Media Profile

Dr Ron Cameron
Executive General Manager - Strategy, Government and International Relations

With more than 25 years experience in nuclear science and technology, Dr Ron Cameron took up his current position at ANSTO in April 2009.

Previously Chief of Operations, Dr Cameron acted as ANSTO’s CEO from May 2008 until March 2009, when Dr Adi Paterson took up the position.

In 2003, Dr Cameron was attached to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

This was preceded by two other roles, one as ANSTO’s Director of Safety and Radiation Science Division (1994 to 2002), and the other as Manager of its Safety and Reliability Centre (1992 to 1994).

Today, as a member of the ANSTO Executive, Dr Cameron’s focus is on the strategic management of the organisation.

As Executive General Manager, he oversees strategic planning, government interactions and international affairs, as well as championing the national security research and representing ANSTO on the boards of two spin-off companies, a US waste-form company, and the medical isotope company, PETNET Solutions.

Dr Cameron is also the Australian coordinator for activities within the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia, and the Australia National Representative for the IAEA Regional Cooperative Agreement, among 17 countries in the region.

Dr Cameron says his role is diverse and provides many challenges.

“There is a continual need for systematic, targeted and effective positioning of ANSTO as a major contributor to government policies, healthcare, scientific research, environmental issues and industrial competitiveness,” he said. “It is, therefore, important that we interact with the right stakeholders, at the right level.

“Our major stakeholders include the community, government, international organisations, regulators, the media, business and the science communities, so liaisons need to be both strategic and tactical.

“In my position there is never a dull moment and the challenges are constant. This, in turn, means the rewards are great, particularly as I need to interact with such a diverse range of people interested in what ANSTO can do.
“For example, having had a major role in the construction of ANSTO’s replacement reactor (OPAL) was particularly rewarding, while representing ANSTO on the international stage is fascinating.”

Day-to-day, much of Dr Cameron’s time is focussed on defining and implementing ANSTO’s strategic directions, national security issues, dealing with requests for advice and information, positioning ANSTO more effectively in national and international forums and organisational planning for key milestones relating to interactions with government and other stakeholders.

“Solid relationship-building is imperative, as one measurement of success is stakeholder feedback relating to their interactions with, and awareness of, ANSTO and its capabilities,” he said.

“For me, thinking strategically, taking time to plan well, being calm in a crisis and striving to be tactful and diplomatic when dealing with sensitive issues is the key to being effective. These are skills I have learned over the years,” Dr Cameron said.

For Dr Cameron one of the most influential decisions in his career was to leave an early teaching position in London in 1978 to undertake a D. Phil at Oxford, which led to work in nuclear-related research in the United Kingdom.

This was followed by his decision to emigrate to Australia to set up a non-nuclear centre for risk and reliability engineering at the University of Sydney, and accepting the position as ANSTO’s Director of Safety, which meant becoming involved in the replacement reactor process.

“All these career decisions, my values and personality, plus my overall experience definitely play a major part in influencing whatever it is I am working on,” said Dr Cameron.

“I think to be a good leader you need to be aware of your external environment and keep your eye on the big picture of what an organisation is about and where it’s going.

“Also of great importance is the ability to listen, motivate and mentor people, remaining aware of external and internal influences as well as having good managerial, leadership and planning skills,” he said.

Overall, Dr Cameron says his career has had major highlights, the most recent being the full power operation of the replacement reactor, OPAL.

“It is always very satisfying to see results and be able to clearly mark achievements. Receiving the construction and then operating licence were definitely two of these moments,” he said.

For Dr Cameron, the major influences in his life are his family and his Christian values.

“They help me to be positive in all that I do, which is good for me and consequently good for my staff, I hope,” he said. “It is important that staff feel appreciated and believe they are making a difference. This, in turn, helps build good internal relationships and trigger a
stimulating work environment. I strive to achieve this for my staff which, in turn, has a positive effect on me.

“I believe my values motivate me to try and treat people fairly and with respect, to recognise that they are more than the work they do, and that more can be achieved if we work together and have consensus on what direction we are following,” he added.

In his spare time, relaxation comes from walking, cycling or tennis with friends, followed by a good meal together. Playing golf with his son is a pleasure, although Dr Cameron admits his son usually beats him, and finally a good concert or movie provides a pleasant distraction from the workplace.

“Some of my relaxation comes from physical activity, but most enjoyment is the result of being in good company,” concludes Dr Cameron.

(Ends)

For more information please contact Sharon Kelly, Media Adviser on (02) 9717 9575 or 0400 394 085