



Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date	31 July – 1 August 2024
Time	1:30 PM – 5:00 PM (Day 1), 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM (Day 2)
Location	Gurrumbuy Room, Level 6, 22 Mitchell St, Darwin, Northern Territory; Microsoft Teams
Members	Dr Jane Canestra (Chair), Dr Gillian Hirth (CEO of ARPANSA), Dr Christine Connors, Mr Chris Perry, Mr Jim Hondros, Prof Pam Sykes, Ms Melissa Holzberger, Mr Stuart Parr, Dr Catherine Olsen, Mr John Piispanen and Prof Mel Taylor (virtual).
Invitees	Rear Admiral Katherine Richards (RAN), Lieutenant Commander Sean Dowling (RAN), Ms Jennifer Reilly, Ms Ingrid McCarthy, Mr Nathan Wahl, Dr Ivan Williams, Dr Rick Tinker, Mr Jim Scott, Dr Marcus Grzechnik, Mr Ryan Hemsley, Mr Rohan Mate, Ms Jenni Stiffe, Dr Megan Cook, Ms Julia Carpenter, Mr Chris Nickel, Dr Peter Thomas, Mr James Wheaton, Dr Fiona Charalambous and Dr Arne Biesiekierski.
Apologies	Mr Chris Donovan (both days) and Prof Mel Taylor (Day 1).

Opening of Joint Meeting between RHC and Council (Day 1)

The Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (the Council) met in a joint sitting with the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) from 13:30 on 31 July 2024. Dr Joanna Wreidt (Chair of RHC) Chaired the joint meeting.

ARPANSA CEO Update

The CEO of ARPANSA provided an update to the Council and RHC on ARPANSA activities. These included, but were not limited to: updates on advisory body activities; appearances of ARPANSA in parliament, along with questions taken on notice; the activities of ARPANSA's regulatory branch; the activities undertaken by ARPANSA's medical radiation branch; international engagement performed by ARPANSA; recent activities and developments relating to emergency management and preparedness; and the establishment of a framework for radiological environmental monitoring and assessment, including the activities of an ARPANSA working group to implement a pilot monitoring program in Western Australia using this framework.

Media Enquiries Dashboard

ARPANSA presented on recent media enquiries received, noting the number of enquiries had increased compared to the same period in 2023. Key issues included enquiries around occupational radiation exposure of medical workers, the update of Australian sunscreen standards, the release of ARPANSA's radio wave exposure study in Melbourne, and the announcement of the Federal Opposition's policy for nuclear power.

Public enquiries dashboard

ARPANSA provided an update on enquiries from the general public through ARPANSA's Talk to a Scientist program. This included information the Council requested regarding updates to the program user flow, an in-depth analysis of user trends, and a comparison to international equivalents. Public enquiries were comparable in number to previous years, dominated by telecommunications and power infrastructure, and personal/occupational exposure to ionising radiation.

Updates on activities of ARPANSA

ARPANSA First Nations advisor

ARPANSA's First Nations Advisor presented on the purpose and progress of ARPANSA's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which is currently in the Reflect phase. The applicability of the RAP to the advisory bodies was raised. ARPANSA also invited all members of the advisory bodies to the launch of the RAP tentatively proposed for later in August. The Council expressed interest in the progress of ARPANSA's RAP as it moves through subsequent phases.

Radiological and Nuclear Event Plan Update

ARPANSA presented on its support and engagement with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) on plans and arrangements stemming from the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework review. ARPANSA is leading drafting of the Australian National Radiation and Nuclear Event Plan (AUSRNEPLAN).

Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) stakeholder engagement fact finding mission

ARPANSA presented on an ARWA-led fact finding mission, which ARPANSA attended alongside ARWA, Australian Submarine Agency (ASA), Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), and the Defence Nuclear Powered Submarine Regulatory Design Team. This included visits to operational and research waste repository sites in the UK, Sweden, and Belgium.

ARPANSA also presented on ARPANSA's participation in a separate roundtable discussion held in Canberra with the Canadian National Waste Management Organisation.

Updates on RHC, NSC and RHSAC

Standards and Guides for Council endorsement

ARPANSA tabled the draft Standard for Radiation Safety and Performance Testing of Diagnostic Imaging Apparatus, which had previously been endorsed for publication by the

RHC, and circulated for comment by the Council. With all changes finalised, it was presented to Council for final endorsement for publication, and subsequently endorsed pending a minor change to the Radiation Protection Series description on the inside cover. It will be published by ARPANSA as RPS S-2.

Decision: The Council endorsed the publication of the Standard for Radiation Safety and Performance Testing of Diagnostic Imaging Apparatus subject to minor corrections.

Task: ARPANSA to publish the Standard as part of the Radiation Protection Series.

Nuclear-powered submarine program implementation

Presentation by Rear Admiral Katherine Richards AM, CSC, RAN

The advisory bodies heard a presentation from the Head of Nuclear-Powered Submarine Regulatory Design, Rear Admiral Richards on the progress of the establishment of the Australian Naval Nuclear-Powered Submarine Regulator (ANNPSR).

Licensing decision and public consultation outcomes

ARPANSA's CEO provided an update on the public consultation and associated licensing decision for a low-level waste store (a 'Controlled Industrial Facility') on HMAS Stirling.

Nuclear Safety Code

An update of progress on the draft Code for Reactor Facility Safety was given to RHC and Council.

