



SUMMARY OF MEETING OF 7 DECEMBER 2007

OPENING OF MEETING, ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES & CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Council met at ARPANSA's Miranda Office on 7 December 2007. All members were present. The minutes were confirmed without amendment.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Council noted that it was proposed to develop a safety guide on the assessment of doses for workers in the uranium and mineral sand mining industries. Development of the National Dose Register would be subject to decisions of the new government.

Council was informed that the new ICRP Recommendations publication was with the publisher, and given a summary of the future work of ICRP and UNSCEAR. The five ICRP Committees have a wide range of work planned, while UNSCEAR expects to publish six documents in 2008, and. UNSCEAR's next work program will be developed from over 40 projects submitted on biological effects, sources of exposure, chronic low level exposure and evaluation of risk.

BRIEFING ON FUNCTIONS OF AUSTRALIAN CBRN DATA CENTRE

Dr George Koperski from the Australian Federal Police Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Data Centre (CBRNDC) delivered a presentation on the roles and functions of the Centre. Dr Koperski informed the Council about the primary roles of the CBRNDC, which opened on 2 July 2007, including its ability to provide national real time technical information and advice in support of CBRN operations for the whole of Government, and parts of the private sector as well as providing support to national CBRN committees. The Centre supports relevant research projects, stores specified technical information, reports and literature, and performs data analysis as well as statistical reporting on recurring CBRN incidents. The Centre also evaluates the feasibility and impact in Australia of the use of specific CBRN agents. In July 2007 the AFP implemented a mobile forensic laboratory which can be deployed close to the crime scene to facilitate forensic investigations of chemical and biological agents. The laboratory's monitoring capabilities of radiation agents are yet to be developed.

ASSESSMENT OF THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

The Chair reminded Council of the CEO's request at the August 2007 meeting for Council to consider a matter of interest to the general public regarding the safety of nuclear power plants and provide advice covering various matters. She noted that Council should not advocate for or against nuclear power and did not need to make recommendations. The CEO had asked that Council consult the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) while developing the paper. The Chair advised that the Chair of NSC had been involved in the consultation process she had also attended the NSC meeting on 26 October 2007 to provide a briefing on Council's work and discuss an early draft. NSC members subsequently provided comment. An ARPANSA working group had been formed to input ideas for the initial draft. A teleconference with several Council members attending and others participating by telephone had been held on

14 November. Council had also engaged with Dr Sam Harbison, Ex-Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations in the UK, and a current member of INSAG, including by his participation in teleconferences.

Council discussed the draft document and agreed that the Chair and Secretary would finalise the letter and forward it to the CEO following the Council meeting.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON RADIATION PROTECTION IN THE MEDICAL APPLICATION OF IONIZING RADIATION

Council was advised of the development process for the Code, which had included a round of industry comment, a period of public comment where a regulatory impact statement and three Safety Guides were released with the Code, and a National Conference during the public comment period. Issues that had arisen during public comment included whether chiropractors should be covered by the Code, and the inclusion of diagnostic reference levels (DRL). Council was advised that the RHC had agreed that the Code was substantially complete and would approve it when the final RIS was available. In discussion, Council noted that it was important to ensure clarity about excluding chiropractors from the Code, and that this should be done by extending footnote 1 to advise that a separate Code to cover chiropractors was being planned. Council further advised that some discussion on the responsible person in the Safety Guide would be helpful. Council agreed that the Code was substantially complete and could be considered out of session after finalisation of the RIS and RHC approval of the Code.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE SAFE TRANSPORT OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

Council received a report that the IAEA had revised the publication currently adopted in the Australian Code of Practice for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material. It was therefore proposed to adopt the IAEA 2005 publication in a revised Australian Code. As the changes to the Code had low impact, a self-assessment of the impacts was carried out and a full RIS was not required. A public consultation period had been undertaken and the main comment related to the WA mineral sand industry, who believed that there would be increased costs in monitoring for contamination of conveyances. This was in fact not required as the material is exempt from the Transport Code. Council agreed to recommend to the CEO that the Code be published.

BRIEFING ON REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORY FOR RADIATION PROTECTION

The Chair reminded Council of the background to undertaking a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Directory for Radiation Protection, and that the CEO had agreed to hire a consultant to assist Council in conducting the review. The consultant would work in consultation with the Chair and Secretariat. The project work would commence mid-December with a report ready for the April 2008 Council meeting. Council noted the progress with the review.

