

## **Statement on receipt of the Replacement Research Reactor operating licence application:**

I have today received an application from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) for a facility licence under the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998 (ARPANS Act) to authorise operation of the Replacement Research Reactor (RRR) at Lucas Heights in Sydney.

I first need to assess whether the application meets the requirements of the Act for a valid application. If necessary, I will need to draw any shortcomings to ANSTO's attention for further submissions. This assessment will need to be completed before I can start the application review process.

The application necessarily includes detailed information on the reactor facility and on its physical protection systems. Some of this detail is classified in accordance with national security requirements, as it is information that could assist a person seeking to sabotage the reactor. ANSTO is taking steps to prepare a version of the application that is available for public release. On receiving this version of the application, in accordance with the ARPANS Act, I will advertise that I intend to make a decision and seek public submissions on the application.

With regard to the timing of my assessment of the application, I have the following planning timetable in mind:

- October 2004 – publication of application and call for public submissions by end March 2005
- International peer review of the application to be completed and published by March 2005
- Reports by the Nuclear Safety Committee on matters arising from its reports on the construction licence to be received and published by May 2005
- Public forum on the application in May 2005
- Second round of public submissions by end July 2005.

During the assessment of the operating licence application, activities will continue under the construction licence. The outcomes of some of these processes will need to be fed back into the operating licence assessment. In particular, the 'cold' commissioning of systems, structures and components important for safety is permitted with my approval as a part of the construction licence. These results will be important to check that the performance of systems put forward as part of the safety analysis report is borne out. My final decision on the licence application must await these results.

I understand that ANSTO is planning 'cold' commissioning<sup>1</sup> in the second half of 2005. I intend to ask the Nuclear Safety Committee to play a role in providing assurance that the outcomes of the cold commissioning are consistent with the safety analysis.

Dr John Loy  
CEO of ARPANSA  
13 September 2004

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<sup>1</sup> 'Cold' commissioning means testing reactor systems, structures and components without nuclear fuel being installed.