



Summary of ANSTO-ARPANSA Liaison Forum (AALF) Meeting

10 April 2024 3 pm – 4:15 pm, ANSTO Lucas Heights

Participants:

ARPANSA	ANSTO
Dr Gillian Hirth, CEO	Mr Shaun Jenkinson, CEO
Mr Jim Scott, Chief Regulatory Officer	Mr John Edge, Chief Operating Officer (virtual)
Dr Samir Sarkar, Acting Director, Waste, Transport and Decommissioning	Mr Aaron Flett, Acting Chief Nuclear Officer
Mr Grant Beamish, Senior Regulatory Officer	Mr Jakob Vujcic, General Manager, Regulatory & Governance (virtual)
Mr Vaz Mottl, Director, Facility Safety	Mr Con Lyras, Chief Engineer
Mr Rodger Tranter	Ms Pamela Naidoo-Ameglio, Group Executive Nuclear Operations and Nuclear Medicine
	Ms Ciara Collins, Manager Regulatory Affairs and Compliance
	Mr David Vittorio, OPAL Reactor Manager
	Ms Jade Greenhalgh, Senior Manager, Regulatory Affairs & Compliance (virtual)
	Ms Paula Berghofer, General Manager, Waste Management Services (virtual)

Strategic Overview from ARPANSA

Support of the nuclear submarine program will remain one of ARPANSA's key activity areas aligned with the national priorities. Timely recruitment of resources has continued to present challenges over the recent period and a tight job market in the industry will remain for the foreseeable future. However, ARPANSA remains confident that submissions will be assessed with appropriate prioritisation.

It is anticipated that ongoing reviews of Regulatory Services Branch processes will continue to bring improved efficiency and effectiveness. In cooperation with other regulatory agencies, including ASNO, ARPANSA is planning to develop a National Nuclear Regulatory Competency Framework.

The regulatory inspection program has been reduced this financial year due to prioritisation of critical licence application work and the subsequent resource reallocation. The inspection program will be gradually restored considering the backlog of safety submissions.

ARPANSA mentioned the value in changes to the ANSTO Safety and Reliability Assurance process. ARPANSA works with the ANSTO Chief Nuclear Officer and Regulatory Affairs and working effectively together to ensure process alignment and optimisation on both ends. Both CEOs agreed the value of the work.

Roll out of the new Regulatory Administration Database (RAD) system has commenced and will continue throughout 2024 with the progressive release of modules to the production environment. ANSTO's participation in the testing phase is essential for successful completion of the project, which will streamline the regulatory processes and communication between ARPANSA and licence holders.

ARPANSA is working cooperatively with the Office of Nuclear-Powered Submarine Regulatory Design to support development of regulatory experience. This may include participation as Observers in relevant parts of ARPANSA's inspection program and knowledge transfer of how ARPANSA undertakes its licensing and safety submission assessments.

Strategic Overview from ANSTO

ANSTO presented updates on its current major projects.

The new Nuclear Medicine Manufacturing Facility (NMMF) project, which will eventually replace the Building 23 facility, is in the initial planning stage.

The project to increase capacity of intermediate-level solid waste storage originally licensed by ARPANSA under a siting licence will be modified to accommodate the storage of legacy liquid waste originating from previous nuclear medicine production processes and currently held in Building 57.

ANSTO's Synchrotron facility has been upgraded recently for new beamlines. The number of the beamlines will grow in near future to further increase utilisation and effectiveness of the facility.

ANSTO advised that more major submissions were in planning, more than had been previously submitted. and acknowledged the likely resourcing impacts to ARPANSA.

ANSTO mentioned that an external review of engineering services had been undertaken across the organisation.

Current Key Regulatory Work

OPAL submissions update

ARPANSA updated ANSTO on the assessment of the Cold Neutron Source (CNS) and First Reactor Protection System replacement (FRPS) submissions. The regulatory assessments identified areas for improvement that will be communicated to ANSTO in upcoming weeks.

HIFAR Decommissioning Licence assessment

The regulatory assessment of the HIFAR Decommissioning Licence application submitted to ARPANSA in 2023 is envisaged to be completed by the end of May provided no major issues are identified. ANSTO informed ARPANSA that the decommissioning is intended to commence in the FY 2024-25.

Camperdown Facility

The decommissioning licence application date for the facility depends on the date when ANSTO releases the site, which is yet to be determined. ANSTO is negotiating a new lease term of the building to suit current decommissioning timelines.

Intermediate Level Waste Capacity Increase

Design work is continuing for the Intermediate Level Waste Capacity Increase (ILWCI), including for the storage of ILLW to be moved from Building 57, to allow ANSTO to progress to a Construction Licence Application. ANSTO noted this will likely require reconsideration of the EPBC determination with the Department of Conservation, Environment, Energy and Water (DCEEW).

SyMo Operating Licence Application

SyMo Operating licence is currently in the ANSTO internal review process and is expected to be submitted to ARPANSA next calendar year. Work is ongoing to assess options to replace the SyMo transfer duct from ANSTO Nuclear Medicine.

Compliance

ARPANSA noted that compliance breaches are only considered closed when all rectification actions are closed, and the evidence provided to the satisfaction of ARPANSA. This is reflected on the ARPANSA website. ARPANSA will not assess safety significant submissions relevant to the licence submitted during the time that safety related breach actions are pending. ARPANSA expects ANSTO to prioritise the actioning and closing of safety related breaches.

Other business

Licence Holder Forum

ARPANSA shared details of the upcoming Licence Holder Forum to be held on 2 May 2024 in Melbourne.

ARPANSA Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) meeting

The third ARPANSA Nuclear Safety Committee meeting of 2024 will be held in Sydney. ARPANSA requested that NSC members be allowed to attend the ANSTO Lucas Heights site for familiarisation purposes. ANSTO agreed and ARPANSA will confirm dates as soon as possible to support effective planning.

ARPANSA s63 process improvements

A meeting is planned for 24th April between ARPANSA and ANSTO to continue the discussion for improving the effectiveness of the s63 submission process.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held by the end of calendar year 2024 at ANSTO. This is due to possible unavailability of ARPANSA's Miranda office for planned renovation which is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.