



Australian Government



Nuclear-based science benefiting all Australians

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

Media release

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Green light for Australian/French nuclear science partnership

ANSTO CEO Dr Adi Paterson was in Paris this week to sign an agreement with his counterpart, Professor Bernard Bigot, head of the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA). This means ANSTO and CEA will partner more widely in research areas such as nuclear medicine, life sciences, radiation therapy, safety and radiological protection.

The signing took place this week at *The International Conference on access to Civil Nuclear Energy* attended by 1400 delegates from across the globe. Opened by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, it is one of a series of conferences preceding the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

“CEA, with more than 15 000 staff, is a leader in research, development and innovation in Europe. ANSTO has key research programs that have become possible because of our state-of-the-art OPAL research reactor and our unique accelerator capabilities which make it mutually attractive to collaborate more intensively.” Dr Paterson said.

ANSTO and the CEA first joined forces in 1992, signing a cooperation agreement on the peaceful uses of advanced nuclear technology. It enabled important collaborative projects in areas such as medical imaging, radioactive waste forms and environmental research.

ANSTO researchers have also been involved in climate and atmospheric pollution monitoring in Europe as well as specialised medical imaging in collaboration with CEA. “It is crucial that Australia continues to have a seat at the European table” Paterson said.

In the last 18 months, ANSTO’s Reactor Operations General Manager, Dr Greg Storr, has collaborated with his French counterparts who are building the new Jules Horowitz Reactor (JHR) at Cadarache in the South of France due for completion in 2014. Cadarache is fast becoming a key global nuclear innovation hub with a number of scientific mega-projects underway.

“Australia benefits greatly from engaging in international research and development collaborations,” Dr Storr added. “Programs like these, which bring key skills, capabilities and facilities within the reach of Australian scientists, allow our experts to work in research activities of global significance. Our French colleagues are also keen to learn more about our cutting edge projects and in partnership use and develop state-of-the-art facilities. In this context it made sense to re-establish a strong and comprehensive research agreement.”

Construction of the Jules Horowitz Reactor, the ITER (originally known as the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) fusion reactor, and new funding for sodium cooled fast reactors received by CEA as part of a €1 billion French stimulus package, is clear evidence of the rapid expansion of nuclear science and technology globally.

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