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Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

## Media Release

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# Australia's First Nuclear Reactor Declared a National Engineering Landmark

Today, Australia's key engineering body - Engineers Australia - officially declared ANSTO<sup>1</sup>'s first nuclear reactor HIFAR<sup>2</sup>, a national engineering landmark.

"We are delighted that Australia's peak engineering body has recognised the heritage and engineering significance of HIFAR," said ANSTO Executive Director Dr Ian Smith.

"While the spotlight has often been on HIFAR's achievements as a nuclear research reactor and supplier of radiopharmaceuticals for nuclear medicine, the significant engineering effort that went into building and maintaining HIFAR has sometimes been overlooked," said Dr Smith. "Now is the time to salute this great piece of engineering and those who made it possible."

The ceremony was attended by Mr Warren Newell President of Engineers Australia, Sydney, ANSTO's local Federal Member of Parliament, the Hon. Danna Vale MP and Sutherland Shire Mayor David Redmond.

Officially shutdown in January this year, HIFAR was the basis for Australia's ongoing national interest in peaceful applications of nuclear technology world-wide and was central to Australia's international nuclear cooperation programs.

"During 47 years of full-power operation HIFAR provided training for several generations of nuclear engineers and scientists," said Dr Smith. "HIFAR enabled Australia to pioneer many applications of nuclear science and technology in industry, medicine and education.

"HIFAR is associated with a number of eminent nuclear scientists and engineers, notably Sir John Phillip Baxter and Charles Watson-Munro," Dr Smith said.

Access to HIFAR's neutron beams by all Australian universities led to the development of internationally recognised expertise in scientific research in the field of neutron diffraction, and justified the highly sophisticated neutron beam facilities which have been built at Australia's new state-of-the art research reactor, OPAL.

HIFAR is now undergoing a decommissioning process entailing a step-by-step dismantling of the reactor, ancillary equipment and buildings. This process will take up to 10 years to complete and will be conducted under the watchful eyes of ANSTO's regulator, ARPANSA<sup>3</sup>, and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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**For more information and to arrange an interview please contact:**

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<sup>1</sup> ANSTO is the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, the country's national nuclear research and development organisation and the centre of Australian nuclear expertise.

<sup>2</sup> The Hiflux Australian Reactor

<sup>3</sup> Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency.