



Meeting Summary

Date	16-17 April 2024
Time	11:00 AM – 5:15 PM (Day 1), 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM (Day 2)
Location	ARPANSA 619 Lower Plenty Yallambie, Victoria; Microsoft Teams
Members	Dr Jane Canestra, Dr Gillian Hirth, Dr Christine Connors (virtual), Mr Chris Perry, Mr Chris Donovan, Mr Jim Hondros, Prof Pam Sykes, Ms Melissa Holzberger, Mr Stuart Parr and Dr Catherine Olsen.
Invitees	Mr John Piispanen (QLD), Dr Lucinda Morris, Mr Nathan Wahl, Dr Ivan Williams, Mr Jim Scott, Dr Rick Tinker, Mr Ryan Hemsley, Ms Francesca Wigney, Mr Rohan Mate, Ms Caitlin Waugh and Dr Adrian Hawley, Mr James Wheaton, Dr Fiona Charalambous and Dr Arne Biesiekierski.
Apologies	Prof Mel Taylor.

Meeting Opening 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. Members observed a minute silence for the Bondi Junction and Sydney church attacks. The Chair thanked (in absentia) Mr Keith Baldry (member as Radiation Control Officer for South Australia) for his long service on the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (“the Council”) and to ARPANSA in various advisory roles, wishing him well following his departure from the South Australian Environment Protection Agency.

No conflicts of interest were declared. The minutes from the August 2023 (amended) and December 2023 meetings were noted as finalized out-of-session (now on ARPANSA’s website). The secretariat provided an update on the status of action items from the previous meeting. The Council noted correspondence from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) advising of the appointment of their new President, Professor John Slavotinek, and the Chairs reply.

Task: A letter to Mr Keith Baldry will be sent thanking him for his contributions to the Council.

Outcomes of All-Chairs meeting

The Chair provided a short summary of a meeting with the Chairs of the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) and Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC). A range of topics were discussed at a high level, such as national uniformity in radiation protection and nuclear safety, including radioactive waste management, national reporting of radiation incidents, and environmental monitoring.

CEO Update on the activities of ARPANSA

ARPANSA's CEO gave an update on the activities of ARPANSA and the NSC and RHC, including recent meeting topics of radioactive waste management, regulatory activities, international engagement, ARPANSA's engagement into the Australian Government Science Group and correspondence received from the South Australian Radiation Advisory Committee on sealed sources. ARPANSA also provided updates on emergency preparedness activities since the previous meeting, environmental monitoring, and public and media enquiries received since the December 2023 meeting.

Security Awareness

ARPANSA provided a briefing on the current security climate and its implications for the Council members at home and abroad. Reference Incident

ARPANSA provided an update on the Reference Incident project that had been undertaken at the request of the Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear).

Nuclear-powered submarine program implementation

ARPANSA gave an update on activities that ARPANSA has been undertaking to support the implementation of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program, and noted the 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 and competencies.

ANNPS Bill 2023

ARPANSA gave an overview of the parliamentary process and opportunities for input at the various stages into any Commonwealth Bill, such as the ANNPS Bill 2023.

Implications for Australian Codes and Standards framework

An update on work to draft a Code for Reactor Facility Safety in consultation with the Nuclear Safety Committee was given.

CEO Response to advice previously provided the principles and attributes of an effective independent regulator for nuclear-powered submarines

The Council provided advice on October 2022 on the "principles and attributes of an effective independent regulator for nuclear-powered submarines". A formal response has now been published in a letter on ARPANSA's website. The CEO thanked the Council for its advice, noting it has been used as a key reference point in ARPANSA's engagement with other government stakeholders on this matter.

CEO seeking advice

In August 2023 the Council asked the CEO to provide a summary of ARPANSA's key activity areas relevant to radiation health and safety that may currently benefit most from Council consideration and advice. The CEO presented the following areas for consideration:

- Improvement of data quality in national registers and databases that ARPANSA currently facilitates with data input from Australian jurisdictions or private enterprise providers.
- ARPANSA's statutory function to promote national uniformity in policy and practices of radiation protection across Australian jurisdictions, in particular key activities that ARPANSA undertakes to support jurisdictional counterparts.
- Strategies for promoting national consistency in radioactive waste regulation across Australian jurisdictions.
- Independent verification of protection of the environment and public around regulated facilities through transparent and accessible reporting, with a focus on new approaches to monitoring capability and capacity, data visualisation.
- Emergency preparedness and response for radiological or nuclear incidents, with a focus on regulatory validation and verification monitoring, early warning systems, and environmental monitoring, including Australian cross-jurisdictional information sharing.

