



Nuclear Safety Committee

Meeting Minutes

- Date:** 15 March 2019
- Time:** 09:00 to 15:30
- Location:** Level 3, 38-40 Urunga Parade, Miranda
- Chair:** Dr Tamie Weaver
- Members:** Ms Fay Bellis, Mr Ian Drinnan, Mr Tony Irwin, Ms Kerrie-Ann Christian, Dr Carl-Magnus Larsson, Dr John Loy, Mr Stuart Parr, Mr Don Macnab, Dr Peta Miller, Dr Joanna Wriedt
- Apologies:** Mr Peter Wilkinson
- Secretariat:** Mr John Ward, Mr Chris Nickel
- Invitees:** Mr Jim Scott (ARPANSA), Mr Andrew McCormick (ARPANSA), Ms Francesca Wigney (ARPANSA), Mr Vaz Mottl (ARPANSA), Ms Julie Murray (ARPANSA), Dr Samir Sarkar (ARPANSA)
- Observers:** None

The members of the Nuclear Safety Committee expressed their condolences on the passing of Narelle Sharon Archer, a member of ARPANSA's Regulatory Services Branch, who had worked for ARPANSA since its formation. Narelle had supported the NSC in several capacities; her support and always positive attitude to work and life will be sorely missed.

1. Introduction

Item 1.1 Attendance and Apologies

The Nuclear Safety Committee welcomed Dr Peta Miller, new member of the Committee who is appointed for the remainder of the current term.

Mr Peter Wilkinson was an apology for this meeting. All other members were present.

Item 1.2 Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interests

The Committee noted Dr Miller's declaration of a potential conflict of interest due to her role in the preparation of the independent report on safety practices at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), particularly ANSTO Health, following a direction issued to ANSTO by the CEO of ARPANSA. The matter is discussed under item 4.1.

Previously declared potential conflicts of interest are maintained by the secretariat.

Item 1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

Draft minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to members following the meeting. Member comments were addressed, and the minutes have been agreed and published online.

Item 1.4 Meeting dates

The following meeting dates were reviewed and confirmed:

- 21 June 2019
- 1 November 2019

ACTION: Confirm the March 2020 meeting date out of session, for either the 6 or 13 March 2020.

Item 1.5 Safety/Security Moment

A Committee member presented a safety moment on the importance of recognising subtle changes in the workplace caused by factors that are minor if considered individually but may happen to reinforce each other and lead to safety events. The value of effective communication to mitigate such risks was emphasised.

2. Business Arising

Item 2.1 Outstanding Actions

The Committee noted that that outstanding actions were completed.

3. Correspondence

Item 3.1 Incoming Correspondence

Nil

Item 3.2 Outgoing Correspondence

Nil

4. Main Items for Discussion

Item 4.1 ANSTO Health Independent Review

Dr Miller declared a potential conflict of interest due to her role as co-author of the Independent Review Team. The Committee noted Dr Miller's declaration and agreed Dr Miller could contribute to general discussion, but she would recuse herself from any potential decision making on this item; further, Dr Miller would recuse herself from providing comment on the draft Minutes in relation to this item.

[**Note:** The minutes record the deliberations of the Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2019. Since the meeting, ARPANSA has received an updated Implementation Plan, as foreshadowed in the minutes below. This represents a significant improvement including identification of 'Critical Success Factors' and has enabled ARPANSA to provide detailed input into several of the planned actions. ARPANSA, at the time these minutes were published, had not approved the Implementation Plan. ARPANSA anticipates that any outstanding issues should be resolved in discussion with ANSTO.]

On 29 June 2018, the CEO of ARPANSA issued a direction to ANSTO to initiate an independent review of safety practices at ANSTO, particularly in relation to ANSTO Health's activities in Building 23 of the Lucas Heights Science and Technology Centre. The direction requested ANSTO to initiate an independent review and to subsequently submit an action plan for ARPANSA's approval. On 5 October 2018, ANSTO provided ARPANSA with [the report](#) by the Independent Review Team, outlining 85 recommendations to improve ANSTO's occupational radiation safety practices, and operational processes and procedures. This report was previously provided to the Committee.

The Committee was provided with ANSTO's action plan as submitted on 4 December 2019, and ARPANSA's response to it on 20 December 2018. In this response ARPANSA identified that, while the action plan demonstrated that a significant number of actions were proposed and that several actions were already being undertaken, the plan did not provide enough evidence that ANSTO was appropriately addressing the contributing factors as identified in the report and its recommendations.

The Committee was informed that ARPANSA has been working with ANSTO to clarify the expectations set out in ARPANSA's response of 20 December prior to ANSTO submitting a final plan for approval. The Committee noted that ARPANSA intends to approve the implementation plan only when it is satisfied that it addresses the underlying intent of the recommendations made by the Independent Review Team. The deadline for this revised action plan currently remains the 31 March 2019. The Committee supported the approach and stance adopted by ARPANSA and agreed that the current document was not sufficiently mature for approval.

The Committee commented that while the current plan appears to focus on actions that may enable safety outcomes, such as updating procedures and holding workshops, there is currently not a clear emphasis on the objective/strategy and how the desired safety outcomes will be measured and sustained. The Committee considered that the information currently supplied was not enough to determine if the underlying objective of the recommendations of the Independent Review Team were addressed. Clearly stating success factors in the plan would assist in measuring if the intent of the recommendations has been met, and in determining the appropriate information required to close out these actions.

The Committee noted the content of the ANSTO correspondence and action plans and believe that there is a potential for these to give the perception that senior management are distancing themselves from issues. For example, in the comments related to the people surveyed and on issues such as punitive culture, bullying and harassment. The Committee considered that it may be desirable for ANSTO to address this potential misinterpretation, as these are areas where active involvement and visible support from senior management would be key factors for achieving success.

The Committee noted that, regarding the action plan, there was no clear indication of any activities that the Board of ANSTO has undertaken relating to their function of ensuring the proper and efficient operation of ANSTO. The Committee commented that further involvement with the Board may be desirable, to help address the perception of limited engagement by senior management.

The Committee noted that there had been changes to the priorities, and that some of the original priorities had not been transcribed accurately. The Committee agreed that it was appropriate for ANSTO to re-prioritise tasks based on operational considerations. However, the deviations, particularly lowering of priorities, should be further explained and justified.

5. Update on major Controlled Facilities and Inspections

Item 5.1 OPAL

The Committee was provided with an overview of the ANSTO OPAL reactor regulatory performance. This included an update of the maintenance operation to reseal the Cold Neutron Source (CNS) Protective Mesh Cover, which had been dislodged on two of the four seating posts. This movement of the protective cover did not have any direct safety impact. Following voluntary prior notification by ANSTO, ARPANSA inspectors attended and monitored the re-seating operation and planning. NSC noted that the operation was completed with low doses to staff and was considered well conducted. ARPANSA is continuing to monitor the initiating conditions and associated investigations and will update the Committee as work progresses.

Item 5.2 ANSTO Nuclear Medicine Facility (ANM)

The Committee was provided with an overview of the ANM regulatory performance since the last Committee meeting in November 2018, including the progress of the transition through hot-commissioning to a full operational status.

ARPANSA had issued an operating licence for ANM on 12 April 2018. This licence authorised ANSTO to commence 'hot' commissioning of the facility; routine operations had not been authorised and would require completion of actions, to ARPANSA's satisfaction, in relation to several conditions of licence.

ANSTO provided information addressing these licence conditions. This included the updated risk assessment for Building 2 Quality Control Lab, which was provided to the Committee for comment.

The committee noted that following an initial review by ARPANSA, ANSTO has undertaken to provide additional information. ARPANSA is progressing the regulatory review of the submitted information.

Item 5.3 National Radioactive Waste Managemt Facility (NRWMF)

The Committee was provided with a brief overview of the current status of the NRWMF proposals.

Item 5.4 Other Facilities

The Committee was provided with an overview of other relevant regulatory activities. This included issuing a licence to ARPANSA's Medical Radiation Branch located in Melbourne for the operation of a new linear accelerator. The licence was issued following regulatory review by ARPANSA's Regulatory Services Branch, overseen by a state radiation regulator (Queensland Health). The Committee was also updated on a recent chemical spill at ANSTO, and a finding of non-compliance for ANSTO's Camperdown facility.

6. Reports

Item 6.1 ARPANSA significant Activities

The CEO provided an update on significant ARPANSA activities. This included the commissioning of a new Linear Accelerator, and ARPANSA's 20th Anniversary Celebrations and Staff Conference.

Item 6.2 Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

The CEO of ARPANSA presented a summary of the recent activities of the Council including membership, review of a new 'radiation protection of medical personnel' training module, and ARPANSA's study into brain cancer incidence in relation to mobile phone use, recently published in British Medical Journal (Open).

Minutes of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council meetings can be downloaded from the [ARPANSA website](#).

Item 6.3 Radiation Health Committee

The Committee was provided a summary of the recent activities of the Radiation Health Committee including: the updates to the National Directory for Radiation Protection (NDRP) 2nd edition, the Emergency Exposure Guide, and the Australian National Radiation Dose Register (ANRDR).

Minutes of the Radiation Health Committee meetings can be downloaded from the [ARPANSA website](#).

Item 6.4 Member of Public update

No submissions to the member of public were received.

Other Business

Item 6.5 Safety Culture Survey

The Committee was provided with a brief overview of the safety culture self-assessment currently being undertaken by the Regulatory Services Branch of ARPANSA.

Item 6.6 Integrated Regulatory Review Service

The Committee was provided with a brief update on the findings of the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission, which took place from 4 November to 16 November. The report has been [published on the ARPANSA website](#). ARPANSA has commenced actioning the recommendations and suggestions that are relevant to ARPANSA and is working with Commonwealth bodies and jurisdictional regulators to develop a plan for actioning recommendations and suggestions to governments and regulators across Commonwealth, States and Territories.

Item 6.7 GovTeams

The Committee was provided with an overview of the functionality of the new GovTEAMS platform that is being used to manage committee affairs.

7. Information on Nuclear Safety Matters and Regulatory Activities

Item 7.1 Travel Reports

The Committee noted the item.

Item 7.2 Public Consultations and Publications

The Committee noted the item.

8. Closure and Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 15:30, the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 21 June 2019