

R 94.008  
18 OCT. 1957

[REDACTED]

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT - ATOMIC WEAPON TESTS  
SIXTH MEETING, FRIDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 1957.

NOTES ON AGENDA

Item 44 Confirmation of minutes of fifth meeting held on 26th August, 1957.

No amendments notified.

Item 45 Operation Antler - Review by Trials Director

Item 46 Sixth Progress Report - Maralinga Range Support Unit.

[REDACTED] Report not yet to hand.

Item 47 Maralinga - Requirement for Blood Counts during Inter-trials periods

[REDACTED] Will propose to the Board that any person going to Maralinga for a period of 5 days or more during inter-trials periods must have a blood count taken before he arrives on site.

This matter has previously been discussed by the Board, the Safety Committee and N.R.A.C. although not specifically to the inter-trials periods. The following are extracts from decisions:-

(a) Board

"It was desirable that all should have blood counts. Civilians refusing to submit to a blood count will be deemed unsuitable for entry to radioactive areas."

(b) Safety Committee

"Reaffirmed its lack of confidence in the usefulness of blood counting as a low level radiation monitor. Its members resolved they did not intend to have blood counts."

(c) N.R.A.C.

"This question was referred to the N.R.A.C. by the Safety Committee which had been asked to give its opinion on the value of the data which might be extracted from blood count records for Service personnel posted to Maralinga. The Safety Committee had been of the opinion that blood counting was of little value, the film badge being a more sensitive detector of low level radiation. The Committee concurred on this point and resolved that the N.R.A.C. doubts if any useful information can be obtained from blood counting in relation to weapon tests."

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Item 48 Maralinga - Future Trials Programme - Current Position

Chairman. The Australian Government has been notified by the U.K. Government that in the event of early developments of other commitments there would appear to be little possibility of a further series of major trials being held at Maralinga during 1958. A firm decision is expected to be taken at the end of November. If no major tests are held at Maralinga next year the U.K. hope to resume kiloton trials at the Range in subsequent years.

It is understood, however, that irrespective of the decision taken at the end of November, minor trials will continue to be conducted during 1958.

Item 49 Maralinga - Maintenance and Works Programmes subsequent to Operation ARTIST.

Will say that based on the assumption that no major trials will be held at Maralinga during 1958, he is at present preparing proposals for submission to the U.K. covering a restricted works programme and the general maintenance requirements of the area.

Item 50 Maralinga - Preliminary estimates of personnel required during 1958 to man Range on a standby basis.

Chairman. At a recent meeting between [redacted] and [redacted] it was estimated that 306 personnel would be needed to man the Range on a standby basis during 1958. This estimate is made up of 256 Service personnel (100 Australian and 156 U.K.), plus 38 from civilian agencies and 12 civilian employees. Perhaps [redacted] could inform the Board if there has been any alteration to this overall figure as a result of the proposals he is at present preparing on the Works and Maintenance programmes.

[redacted] - to speak.

Chairman. A communication from the Secretary, Department of the Navy, on the subject of the R.A.N. contribution to the Maralinga Range Support Unit was referred to the Defence Committee at its meeting on 10th October. The relative paragraphs are as under:-

"The present R.A.N. contribution of 44 comprises mainly engineering, electrical and supply ratings and most of these are in senior categories which are critically short for manning the Fleet.

The manpower position in the R.A.N. is deteriorating rapidly and drastic measures are urgently necessary in order to save further ships of the Fleet being paid off.

The Naval Board reluctantly recommends that the 44 Naval ratings at present at Maralinga should be relieved at the earliest possible date by either civilians or other Services in order that they may be diverted to priority Naval tasks."

NOTE: The R.A.N. contribution to the Maralinga Range Support Unit is :-

Basic Force	25
Preparatory Phase	37 - 1st March
Operational Phase	44 - 1st July to 30 Nov.

Item 51 Other business.