



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Radiation Protection  
and Nuclear Safety Agency**



8 March 2025

Ref: MB25-000461

The Hon. Ged Kearney MP  
Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care  
Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health  
159 High Street  
PRESTON VIC 3072

Dear Minister,

**Re: Statement of Intent**

Thank you for your letter of 8 October 2024 outlining your Statement of Expectations to ensure the effective governance and performance of regulatory functions of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), guided by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

I am pleased to provide you with my Statement of Intent, which sets out how I will meet the expectations you have outlined and carry out my functions under the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* (ARPANS Act).

**Overview**

As the Australian Government's primary authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety, ARPANSA will continue to promote radiation protection and nuclear safety across the Commonwealth, the states and the territories.

As the regulator of Commonwealth entities using or producing radiation, we will continue to maintain a high standard of radiation protection and nuclear safety in Australia by continuing to provide advice, developing standards and regulating Commonwealth entities.

ARPANSA will demonstrate national leadership in engagement with jurisdictions on national uniformity issues, including safety standards and guidance, and explore opportunities for progressing greater consistency of radiation safety regulation in Australia. Specifically, we will seek to produce a scalable strategic plan for the Radiation Protection Series, as part of the national framework to support national uniformity in radiation regulation.

As the Australian Government's primary authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety, ARPANSA will continue to maintain internal expertise and monitor domestic and international research and best practice, to ensure that we can fulfil this role.

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In ARPANSA's capacity as the National Competent Authority for radiological and nuclear events, my agency has supported the update of the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) and will work across government as the Lead Sector Agency responsible for developing and supporting an Australian National Radiation and Nuclear Event Plan (AUSRNEPLAN) to ensure Australia is prepared in the event of a radiological incident.

An immediate and significant priority for ARPANSA will continue to be supporting the delivery of nuclear-powered submarine enterprise through developing various policies, advice, codes, practices, standards, service and regulation. Specific activities my agency is undertaking in the space include;

- Licencing assessments for facilities associated with the nuclear-powered submarine enterprise,
- Developing appropriate interfaces and boundaries, establishing roles and responsibilities for ARPANSA and supporting the implementation of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR),
- Ensuring there is a national framework for radiation, and nuclear safety standards and guidance that is suitable for nuclear-powered submarines, and
- Drafting an ARPANSA Technical Report to provide best-practice guidance on designing and implementing environmental monitoring and assessment programs for radiation protection, which will support ARPANSA's long-term goal of establishing and maintaining a national radiation monitoring program that provides high-quality, accessible information to publicly demonstrate protection of the Australian community and environment.

These actions – in accordance with your Statement of Expectations - contribute to ARPANSA's mission to protect Australians – including the public, workers, patients undergoing medical procedures using radiation – and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation.

### **Regulatory Reform Agenda and Principles of Regulator Best Practice**

In addition to ARPANSA's aforementioned efforts to harmonise radiation safety across Australia – which will contribute to efficiency and productivity – my agency is always seeking to lead by example by acting in accordance with regulatory best practice to maximise transparency and minimise compliance costs.

The key principles of regulator best practice are embedded into my agency's activities, and I – along with my Executive Group of agency leaders – are proactive and innovative in applying continuous improvement in how ARPANSA displays the principles of regulatory best practice.

ARPANSA applies the recommendations of *Regulator Performance (RMG 128)*, including by integrating and reporting on its application through a dedicated performance measure within our Corporate Plan.

On cost recovery arrangements, ARPANSA remains committed to full cost recovery of the regulatory service it provides to other Commonwealth agencies, seeking annual amendments to our ARPANS Regulations 2018 and ARPANS (License Charges) Regulations 2018 to ensure the coverage of actual costs. The purpose of annual changes is to decrease certain license charges where possible - as well as increase other license charges as required - ensuring fairness to licensee holders and ultimately taxpayers.

### **Innovation and Regulatory Change**

My agency is proactively increasing opportunities and incentives for innovation – particularly in the application of our regulatory processes. ARPANSA will take a strategic approach in adapting to the evolving

**OFFICIAL**

technological landscape. My agency recognises that we will need to review and adjust policies and practices to ensure we are responsive to our contemporary – and future – operating environment to leverage the full potential of emerging technologies and align with community expectations. ARPANSA's leadership recognises that this will require innovation in our capabilities also, necessitating the fostering of a diverse workforce to equip us as a modern regulator.

**Relationship with the Minister and Portfolio**

I acknowledge the role ARPANSA has in assisting yourself – as responsible Minister – and the Government to respond promptly to issues that may arise in radiation protection and nuclear safety. I undertake to provide you accurate and timely advice on any significant issues that may arise.

Additionally, ARPANSA will continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Health and Aged Care, particularly on contributing to ongoing policy advice and ideas to strengthen radiation protection and nuclear safety.

I thank you for your continued support of ARPANSA, and my independence as CEO. Please accept this Statement of Intent as a demonstration my enduring commitment to exercising my functions and powers in good faith, and to the best of my ability.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gillian Hirth AO  
CEO of ARPANSA

Cc: The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health