Member representing the interests of the general public

The member representing the interests of the general public tabled a paper highlighting concerns from the community on topical issues of radiation safety including those relating to:

- 2023 news reports of inadequate radiation shielding at a cancer treatment room at Monash Medical Centre, Melbourne.
- A radioactive waste storage facility planned for HMAS Stirling, Western Australia.
- The Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Bill 2023 [and] Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety (Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023.
- Proposed Tellus Pty Ltd radioactive waste disposal facilities, in the Northern Territory (Chandler Project).

ARPANSA reconciliation action plan

ARPANSA provided an update on the progress of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which was submitted to Reconciliation Australia (RA) in early March 2024. ARPANSA's RAP has been drafted in consultation with a newly appointed external First Nations Cultural Adviser. Once the RAP has been finalized and available for circulation, Council will receive a copy out-of-session. Council proposed to invite ARPANSA's First Nations Cultural Adviser to attend a future Council meeting.

Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Working Group

The EPR working group provided a revised draft letter of advice on Australian national preparedness and response capability for radiological emergencies with a supporting background paper. Both RHC and NSC had been consulted regarding the letter and the background paper. Council discussed the revised draft letter and paper and endorsed both drafts as final.

Decision: Council endorsed the letter to the CEO on national preparedness and response capability for radiological emergencies.

Shielding Working Group

The shielding standards working group provided an update on a revised draft letter of advice on national guidance for shielding design, installation and verification. The Council discussed the letter and endorsed the draft as final.

Decision: Council endorsed the letter to the CEO on national guidance for shielding design, installation and verification.

Skin Cancer Register Working Group

The Skin Cancer Register working group provided a revised draft letter of advice on the national registration of keratinocyte cancers with a supporting background paper. Council discussed the letter and endorsed the draft letter only as final. The Council agreed that the working group should seek to publish the supporting background paper in a suitable peer-reviewed journal following modifications.

Decision: Council endorsed the letter of advice on the national registration of keratinocyte cancers.

Task: The Skin Cancer Registry Working Group will seek publication of the background paper in modified form in a peer-reviewed journal.

Sealed Sources Working Group

The Sealed Sources working group presented an update on their progress since December 2023 to draft a letter of advice on residual risks and loss of sealed radioactive sources in Australia. Further feedback on the draft letter was sought from Council members, requested by 15 May 2024.

Task: Council members to provide feedback on the draft letter on residual risks and loss of sealed radioactive sources in Australia by 15 May 2024.

Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service (ACDS) Annual Report

Dr Lucinda Morris, Chair of the Clinical Advisory Group (CAG) gave a virtual presentation of the ACDS Annual Report for 2023. The Council noted the importance of the ACDS' international standing, and discussed the reduction of data captured by the Australia / New Zealand ACDS database over the preceding 12 months and the potential implications this may have for research which informs patient care. The Council also discussed inconsistent jurisdictional requirements applying to dosimetry auditing services and comparable audit approaches regarding data collection and quality, noting that there is no current Australian standard for clinical dosimetry audits.

Task: To seek advice from the Chair of CAG advising of suitable clinicians to present to Council in future on their perspective on the benefits of a robust audit program and national dataset.

Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS) and Conference Updates

Council was presented with an update on the following upcoming conferences:

- Australasian Radiological Protection Society (ARPS) Conference 2024
- Australia's formal bid to host the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Congress 2032
- IRPA Congress 2024 in Orlando, Florida, USA
- South Pacific Environmental Radioactivity Association (SPERA) Conference 2024.

New Issues to Consider

Council was presented a paper on radiation protection capability in Australia and the importance of a holistic strategy where institutional and organisational barriers do not constrain the strategy was presented to Council members. Council noted the presentation and paper. Council recommended that a agenda item on workforce should be on future Council agendas.

Other Business and Close

The Council was informed that the iRefer guidelines (discussed in December 2023) at the Alfred Hospital (Melbourne) are now in place. A presentation will be given at the next Council meeting on the functioning of the iRefer guidelines.

Task: A presentation on iRefer guidelines will be given at the July 2024 meeting.

Council reviewed the actions from the meeting. The next meeting is set for 31 July to 1 August 2024.