



## Summary of ANSTO-ARPANSA Liaison Forum (AALF) Meeting

10 September 2020, 10:00 am – 1.00 pm, ANSTO Building 1

### Participants:

ARPANSA	ANSTO
Dr Carl-Magnus Larsson, CEO	Mr Shaun Jenkinson, Acting CEO
Mr Jim Scott, Chief Regulatory Officer	Mr John Edge, Chief Operating Officer
Mr Robert Godfrey, Director, Facility Safety	Mr Hefin Griffiths, Chief Nuclear Officer
	Ms Pamela Naidoo-Ameglio, Group Executive Nuclear Precinct
	Mr Mohammed Ali, Acting Regulatory Affairs Manager
	Mr Steven McIntosh, Senior Manager, Government and International Affairs
	Mr Grant Griffiths, Regulatory Affairs Support
	Mr Alex Borovskis, Operations Leader, Waste Management Services

### Safety Focus

The Acting CEO of ANSTO informed ARPANSA of its current safety focus which is consolidating training requirements, reviewing the number of training programmes, and evaluating the effectiveness of training as part of strengthening ANSTO's nuclear baseline.

### Future Priorities from ARPANSA

ARPANSA stated that its main priorities have been maintaining its functions through the COVID-19 pandemic. Operational challenges have included less face-to-face interactions with stakeholders, including licence holders, and managing the impacts caused by lockdown and border restrictions.

### Future Priorities from ANSTO

ANSTO stated that its main priorities have been its staff and safety. ANSTO has minimised the number of staff onsite to those who are critical for operations and research, including COVID-19 related research. ANSTO remain committed to the production of nuclear medicine which is considered a necessity for the Australian people.

## National Radioactive Waste Management Facility (NRWMF)

ARPANSA will engage closely with the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) concerning the assessment of the design of the NRWMF to minimise risk to the licensing process. ANSTO emphasised the importance of critical assumptions about the waste inventory to minimise risk.

## Guide for Classification of Radioactive Waste (RPS G-4)

ANSTO confirmed that none of its waste holdings exceeded the classification of Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) as defined by the revised guide, RPS G-4. ANSTO also informed ARPANSA that the waste arising from OPAL spent fuel sent to France in 2018 for reprocessing will meet the definition of ILW in RPS G-4.

ARPANSA requested that the inventory of any waste packages dispatched from overseas be provided to ARPANSA well in advance of the shipments leaving the country of dispatch.

## Waste Management Strategy and Waste Stream Analysis

ARPANSA informed ANSTO that the draft waste management strategy provided to ARPANSA needed further work, and that ARPANSA would engage more closely with ANSTO on this issue in the near future. ARPANSA considers that a more integrated approach is required to waste management which considers all the following:

- Projections of waste inventory generated in the future
- Contingency planning
- Identification of critical points in time where decisions may need to be made
- Plans for waste treatment and waste storage capacities for different waste streams

ANSTO informed ARPANSA of the recent work it has undertaken on its waste stream analysis which ARPANSA acknowledged was a positive step forward in developing its waste management strategy.

ARPANSA stated that it requires a clear systematic plan from ANSTO which will assist in managing the different waste streams, and provide appropriate input into the development of the Waste Acceptance Criteria for the NRWMF.

## Interim Waste Store (IWS) licence condition 5 and ANSTO Nuclear Medicine (ANM) licence condition 14

ARPANSA indicated that ANSTO has essentially met the intent of IWS licence condition 5, although some further information is required. More information is required on the contingency plans for dealing with the TN-81 cask(s) at the IWS, and the radiological equivalency of radioactive waste returned from overseas. ANSTO informed ARPANSA that the return of the radioactive waste to Australia from the UK Nuclear Decommissioning Authority at Sellafield in the UK is subject to a robust verification process to ensure the radioactive waste inventory returned to Australia is equivalent to that originally sent to the UK in HIFAR spent fuel.

With regards to licence condition 14 on ANM, ARPANSA indicated that the information provided in the ANSTO response was not sufficient to remove this licence condition yet, and more information would need

to be provided to ARPANSA, particularly details of contingency plans should components of the ILW management system not eventuate or fail.

## SyMo construction licence

ANSTO confirmed that the construction status of the SyMo facility is well-advanced, although recent progress has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. ARPANSA indicated that the ANSTO request to remove licence condition 3 from the SyMo licence is likely to be approved which should allow cold commissioning of the SyMo plant to commence.

## Little Forest Legacy Site (LFLS)

ANSTO provided an update on its response to the ARPANSA licence condition on the LFLS requiring a plan for the medium and long term management of the site. ANSTO informed ARPANSA it had used the UK nuclear industry Code of Practice for Best Available Techniques (BAT) for management of the generation and disposal of radioactive waste. Under ANSTO's plan, it is proposed that a geomembrane will be designed and constructed over the disposal trenches to provide a barrier to prevent water ingress and subsequent radionuclide migration from the trenches, subject to regulatory approval. The trenches will then be monitored to validate the performance of the geomembrane.

ARPANSA indicated that it is currently reviewing the plan and aims to provide a response to ANSTO before 31 December 2020.

## ANSTO Nuclear Safety Review

ANSTO briefed ARPANSA on its recent safety review at controlled facilities which is a follow-on action from the ANSTO Health independent safety review. This review has looked at the various factors which affect nuclear safety, including people, plant and process factors. This is an open and transparent review of key aspects of nuclear safety whose aim is to identify any systemic safety issues for reporting back to the ANSTO Executive. This exercise will also allow good practices to be identified and shared.

ARPANSA informed ANSTO that they have recruited an organisational psychologist with human factors experience. They also acknowledged ANSTO's important work in improving safety culture in its organisation, and welcomed any lessons learned that can be shared between the two organisations.

## ANSTO Management Licence (formerly known as the 'ANSTO Site Licence')

ANSTO provided ARPANSA with an update on its work in this area, including provision of a management plan set of documents which covers the ANSTO facility licences. This will allow better integration of the ANSTO management system processes.

ARPANSA supports this plan. The proposal will undergo legal review to assess compatibility with the ARPANS Act and Regulations.

## Government Expansion of Emergency Powers

ANSTO indicated the proposed expansion of powers of Emergency Management Australia which could potentially conflict with ARPANSA's powers under the ARPANS Act. ANSTO is proposing to include a

provision in the Emergency Management Act to the effect that the ARPANS Act requirements will apply where there is potential conflict.

## **Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA)**

ANSTO indicated that ARWA is developing a strategy to recruit suitably qualified and experienced people to their organisation. ANSTO is considering establishing a secondment arrangement from ANSTO to ARWA where particular skill sets are required.

## **ANSTO Regulatory Submissions**

ARPANSA reminded ANSTO that early engagement on any upcoming submissions was key to prompt assessment, particularly when the category of the submission was marginal under section 63/section 64 of the ARPANS regulations, in which case the determination form should be supplied to ARPANSA well in advance.

## **Next meeting**

The next AALF meeting will be held at ARPANSA's Miranda Office at a date to be determined, subject to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time.