

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: ANSTO

Output Group: ANSTO

DEST Question No. E717_07

Senator Wong asked on 1 November 2006, EWRE Hansard page 36:

Question:

How many incidents were reported to ARPANSA for the March quarter? Could you take on notice in relation to each incident reported to ARPANSA in the March quarter details including what occurred, the dates on which it occurred, whether staff were involved and whether there was any escape of radioactive substances into the environment? Can you also indicate when each incident was reported to ARPANSA—and you might want to relate that to the protocols that you have indicated to me as to the time frames for reporting; if and when each incident was reported to the minister; and what steps ANSTO has taken to avoid this in the future? If it is possible, could you do that in relation to all licences? That would include ARI, would it not?

Answer:

ANSTO has provided the following response:

ARPANSA quarterly report

No accidents requiring notification under ARPANS Regulation 46 were reported to ARPANSA in the first quarter of 2006.

Four abnormal operating occurrences in HIFAR in the first quarter of 2006 were reported to ARPANSA. All were rated as Level 0 on the INES event scale, and had no safety significance. None resulted in any exposure to workers or releases to the environment. The details of those events were:

- 21 January 2006. Accidental trip (shut down) of the reactor.
- 24 January 2006. Instrumentation defect.
- 18 February 2006. Instrumentation defect.
- 2 March 2006. Accidental trip (shut down) of the reactor.

These occurrences were reported to ARPANSA in the quarterly report.

ARI reported five events:

- 9 February 2006: Dose to a worker that triggered an internal investigation but was well within statutory dose limits set by ARPANSA.
- 20 January 2006: Unexpectedly high radiation readings during unloading of an industrial radiation source. Doses to workers were very small.

- 3 March 2006: Dose to workers that triggered an internal investigation but were well within statutory dose limits set by ARPANSA.
- 12 March 2006: Dose to a worker that triggered an internal investigation but was well within statutory dose limits set by ARPANSA.
- 28 March 2006: High radiation reading. Dose to a worker that triggered an internal investigation but was well within statutory dose limits set by ARPANSA.

All these events were INES Level 0 (of no safety significance) and were reported to ARPANSA in the relevant quarterly report.

No other events which required reporting to ARPANSA occurred in the first quarter of this year.

None of the events were reported to the Minister.

All incidents are recorded as non-conformances in relevant quality management systems and databases. Management, in consultation as necessary with ANSTO Safety and Radiation Science, then considers whether corrective actions are appropriate. Such actions might include training of staff, changes in procedures or modifications to equipment. If the changes or modifications are of safety significance, relevant ARPANSA approvals are sought. In the cases outlined above, where necessary, appropriate corrective actions have been taken.