



**Summary of the meeting held on 26 October 2007**  
**ARPANSA – Miranda Campus**

**OPENING OF MEETING AND CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES**

All Members attended with the exception of Doctors Tamie Weaver and Rob Lee who had tendered their apologies. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed with minor amendments.

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 22 JUNE 2007**

The Committee was advised that the site for a radioactive waste management facility nominated by the Northern Territory Lands Council had been formally accepted and was therefore protected by the *Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Facility Act 2005*. Tests were being carried out on the site to assess its suitability for a facility.

**BRIEFING ON THE OPAL REACTOR**

**Update report on commissioning of the OPAL Reactor, including ongoing regulatory issues**

The Committee was briefed on the hot commissioning of the OPAL Reactor including three issues that needed to be resolved before full operation of OPAL could be approved. These were:

- Reflector vessel repairs: In August, ANSTO proposed a repair strategy under Regulation 52 for the reflector vessel that involved injecting an alumina slurry through the leak area. ARPANSA agreed with the proposal and to date, the repair appeared to have been effective.
- The fuel plate event: Fuel plates had dislodged from their fuel assemblies during operation. Seven fuel assemblies had been affected and a total of twelve plates were dislodged. The fuel plate event was first detected on 24 July 2007, reported to the Regulatory Branch the following day and a meeting with ARPANSA regulatory staff was held on 26 July to discuss the problem. ARPANSA would receive a submission that would include the outcomes of the investigation. A vibration testing report was also expected to be received in November 2007.

ARPANSA had commenced unannounced inspections targeting, among other items, operational matters such as logbook entries.

**OPAL displaced fuel event – update from ANSTO**

Dr Greg Storr of ANSTO updated the Committee on the status of the fuel plate displacement event and ANSTO's proposed process for OPAL return to power. ANSTO was looking into the engineering aspects relating to the fuel and a new fuel design was expected to be submitted on 9 November.

INVAP had provided information to ANSTO on the welding purity.

**CLOSURE AND DECOMMISSIONING OF HIFAR**

**Application for a licence to possess or control HIFAR – briefing and NSC discussion**

The Committee noted the correspondence of 20 September 2007 from the CEO of ARPANSA to ANSTO in relation to the ANSTO application for a licence to possess or control HIFAR. ANSTO had not formally responded to Dr Loy's letter however, a meeting had been held between ARPANSA and ANSTO that outlined the main issues.

## **IAEA RESEARCH REACTOR CONFERENCE – 5-9 NOVEMBER 2007, SYDNEY**

### **ARPANSA paper presentation**

A staff member from the Regulatory Branch was scheduled to deliver a paper titled **Regulatory Review Methods: Review of the ANSTO Application for a Facility Licence to Operate the OPAL Research Reactor in Australia: Case Study Review of Operational Readiness** at the upcoming Research Reactor Conference in Sydney. His presentation was made to the Committee during the meeting and covered the review of operational readiness that examined the extent to which the managerial, procedural and administrative controls proposed for the reactor were appropriate and demonstrated underlying support for the operation of the OPAL reactor.

Points outlined in the presentation included:

- Many documents had to be reviewed before ARPANSA could issue a licence and it was a time consuming process;
- One hundred and thirty-one “Requests for Approval” had been received throughout the process covering both plant and safety items;
- The licence application review process demonstrated that there were some areas that needed to be addressed; and
- The licence application would form the basis of an inspection program.

The Committee would receive a summary of the Conference at its next meeting.

## **REPORTS**

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

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

- ARPANSA had completed its review of the Department of Defence.
- ARPANSA had received the report of the IRRS mission from the IAEA and was addressing the recommendations therein
- He had attended the IAEA General Conference in Vienna in September 2007 that covered the direction for the next four years, the next 25 years of nuclear energy, the strengthening of operating safety frameworks in reactor operation, multi-lateral assurance of fuel supply, incidents and near misses involving nuclear reactors and several proposed IRRS missions.
- An earthquake in Japan in July 2007 had affected a major nuclear power plant site causing some contaminated water to be released to the environment and some minor, albeit not safety related, damage to items in the plant area.

### **Report on Council – Meeting of 3 August 2007**

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

### **Report on RHC – Meeting of 18-19 July 2007**

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

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council joined the meeting to discuss the paper on nuclear power being prepared by Council. Members were asked to provide comment on the paper by 7 November in order that it could be considered by Council at its next meeting in December.

## **CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 21 February 2008 at Yallambie, possibly preceded by a tour of Synchrotron.