RPS gap analysis

ARPANSA presented work on a systematic review into the current status and future work items of the Radiation Protection Series (RPS), including a summary of the RHC's separate deliberations earlier in the day, seeking input or feedback from RHC and Council members.

Task: RHC and Council to provide feedback on the RPS Gap Analysis prior to 30 August 2024.

Meeting Opening and Housekeeping (Day 2)

The Chair acknowledged the Larrakia People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which the meeting was held, paying respect paid to their Elders past and present. The Chair noted the resignation of Mr Chris Donovan (person representing the interests of the general public) and thanked him (in absentia) for his service on the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council ("the Council") and wished him well at his new role.

No conflicts of interest were declared. The April 2024 meeting minutes were noted with minor amendments. The secretariat provided the status of action items from the previous meeting. The Council noted correspondence from the Australasian Association of Nuclear Medicine Specialist (AANMS) in relation to the 2nd AANMS Theranostics Course 2024 and it was agreed that the Chair will respond seeking more information.

Decision: The April 2024 minutes were endorsed for publication with minor amendments.

Task: The Chair to respond to AANMS seeking more information on the AANMS Theranostics Course.

Member representing the interests of the general public

The member representing the interests of the general public tabled a paper presenting observations on certain topics related to radiation safety, including radioactive waste and community consent considerations (health, environmental, community, economic and regulatory) related to current national priority discourse; the importance of considering Indigenous rights and perspectives in any discussions about nuclear activities as demonstrated at Maralinga; and an anti-poaching initiative using radioactive material as a tracer in rhinoceros horns as a novel approach to conservation.

Task: ARPANSA dose reassessment report to be circulated to Council members along with international reports that included case studies on Maralinga.

iRefer Clinical Decision Support

Council was given a presentation on the iRefer clinical decision support (CDS) software solution for radiology at The Alfred Hospital in Melbourne. This included the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologist's (RANZCR's) consideration of CDS options and selection of iRefer as one of two preferred CDS for radiology. The CDS software can help clinicians to make better and more timely evidence-based decisions, across care settings, specialties and pathways to improve healthcare delivery and reduce errors, based on "the right test the first time". The presentation highlighted core CDS functionality including reduced variability in clinical decisions, and early observed benefits such as improved reporting turnaround times, and a positive shift in amended and cancelled referral rates which will have led to a measurable reduction in procedures and, possibly, a reduction in collective radiation dose to patients. The Council also noted the opportunity to integrate CDS with general practice and hospitals in a whole-of-healthcare approach.

Sealed Sources Working Group

The Sealed Sources working group provided a revised draft letter of advice on residual risks and loss of sealed radioactive sources in Australia for discussion and decision. Council discussed the revised draft letter and endorsed the draft with minor amendments.

Decision: Council endorsed the letter to the CEO on residual risks and loss of sealed radioactive sources in Australia.

Skin Cancer Register Working Group

The Skin Cancer Register working group provided a modified form of the background paper to the letter of advice on the national registration of keratinocyte cancers. 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 that if the modified background paper is not published in a peer-reviewed journal, that the supporting background paper be published alongside 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.

Theranostics

A presentation given to the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) was also presented to Council, which provided an overview of advancements in technology enabling new clinical approaches to diagnostic imaging and therapeutic uses of nuclear medicine, known as theranostics. RHC are examining this technology to ascertain if there are gaps in ARPANSA's Radiation Protection Series (RPS) publications or staff training competencies. Council requested to be kept informed when more information is available and once RHC has collated its recommendations.

Australian Societies' update

An update was provided on recent Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS) activities and initiatives since the April 2024 Council meeting. The highlight was the successful bid by Australia and ARPS to host the 2032 International Radiological Protection Association (IRPA) Congress in Darwin.

ICRP Activities Update

ARPANSA provided an update on the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), its mentorship program, the ICRP Task Groups currently under development, the current draft publications under public consultation and upcoming ICRP events.

Potential areas for future advice

The Council discussed potential areas for future advice which the CEO had previously provided at the April 2024 meeting: Regulatory independent verification and transparent public reporting; emergency preparedness and response (EPR) verification, validation and protection of the public during incident response; data quality in national registers and databases; and ARPANSA and jurisdictional collaboration. ARPANSA presented some additional context for these areas. The Council discussed these topics and did not identify a clear and pressing need for advice to the CEO at this time. However, some items were identified as of significant importance, and the Council requested to remain updated on progress thereon. These items were: the work supporting the establishment of a framework for radiological environmental monitoring and assessment; the improvement of data quality in national registers and database; and ARPANSA's collaboration with jurisdictional counterparts.

Workforce - RadInnovate

Ms Ingrid McCarthy, Chief Operating Officer of the Australian Research Council (ARC) Industrial Transformation and Training Centre for Radiation Innovation (RadInnovate) led by the Australian National University (ANU) presented on the Centre of Excellence and the development of university students in the radiation protection and nuclear safety space. RadInnovate is a collaboration between ANU, the University of South Australia (UniSA) and the University of Adelaide (UA), the Training Centre boasts participation from over 16 partners spanning industry and government sectors. The Council asked to receive future updates on RadInnovate given its contribution to radiation safety workforce development.

Other Business and Close

The Council reviewed the actions from the meeting. The next meeting is set for 20 to 21 November 2024.