

## Summary of the meeting held on 9 April 2001

### **1-4 OPENING OF MEETING, ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES, MINUTES, BUSINESS ARISING.**

The Council met at Miranda with all members present.

Mr Selva Kumar attended for item 5. Councillor Genevieve Rankin and Mayor Tracie Sonda of Sutherland Shire Council were invited to address the meeting in regard to item 8.1. Senator Grant Tambling and Mr David Losberg attended the meeting during discussion on items 7, 6.2 and 8.2. The minutes of the meeting of 1 December were confirmed and there was no substantive business arising.

### **5. NATIONAL COMPETITION POLICY REVIEW OF RADIATION LEGISLATION**

Mr Selva Kumar, project manager for the National Competition Policy (NCP) Review of Radiation Protection Legislation briefed Council on the Draft Final Report of the review. Mr Kumar outlined the process undertaken in the review and the 19 recommendations in the Draft Final Report. The process remaining is for a steering committee meeting to consider the report and outcomes of consultation on 27 April. The Final Report will then go to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) and to Australian Health Ministers' Conference (AHMC) and Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Jurisdictions will have the opportunity to respond to the recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations is expected by 30 June 2002. Mr Kumar advised that 18 submissions had been received on the report. Mr Melbourne described the agreement to develop a National Directory for Radiation Protection as the main tool to promote uniformity in radiation protection matters.

### **6. RADIOACTIVE WASTE ISSUES**

#### **6.1 Council Radioactive Waste Working Group**

The Chair reported that the working group had not yet completed its task, and that the paper will be completed and circulated out of session.

#### **6.2 Presentation on Radioactive Waste Issues**

The CEO described the issues to be considered in considering radioactive waste. These included the physical description of the material (eg spent fuel, disused sources, emissions), the conceptual description (eg low level, intermediate level, high level, long-lived, short-lived), and the means of handling the waste (eg disposal by the user, near-surface repository, long term store, geological repository). The CEO indicated that the document that is being prepared by the Working Party on Radioactive Waste should help inform further discussion in this area. A paper prepared by ARPANSA's Environmental & Radiation Health Branch for the recent Radiation Health Committee meeting was also tabled.

### **7. COUNCIL PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE WORKING GROUP**

Senator Tambling and Mr Losberg joined the meeting and were welcomed by the Chair. Dr Dickie discussed the draft paper prepared by the working group. After discussion it was suggested that the paper be finalised and circulated to the Australian and New Zealand Food Authority, Office of Gene Technology, and Therapeutic Goods Administration to seek their views and promote a consistent approach in the Health portfolio. Council members are to forward comments to Dr Dickie by 30 April. It was also suggested that the paper could be summarised into a two-page advice to the CEO or for use as an information sheet.

## **8. COUNCIL & THE PUBLIC**

### **8.1 Open meetings**

The reply to Councillor Rankin of 11 December 2000, which had been circulated with the agenda, was noted. It addressed misconceptions in Councillor Rankin's letter regarding the role of Council and in particular that its role was as an advisory body rather than a decision-making body and that the composition of the Council was established in legislation. Mayor Tracie Sonda and Councillor Genevieve Rankin of Sutherland Shire Council (who had arrived just prior to the commencement of the Council meeting) were invited to address the meeting regarding their concerns.

Following some discussion they made four specific requests:

1. An answer on the issue of public hearings relating to the various stages of the plan for the replacement research reactor.
2. Support for Councillor Rankin to be appointed to Council.
3. A copy of Council's consultation policy to be provided.
4. An answer on the issue of open meetings.

The Chair proposed that an answer would be provided by the end of the month. Mayor Sonda and Councillor Rankin then left the meeting.

