

# Radiation Health & Safety Advisory Council

an advisory body to the CEO of ARPANSA, established under the ARPANS Act 1998  
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## DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING OF 12 APRIL 2002

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## **1 OPENING OF MEETING AND ATTENDANCE**

Council met at the Stamford Hotel, Sydney Airport on 12 April 2002. The following were present:

Members: Dr Rick McLean (Chair)  
Dr Nick de Klerk  
Dr Arthur Johnston  
Dr John Loy  
Mr Peter Raue  
Dr Richard Smart  
Dr Garry Smith  
Ms Sylvia Kidziak  
Mrs Jill Fitch

Secretariat: Mr Alan Melbourne  
Ms Rosemary Marcon

Dr McLean opened the meeting at 9:30 am and welcomed all members.

## **2 APOLOGIES**

Dr Lorraine Robb, Ms Lorraine Plues, Dr Graeme Dickie

## **3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 30 NOVEMBER 2001 MEETING**

The minutes were confirmed without amendment.

## **4 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Council was advised that letters had been sent to all cardiology centres informing them of radiation protection issues. The letter was jointly signed by Dr McLean and Prof Muller of the Cardiac Society. It was not known whether there had been any response to the letter to date. A teleconference would be held with Prof Muller to ascertain details of any responses and to develop a questionnaire to seek additional information from cardiology centres.

## **5 PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE WORKING GROUP**

Council considered a short paper on precautionary approaches in radiation protection, which had been prepared as advice to the CEO. Council members provided comment on the paper. These further drafting suggestions will be considered before finalising the paper at the next meeting. Council also noted that a longer version of the paper had been circulated to The Australian & New Zealand Food Authority, the Office of Gene Technology, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration for comment. No responses had been received as yet. The longer paper would be published in an appropriate journal after consideration of the comment received.

## **6 RADIOFREQUENCY STANDARD - ADVICE ON ADOPTION OF STANDARD**

Council discussed the final version of the RF Standard, and noted the completion of the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) process, and the development of a plain language question and answer guide (Q & A Guide) to be published at the same time as the Standard. Council made recommendations for some further editing of the Q & A Guide, and recommended that it be reviewed and edited to simplify the language wherever possible. Ms Plues, although not attending the meeting, had forwarded comments on the Standard and the regulatory impact statement (see attachment), which were considered by Council.

Council noted that the appropriate processes and procedures had been followed, and advised the CEO that he might consider adoption of the Standard, while noting comment from Ms Plues that the RIS did not meet NSW requirements, and from Dr Smith who had reservations about the wording of the precautionary statement in the plain language guide. Dr Smith would provide suggested wording for a paragraph to be included in the guide on this issue.

Council was also provided with a copy of the Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) Code of Practice, which had recently been made available via the ACIF web site.

## **7 COUNCIL RADIOACTIVE WASTE WORKING GROUP**

Council discussed a draft report developed to respond to a request from the CEO for advice on radioactive waste issues, and considered a range of options for completing the task. In particular, the draft needed to be re-focussed on issues relevant to the original task. It was agreed that mining was outside the scope of the original request. Council decided that the report needed to:

- give an overview of existing waste;
- how it should be handled in future to ensure safety;
- what codes of practice should be used;
- how to measure against world's best practice; and
- what needed to be better managed.

Mrs Fitch and Ms Kidziak would provide comment on the structure and scope of the report to be prepared, and then a small group would complete the drafting by editing the existing draft into the required structure.

In regard to the summary of Acts, regulations and policy documents on radioactive waste, it was agreed to clarify the issues raised by Ms Plues relating to NSW, but otherwise not proceed at present.

## **8 NATIONAL ELF SURVEY**

Council noted the proposed national survey on residential ELF levels in Australian homes, and that funding of the survey was still not determined. Council supported the concept that a study of this type was of national importance.

## **9 COUNCIL - FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND AGENDA**

Council discussed a short paper that identified possible future agenda items. Issues discussed included the need for a clearer link to the ARPANSA strategic plan, whether Council should produce or review documents, independence of Council, identification of things not being done in Australia that perhaps should be, and further involvement in the work of the Committees. Written suggestions forwarded by Lorraine Plues were noted. It was agreed that a position paper would be developed for the next meeting to cover Council Operational Issues and Future Directions.

Council also discussed suggestions for the skills mix of the next Council to be appointed by the Minister later this year. It was agreed that risk communication expertise would be useful.

## **10 PROGRESS REPORT ON CONSTRUCTION LICENCE APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT RESEARCH REACTOR**

The CEO briefed Council on the construction licence issued to ANSTO for the replacement research reactor, which had been announced on 5 April 2002. A Media Release, the Licence, and the CEO's Statement of Reasons were provided to Council and were now available on the web site, however the Regulatory Assessment Report was not yet available. The CEO described in detail the conditions that had been applied to the licence.

