including Sutherland Council staff, would be briefed on key issues raised in their submissions prior to licences being judged.

Briefing on IAEA NUSSC issues

The Committee was advised on the methodology of preparation of IAEA safety documents and of the International Conference on Topical Issues in Nuclear Safety in Vienna in September 2001. Of particular interest to the Committee at the conference may be sessions on the safety of fuel cycle facilities, safety of research reactors and safety of performance indicators.

Draft Transport Code — progress report

The Committee was updated on the progress of the draft **Code of Practice for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material** and its associated Regulatory Impact Statement. The draft Code and regulatory impact statement were expected to go to public comment within the next month. Ideally, Australian regulators would adopt the Code of Practice by 1 July 2001.

GENERAL BUSINESS

A letter from the Chair of the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) to the Chair of the NSC in relation to the RHC discussion of the exceptional circumstances clause in RHS39 was tabled for the Members' information. The Committee was satisfied with the result of the discussion and the Chair NSC would advise the Chair RHC accordingly.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be 5 and 6 July 2001 subject to receipt of the ANSTO licence application and a further meeting was scheduled for December 2001 to coincide with important milestones in the licence assessment process.