In relation to these issues:

1. Council noted that a public hearing type process was still under consideration by the CEO. the Nuclear Safety Committee, was supportive although it had concerns that such process does not become 'judicial'.
2. Council agreed that as its composition is legislated it currently has no role to support or otherwise Councillor Rankin's appointment to Council. Council agreed that there could be opportunity for other groups to present information to Council at appropriate times.
3. The consultation document had already been provided with the reply to Councillor Rankin on 1 December 2000 and it could be provided again.
4. Open meetings were still not supported. However, it was proposed that the Chair and CEO would formulate some options to improve public interaction and circulate them. A teleconference could then be arranged to finalise the matter and respond to Sutherland Shire Council.

### **8.2 Proposal regarding Public Concerns**

The Council discussed the Chair's letter to the CEO proposing that research be undertaken to establish key areas of public concern, and the CEO's reply. The proposal related to the Council's terms of reference to advise on matters of concern to the public. Council discussed options for an initial qualitative approach, the possibility of using focus groups, and the resources required to undertake such a project. Council agreed that the proposal for researching public concerns would be deferred at this stage. However, Council felt that it would be useful to request ARPANSA's information officer and the State/Territory regulators, who take many calls from the public, to provide information on what concerns are expressed to them by the public.

## **9. INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGY**

The Chair's letter to Associate Professor Muller and his reply were tabled. Council noted that a teleconference had also been held. The next step was to send out a letter jointly with the Cardiac Society of Australia. The letter would advise that Council is examining the issue, would seek information on equipment and practices, and provide information on radiation protection issues in cardiology.

## **10. REPORT FROM THE CEO**

The CEO tabled a short summary of his discussions with INVAP and the Argentinian Nuclear Regulator, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and US Food and Drug Administration, along with his visit to Chalk River facility in Canada. The CEO also advised of progress on licensing some of ANSTO's existing facilities, on development of additional Comprehensive Test Ban

Treaty monitoring stations, and that the Radiofrequency (RF) Standard had been released for public comment.

## **11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **11.1 Report from the Radiation Health Committee**

Mrs Fitch tabled a report on the Radiation Health Committee meeting of 29-30 March 2001. The RHC had been addressed by Professor Roger Clarke, Chair of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), on progress towards the development of new ICRP recommendations. The RHC's discussions included reviews of existing publications, uniformity and the development of a National Directory for Radiation Protection, and proposed new codes in diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy. A working group was also proposed to consider the use of lasers on humans. The RHC also agreed to review the Interim ELF Guidelines and develop an ELF Standard.

### **11.2 Diagnostic Reference Levels – report to Radiation Health Committee (RHC)**

Dr Smart tabled a status report on the use of diagnostic reference dose levels in Australia, which had been prepared for the RHC. The paper recommended that ARPANSA should develop diagnostic reference levels for Australia, and that professional groups should develop the protocols for measurement. In discussion, it was pointed out that there are several variations in the ways diagnostic reference levels are used overseas, and there needs to be further exploration of the best way to use them in Australia. RHC will consider this issue in greater detail at the next meeting.

### **11.3 Report from Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC)**

Ms Kidziak tabled a report on the meeting of the NSC on 15-16 March 2001. The first day had involved a visit to the ANSTO site. The NSC meeting had considered progress on the Regulatory Assessment Principles and the Regulatory Assessment Criteria which were now near completion, the role of the NSC in relation to consideration of the ANSTO construction licence, presentations on spent fuel transport and the revised reference accident for nuclear powered warship visits, reports from the CEO, RHC and Council, and on the Transport Code.

## **12. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **12.1 Paper on Non-human Environment**

Council discussed an issues paper on the protection of the environment from ionizing radiation presented by Dr Arthur Johnston. A conference to be run jointly by ARPANSA and Office of the Supervising Scientist (OSS) has been planned for July 2002 in Darwin. In the meantime, consideration could be given as to what are the threats of radiation exposure to the environment in Australia. Council requested that it be provided with progress reports on this issue at future meetings.

## **13. CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was set for Friday, 3 August 2001 at Miranda.