OUTCOMES OF THE INTEGRATED REGULATORY REVIEW SERVICE (IRRS) MISSION TO ARPANSA

The CEO informed Council that the final report of the IRRS mission was now available from the ARPANSA web site. ARPANSA was planning for activities to respond to the findings, including recent commencement of unannounced inspections, and addressing staff training

issues. The IRRS report had noted the uniformity process as a good practice, and commented that the progress was 'remarkable'. Three items related to Commonwealth/State policy issues. These were firstly the security of sources, where implementation of the international Code of Conduct for the Security of Radioactive Sources and the ARPANSA Code of Practice are proceeding in consultation with the States and Territories. Secondly, as Australia does not have a formal system for classification for radioactive waste, the RHC will update work it had undertaken some time back, in light of the recent IAEA draft DS 390. Thirdly, in regard to transport of radioactive material, the IRRS report commented on the number of Competent Authorities in Australia. It is proposed to convene a meeting of the Transport Competent Authorities Working Group at executive level to discuss working arrangements.

REPORT FROM THE CEO

The CEO informed Council of the following matters:

- HIFAR decommissioning, where ANSTO had applied for a licence to 'possess or control', to prepare it for decommissioning with the intention of dismantling HIFAR in 10-12 years.
- OPAL commissioning, where a response to the issue of fuel plates being dislodged from within the fuel assembly is being considered by ANSTO. Contributing causes are likely to include a design flaw in the fuel assemblies and manufacturing issues. ANSTO is expected to propose redesigned fuel and a different manufacturer. In regard to light water leaking into the heavy water, this was not a safety issue, but had been treated by injecting particles into the leak area and this appeared to have been successful.
- IAEA Safety Standards had been discussed at the recent meeting of the Commission on Safety Standards (CSS). CSS noted the major achievement of the triennium as publication of the Safety Fundamentals (SF-1), and was restructuring the Standards to include General Requirements and particular Requirements, with a limited number of Safety Guides under each. The Basic Safety Standards are currently being reviewed, and the relationship between IAEA safety and security publications is still being discussed.
- Appointment of Mr Robin Chapple to RHC as the member representing the interests of the general public. Council supported appointment of Mr Chapple to RHC.
- An earthquake had occurred in July 2007 in Japan with an epicentre 16km from the Kashiwazaki Kariwa nuclear power station, the world's biggest, which included 7 nuclear reactors on the site. While there had been little damage at the site, the measured peak ground accelerations had exceeded the design values significantly. The IAEA have prepared a report which is now available on their web site. The Japanese safety authorities are being very transparent about their processes and also keeping the world nuclear community well informed.
- The Research Reactor Conference held in Sydney in November had been successful, with approximately 150-180 delegates from 42 countries attending. Issues discussed included harmonization, training to deal with skills shortage and security.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council was informed that the Committee had met on 21-22 November and dealt with a large agenda. In particular, a Safety Guide on NORM was progressing well, and it had been agreed to take a different approach to development of the National Directory for Radiation Protection. Rather than prepare a consolidated edition 2, RHC decided to put forward items individually, so that straightforward matters would not be held up while RIS issues on other

items were being addressed. The Directory would be maintained via the web site, with a consolidated edition being printed perhaps every 2-3 years. Recent Codes would be put to Ministers shortly as the RIS requirements had already be met.

Council was also informed that a National Forum on the Impact of Regulating Solaria had been held on 20 November 2007. The morning had included government representatives, an industry representative, a Cancer Council Victoria representative, and a researcher contracted by ARPANSA to advise on the costs and benefits of regulating solaria. A meeting of the government representatives was held in the afternoon. Outcomes of the meeting were prepared and discussed at the RHC meeting. The RHC agreed to manage the process of developing the forum outcomes into a regulatory format by Christmas, and to work with Victoria to develop a RIS that would be suitable nationally. It was also noted that public health messages consistent with the regulatory approach would need to be developed.

Report from the Nuclear Safety Committee

Council noted the draft report of the Nuclear Safety Committee meeting of 26 October 2007.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Dickie tabled an article by Brenner et al on radiation exposure from CT scanning. Council noted the paper, including that over 62 million CT scans are conducted in the USA each year.

CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 11 April 2008.