

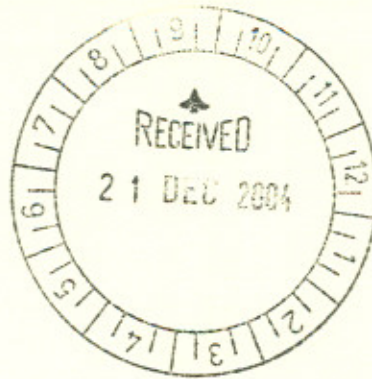


Australian Government

17 December 2004

Dr John Loy
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Dear Dr Loy *John*



Nuclear-based science benefiting all Australians



EXECUTIVE

APPLICATION FOR A FACILITY LICENCE, OPERATING AUTHORISATION FOR THE REPLACEMENT RESEARCH REACTOR

In its Application for a Facility Licence, Operating Authorisation for the Replacement Research Reactor, ANSTO provided details of its preferred options for the disposition of spent fuel arising from the operation of the replacement reactor. Those details were contained in the Ultimate Disposal and Transfer Plan (RRRP-7200-EDEAN-005-Rev0), which formed part of Part B of the licence application. When this document was prepared, the plans for the disposition of the spent fuel were of a contingent nature. Their finalisation depended on decisions of other countries or commercial companies, the timing of which was not under the ANSTO's control. In recent weeks, however, there have been announcements by the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and commitments from COGEMA that have enabled the details for the two preferred disposition routes identified in the plan to be confirmed.

On 1 December 2004, the DOE announced a revision of the record of decision (ROD) for a Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Policy Concerning Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel (FRR-SNF). The revised ROD was published in the United States Federal Register at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/nepa/rods/2004/69901.pdf>. A copy of the revised ROD is Attachment 1 to this letter. In the revised ROD, the DOE announced its decision to extend the FRR-SNF policy for ten years until May 12, 2016, for irradiation of eligible fuel, and until May 12, 2019, for fuel acceptance. In addition, the decision states that the DOE will accept spent fuel from the reactor facility in the extension to this program (further details are included in the supplemental analysis carried out by the DOE, which is Attachment 2 to this letter). Consequently, the preferred option for disposition of silicide-type fuel identified in the Ultimate Disposal and Transfer Plan is now available to ANSTO under this revised US policy.

Additionally, under the contractual arrangements already in place with COGEMA for reprocessing of fuel from the HIFAR reactor, COGEMA has confirmed its agreement to accept all spent fuel arising from the replacement reactor (Attachment 3). Hence, ANSTO has in place firm plans for the management of spent fuel for the lifetime of the current reactor.

ANSTO has therefore updated the Ultimate Disposal and Transfer Plan, a revision of which (RRRP-7200-EDEAN-005-Rev1) is Attachment 4. A compilation of the changes to RRRP-7200-EDEAN-005-Rev0 is Attachment 5.

Yours sincerely

DR IAN SMITH
Executive Director

Atts
cc: G Whitbourn, RRRP Manager
R Cameron, Chief of Operations