The conditions covered:

- undertakings and obligations;
- the nominee;
- contractors;
- construction of items important for safety;
- commissioning of items important for safety;
- updating of the safety case;
- review of human factors;
- computer codes;
- procedure for change control;
- facility staffing;
- emergency arrangements;
- security arrangements; and
- record-keeping and reporting.

Council noted that the wording of the licence conditions was such that it could serve as a model set of conditions for other projects. Council also discussed the issue of supporting information and noted the importance of having as much supporting documentation as possible available at the time a decision is announced.

## **11 REPORT FROM THE CEO**

The CEO reported that in relation to the Strontium-90 testing issue, the matter had been referred to the Australian Health Ethics Committee, and their advice had gone to the Minister. An announcement was expected soon. It is understood that the advice recommends that ARPANSA information be supplied to the States and Territories and individual hospitals, so that institutions would have all available information to assist in

dealing with requests from families. Samples can be returned to families if requested. The issue of disposal of samples not requested would be considered again in a few years time.

In relation to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty radionuclide monitoring stations, ARPANSA now managed operating stations in Perth, Melbourne, Darwin and Townsville. Stations were being planned or constructed in Macquarie Island, Cocos Islands, Papua-New Guinea and Antarctica.

The CEO also advised that ARPANSA's Personal Radiation Monitoring Service had recently received NATA accreditation, and that he would be involved in an IAEA process for developing a Code of Conduct for Research Reactors.

## **12 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Dr Barbara Shields, who had chaired the recent RHC meeting on 20-21 March 2002 in Mr Critchley's absence, joined the meeting by phone to provide the RHC report. Dr Shields advised of RHC's approval of the RF Standard, recommendations to the Mining Code working group, and a recommendation to the Intervention Levels working group to include additional justification for the levels chosen for iodine prophylaxis for children. Proposals, including a national register of major radioactive sources, will be considered in response to an IAEA initiative on safety and security of sources. Several other draft codes, including Research with Human Subjects, Discharge of Patients undergoing Treatment with Radioactive Substances are nearing public comment stage. For the Soil moisture/density Gauge Code the working group had been requested to provide a radiation safety case for the monitoring requirements. This is to overcome the current non-uniformity in approaches from regulators in different jurisdictions. There might be opportunity for Council input into RHC priorities later this year, when some of the current tasks are completed.

### **12.2 Report from the Nuclear Safety Committee**

Ms Kidziak advised that NSC had completed its report to the CEO on the three key issues on which he had requested advice. These were:

1. Seismic design as related to safety systems
2. Accident analyses in the Preliminary Safety Analysis Report
3. Spent fuel management and radioactive waste disposal.

Ms Kidziak informed Council of the working group process that had led to the final report, including meetings with INVAP, overseas experts, and ARPANSA staff. Council congratulated the NSC on the huge amount of work involved and the professional result.

The CEO was to report to the next meeting of the NSC on the reasons for his licensing decision and his consideration of their Report.

Ms Kidziak will also discuss priorities for NSC, including input into safety critical projects, with the CEO. It was also noted that Council priorities should be advised to the Committees.

### **13 OTHER BUSINESS**

Council was advised of progress in all jurisdictions on adoption of the 2001 Transport Code. ARPANSA and 3 State/Territory jurisdictions have adopted the Code already. Other jurisdictions had commenced adoption procedures, but expected the processes would not be completed for another 2-3 months. Council requested a further update at its next meeting.

### **14 CLOSURE AND NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 9 August 2002 at Miranda. The meeting was closed at 3 pm.

RELEASED BY ARPANSA UNDER FOI MAY 2019

## ATTACHMENT - LORRAINE PLUES COMMENTS

### Agenda Item 6.1 - Draft RF Standard

Lorraine Plues advised that if the draft standard is published without a quantitative regulatory impact statement it will not be suitable for adoption on the National Directory for Radiation Protection.

Should ARPANSA publish the document, any reference to 'approved by the Radiation Health Committee' and the 'Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council advised the CEO to adopt..' should be removed. NSW representatives on each committee do not support the Regulatory Impact Statement. These statements are only appropriate for the adoption of documents on to the National Directory and it is premature to have them on this standard. More appropriate words may be 'developed by the Radiation Health Committee' [See ARPANS Act 1998, section 23 (1) (b)]. Both these committees are advisory only and do not have majority decision approving powers under the ARPANS Act. Decisions have to be reached by consensus and differing opinions have to go forward.

### Agenda Item 6.2 - Comments on the RF Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS)

Lorraine Plues advised that there are problems with the Regulatory Impact Statement that have been raised formally with ARPANSA and not taken into account. The Regulatory Impact Statement does not meet the COAG guidelines or the NSW Government guidelines for conducting regulatory impact statements. The Regulatory Impact Statement is not supported.

The RIS has a heavy bias of comparing the draft ARPANSA standard with the ICNIRP:1998 without similar treatment of comparing the draft with the expired SAA 1998 (interim) standard. The Plain English Q&A guide actually deals with this much better.