



Summary of the meeting held on 14 October 2005

ARPANSA – Miranda Campus

OPENING OF MEETING

All Members attended with the exception of Professor Rob Melchers and Dr Alan Roberts who had tendered their apologies.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 17 JUNE AND 22 JULY 2005

The minutes of the two previous meetings were confirmed with minor amendments.

THE OPERATING LICENCE APPLICATION FOR THE OPAL REACTOR **Committee Discussion of Report to the CEO**

The [Final Report of the NSC](#) on the operating licence application for the OPAL reactor was available on the ARPANSA Web site in both [PDF](#) and [RTF](#) formats. The CEO advised the Committee that the Report had covered the issues he had raised in his letter of 12 November 2004 although he did seek clarification of some of the recommendations made in the Report during the meeting. The respective Working Group convenors were able to provide clarification to the CEO.

The CEO would forward the Final Report to ANSTO advising them that he would be taking it into account in his licence deliberations and seeking any response that ANSTO may wish to make.

Current state of the ARPANSA assessment and forthcoming developments

ARPANSA was in the process of assessing the licence application to operate the OPAL Research Reactor and the initial analysis of the documentation was expected to be finalised shortly after the October meeting.

A [public forum](#) to discuss the licence application was scheduled to be held in Sydney on 8-9 December 2005. The CEO expected to be in a position to consider all issues relating to the application, including the satisfactory completion of the cold commissioning program, and he expected to make a decision on the licence application soon after that.

OPAL REACTOR COMMISSIONING PROCESS – BRIEFING

Update on the commissioning process and timetable

The Committee was briefed on the commissioning of the OPAL Research Reactor. Three quality systems would need to be in place for the commissioning process and these were in:

- the project division of ANSTO;
- the operating organisation of ANSTO; and
- INVAP.

Each of these quality systems would need to fit together in a cohesive fashion and would be monitored by ANSTO's management group. ARPANSA would monitor compliance during the commissioning process.

The pre-commissioning stage of the OPAL Research Reactor was in progress and cold commissioning

was expected to commence in late November 2005. Hot commissioning could not commence unless ARPANSA issued an operating licence as fuel was required for that part of the process. ANSTO expected the hot commissioning to take three months, subject to approvals from ARPANSA and their own commissioning safety review committee during the process.

Several ANSTO staff would be involved in the various commissioning safety review groups. Each group would draw together relevant people as part of the overall commissioning group to conduct tests, demonstrate assumptions in the safety analyses, demonstrate operating procedures and make reports.

NSC involvement in OPAL reactor commissioning process

The OPAL Research Reactor commissioning process was complex and involved many phases. ARPANSA had requested a signed off report on the pre-commissioning phase and would provide relevant information to the Committee when available.

Cold commissioning was critical to the licence decision and was the final stage of the assessment of the licence application. The CEO suggested that the Committee receive a briefing on the process once the completed ANSTO report was available. The Committee could also have a role in reviewing the report. It was agreed that the NSC would hold a one day meeting to discuss the ANSTO summary report on cold commissioning. The meeting would be before the final decision on the operating licence and involve a briefing on the reports and provide Members with the opportunity to put questions to ANSTO and ARPANSA staff.

HIFAR

Update briefing on the decommissioning of HIFAR

Three options had been proposed for HIFAR following its decommissioning:

1. An early return to a 'greenfield' site;
2. A late return to a 'greenfield' site; and
3. Turn it into a museum.

ANSTO expected to advise the CEO of its preferred option by the end of 2005 followed by a formal application for a decommissioning licence. The Committee would be updated on the HIFAR decommissioning issue as information became available.

FUTURE AGENDA FOR THE NSC

Issues for future consideration

The terms of reference from the ARPANS Act for the NSC included controlled facilities, which was more than just nuclear installations. The Committee suggested several other installations that could be considered in future including:

- accelerators at ANU and ANSTO;
- the synchrotron in Victoria, should the management of it be contracted out to a Commonwealth agency;
- the radioisotope production area of ANSTO;
- visiting nuclear powered warships;
- possible alternate methods of long term disposal/storage of radioactive waste.

The CEO outlined activities for future consideration of the Committee including:

- The commissioning process for OPAL;
- The decommissioning of HIFAR;

- The Radioactive Waste Management Facility;
- Broader issues such as safety culture; and
- Security issues.

REPORTS

General Report from the CEO

The CEO highlighted several issues involving ARPANSA including:

- Attendance at [IAEA general conference](#) in Vienna which covered:
 - the formal business of considering budgets and programs;
 - the Australian resolution on nuclear, Radiation and waste safety, which had been passed with substantial support; and
 - resolutions on transport safety and nuclear security.

The general conference also hosted:

- A one day [senior regulators meeting](#), where the proposed new ICRP Recommendations were discussed; and
- A scientific forum on “[Nuclear Science: Physics Helping the World](#)” covering the broad topics of “Meeting Energy Needs”, “Developing Advanced Materials and Technologies”, “Advancing Radiation Medicine” and “Supporting Nuclear Safety”.
- Attendance at the [International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Disposal](#) in Tokyo that covered issues relating to the ratification and implementation of the Joint Convention in various countries and proposals from a range of countries as to how each was handling radioactive waste disposal.
- The [ARPANSA response](#) to [Auditor-General’s report on ARPANSA regulatory processes](#). An ARPANSA regulatory review team had been set up and the CEO had appeared before the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit to respond to the report. The Proof Committee Hansard transcript from that appearance can be found at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/joint/commttee/J8737.pdf>.
- The CEO had also appeared before a House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources to discuss the development of mining code, ionizing radiation exposure and doses. The Proof Committee Hansard transcript from that appearance can be found at <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/rep/commttee/R8746.pdf>.

Report on Council – Meeting of 5 August 2005

The Committee noted the [Web summary](#) of the August Council meeting with particular reference and agreed that a triennium report on the NSC’s activities similar to that prepared for Council should be prepared.

Report on RHC – Meeting of 20-21 July 2005

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

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for early 2006 at a date to be determined.