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| **Date** | 6 March 2024 |
| **Time** | 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM |
| **Location** | 619 Lower Plenty Road, Yallambie Victoria 3085, and Virtual (Microsoft Teams) |
| **Members** | Joanna Wriedt (Chair), Gillian Hirth (CEO of ARPANSA), Fay Bellis, Hazel Upton (WA), Simon Critchley (QLD), Karen Marler (NSW), Penny Hill (ACT), Glenn Riley (VIC), Stephen Newbery (TAS), Daniel Bellifemine (SA), Bradley Feldtman (NT), Tom Sullivan |
| **Invitees** | Nathan Wahl, Jim Scott, Rick Tinker, Ivan Williams, James Wheaton, Arne Biesiekierski, Fiona Charalambous |
| **Apologies** | Stuart Parr |

**Radiation Health Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**



agenda items start:

## Introduction and Housekeeping

The Chair acknowledged the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin nation land on which the meeting was held, paying respect paid to their Elders past and present. The chair introduced Karen Marler and Tom Sullivan as new members for the current term.

A potential conflict of interest was declared by Mr Sullivan related to his employment at the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The December RHC meeting minutes were presented with two open comments accepted for discussion regarding fluoroscopy testing in the draft compliance testing standard and a proposal to produce a code on x-ray screening for security purposes.

**Decision:** The draft December 2023 Minutes were endorsed subject to these comment resolutions.

## ARPANSA CEO Update

ARPANSA’s CEO gave an update on recent agency activities across the agency. This included assessing regulatory submissions from ANSTO for upgrades to the OPAL reactor; work associated with the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Bill 2023 that has been tabled in Parliament to establish a framework to regulate the nuclear safety aspects of Australia’s nuclear-powered submarine enterprise; development of a Regulatory Administration Database (RAD) portal; and a Safety Culture Assessment that was undertaken in late 2023. ARPANSA has also been engaging with the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency to understand the next steps that will be undertaken to develop alternative proposals for the storage and disposal of the Commonwealth’s civilian low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste, following the August 2023 decision to not pursue a waste disposal facility at the Napandee site in South Australia.

ARPANSA has also worked to update its calorimetric primary standard; develop a 4D audit service for the Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service; and hold an ACDS Stakeholder Engagement Day.

Emergency management activities have included ARPANSA’s participation in a counter-terrorism exercise in February 2024, operational support for submarine visits to Western Australia, and the upcoming INEX-6 Exercise (further details below).

International activities included advice to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on matters such as Fukushima releases of ALPS treated water and the conflict in Ukraine; attending International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safety Standards committee meetings; and preparing Australia’s national report to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. ARPANSA will give a future update on the IAEA’s work program to aid RHC work prioritisation.

 The CEO also noted ongoing work to develop an Environmental Monitoring Framework to support regulatory monitoring, establish principles for risk assessments, and provide public transparency.

The RHC received a summary of media and public enquiries to ARPANSA, noting a decrease in media enquiries when compared to the same period in 2023 (in the absence media attention on the 2023 lost radioactive source in W.A.) and an approximately constant number of public enquiries compared to previous years.

## RHC member briefing

RHC members were provided with an overview of their roles and responsibilities as RHC members, this included guidance related to the current security climate and its implications for RHC members at home and abroad.

## Nuclear-powered submarine program implementation

ARPANSA gave an update on activities being undertaken to support implementation of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program, as well as adjacent work concerning nuclear-powered vessels more broadly. This included a summary of the 2023 Reference Incident project, an update on work to draft a Code for Reactor Facility Safety in consultation with the Nuclear Safety Committee, and progress on the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Bill 2023.

ARPANSA also noted continued assistance to the Office of Nuclear-powered submarine Regulatory Design, including advice and guidance on the development of the regulations, creating common platforms and systems for regulatory work, common quality management systems, and proposed training of inspectors, to ensure common regulatory practices.

## Member representing the public

The member representing the interests of the general public tabled a paper raising three items of potential public interest: the proliferation of collariums in Australia; the loss of radioactive gauges such as those in South Australia or Western Australia; and the scope of skin cancer registries. Several jurisdictions noted the increasing use of collariums as an area of regulatory concern, and shared methods for understanding the issue and associated regulatory challenges. The RHC discussed the benefit of publishing an ARPANSA fact sheet to provide public information. Other items raised by the member were noted for further RHC discussion in 2024.

**Task:** Jurisdictions to provide ARPANSA with information for drafting a fact sheet on collariums.
**Task:** ARPANSA to consider producing a draft fact sheet on collariums on the basis of the information provided.

## RHC Workplan 2024

ARPANSA tabled a draft workplan for the RHC for 2024, also highlighting potential areas for future work across the remainder of the term. The workplan accounted for existing workplan items, resourcing, and emerging issues. The RHC considered the need for a new code for Ultraviolet Radiation (UV) protection given the emerging issue of collariums, and resources for the workplan.

**Decision:** The RHC endorsed the proposed 2024 workplan.

## Radon Guide - exposure in the workplace (advisory note)

ARPANSA tabled revised guidance for radon exposure in the workplace, noting amendments to address prior comments from RHC members. Discussion noted further minor changes relating to suitably qualified occupational hygienists, risk terminology, and radon monitor distributors.

**Decision:** The RHC endorsed the guidance for publication subject to minor changes.

**Task:** ARPANSA to make minor changes and publish the guidance on its website.

## National Uniformity

An RHC working group tabled a draft letter detailing which ARPANSA activities are important to the jurisdictions, including those for promoting national uniformity. The RHC discussed the purpose of the letter and broad themes. Further comment was invited out-of-session.

**Task:** RHC members to provide comments and feedback on the tabled letter by 22 March 2024.

## Working group updates

## General update

The RHC noted on the draft Code for Radiation Protection in Dental Exposure that initial contact had been made with the Australian Dental Association (ADA) to discuss input to related guidance. ARPANSA met with Standards Australia as part of considerations to establish an accreditation pathway for the Dosimetry Service Provider Standard. Progress on a draft Code for Safe use of Well-Logging Equipment with Sealed Radiation Sources was pending key decisions on the Radiation Gauges code (see 10.2 below).

## Radiation Gauges draft Code

The Working Group tabled a draft Code for comment, and an associated draft standard as work in progress for information only. Comments were sought out-of-session prior to the next step of public consultation. RHC agreement was sought to proceed with public consultation on the draft code ahead of finalising a draft equipment standard and guidance for subsequent consultation.

**Decision:** The RHC agreed to proceed with public consultation on the draft code, pending out-of-session comments, ahead of the finalising a draft guide and equipment standard.

**Task:** RHC to provide comment on the draft Radiation Gauges draft code by 3 May 2024.

## Mobile CT working group

The working group presented an issues paper on the use of the mobile CT devices, to underpin discussion around aspects such as cross-jurisdictional use of mobile apparatus, licencing of operators, and technical specifications around shielding.

**Task:** Jurisdictions to provide what current and novel CTs we have collectively authorised, including who is authorised and for what purpose.

**Task:** ARPANSA to seek information from TGA about their approval processes for devices, including criteria for approval or otherwise, noting reciprocal arrangements with EU via IE-60601.

## New items

## Theranostics

ARPANSA presented on the increasing use of combined diagnostic and therapeutic uses of nuclear medicine practices known as theranostics. Jurisdictions shared recent experiences of requests from medical practitioners expanding into this therapeutic space, and the potential risks and challenges that may arise in therapeutic uses of nuclear medicine which may not be present in contemporary diagnostic uses. A need to clarify these risks was noted.

**Task:** ARPANSA to engage with regulators and prepare a paper on identified risk areas (as distinct from regulatory complications) in theranostics, including information on competencies.

## Radiotherapy Auditing

ARPANSA presented information which the Imaging and Radiation Oncology Core (IROC) provided on maintaining a national audit service for evolving radiotherapy technologies, and information which the IAEA Secondary standards Dosimetry Laboratory (SSDL) provided on collaboration and setting standards for audit services around the world.

ARPANSA also presented evidence of audit outcomes demonstrating that dosimetric issues had been resolved through Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service (ACDS) audits.

## Emergency Preparedness and Response to Radiological Incidents

The Chair of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council presented on a draft letter on Australian national preparedness and response capability for radiological emergencies. RHC members discussed high level issues and agreed to provide further comments out-of-session.

**Task:** RHC members to provide comments and feedback on the draft letter on Australian national preparedness and response capability for radiological emergencies by 22 March 2024.

## Shielding Design in diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy

The RHC was presented with a table of information from the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council containing dose constraints applied to occupationally exposed persons and members of the public in each jurisdiction across Australia. The RHC was asked to validate the information for use a draft letter of advice to the ARPANSA CEO on shielding design for diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy, which will be provided to the RHC separately for comment.

**Task:**  RHC members to review and confirm dose constraint regulations by 22 March 2024.

## Regulatory knowledge exchange

ARPANSA presented on the INEX-6 Exercise being held in Tasmania and virtually on 26 March and 30 April 2024, to test elements of preparedness and decision making for long-term recovery after a radiological incident. The exercise will cover health aspects, food safety, remediation and decontamination, and waste management.

Victoria provided an update about a proposal they had received to provide remote (mobile phone) controlled operation of X-ray radiography devices. This was raised to ascertain if other regulators had received similar requests. The RHC discussed general considerations about telehealth and human-free imaging and treatment technologies.

## Other Business and Meeting Close

A final version of the Radiation Apparatus Safety and Performance Standard will be recirculated out-of-session following the addressing of feedback from the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council.

The dates for remaining RHC meetings this year were noted as 30-31 July and 19-20 November 2024.

Dr Stephen Newbery was acknowledged and thanked for his decades-long valuable contributions to ARPANSA and the RHC, with his retirement from the Tasmanian Department of Health in April 2024.