



Executive summary of the Defence-ARPANSA liaison forum (DALF) held on 23 September 2020

Terms of reference

- Terms of reference for the Defence-ARPANSA liaison Forum (DALF) have been updated out of session and were signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ARPANSA and the Commander Joint Logistics Command (CJLOG) of the Department of Defence.

Strategic view from Defence's perspective

- Minutes from the previous DALF were accepted by both parties.
- CJLOG outlined a number of strategic highlights associated with Defence radiation safety practices including:
 - the COVID-19 effects on Defence's own internal assurance program, with particular focus on how border restrictions have limited Defence Radiation Safety and Assurance (DRSA) inspections
 - updates on the Defence Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program, which represents a major Defence transformation and modernisation undertaking that will significantly enhance the way Defence operates. Ultimately, it was explained that ERP, expected to go-live in mid-2022, will strengthen Defences capability to manage radiation sources and their associated risks
 - accomplishments from the Defence Radiation Safety Assurance Committee (DRSAC) meeting that included Safety Analysis Report development, amended sponsorship arrangements for industrial X-ray dealings, revision of personal dosimetry requirements and, the removal of the University of New South Wales – Australian Defence Force Academy campus from Defence coverage

Strategic view from ARPANSA's perspective

- The CEO of ARPANSA highlighted some of the challenges affecting the regulator and licence holders, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues largely focused on the difficulty of conducting compliance monitoring activities such as inspections due to border closures and challenges associated with domestic travel. However, it was noted that with some restrictions now easing, ARPANSA will take the opportunity to commence inspection campaigns where opportunities arise (such as South Australia and Northern Territory). Further, the CEO also outlined the current performance status of ARPANSA scientific and regulatory services.

- The CEO also tabled his recent decision to exempt Defence from the use of low-activity gaseous tritium light sources (GTLS); it was noted that this will significantly assist Defence in managing their inventory and reduce regulatory burden.

Update on ARPANSA regulatory matters

Inspection approaches and lessons learned

- The Chief Regulatory Officer highlighted that ARPANSA had participated in an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) survey and conference on the global impacts of COVID to regulatory bodies. Of the 93 member states who participated, 80% reported that they had experienced a reduction in regulatory activities.
- Given the COVID-19 arrangements, ARPANSA efforts had focussed on ensuring that inspections occur for high-risk facilities and sources. E-inspections (remote) had been undertaken where appropriate.
- ARPANSA has undertaken a review of the exposure standard for radiofrequency radiation (RPS 3) through the Radiation Health Committee but will continue to engage with its licence holders. Subject to consultation and amended as appropriate, ARPANSA is working towards publication of the new standard by late 2020/early 2021 as RPS S-1. ARPANSA agreed to consult with Defence during the review process as this has the potential to be a significant standard for Defence.
- ARPANSA committed to directly engage DRSA for future revisions of Codes, Standards and Guides rather than directly to the unit-level organisations.

Update on Defence governance and assurance issues

RadSafe governance update

- Defence provided ARPANSA with an update of its policy framework and governance arrangements including radiation safety policy statement, radiation safety management system, the Defence radiation safety manual and specific unit-level radiation safety plans.

Source inventory management update

- Defence advised that they are reviewing their inventory holdings against group 1 thorium and radium source types. It is expected that this review will capture any legacy/historical items or any items that are used as museum display articles across Australia.
- Defence committed to continue to work with ARPANSA to ensure that the source inspection program will reflect the ARPANSA regulatory priority matrix.

Assurance inspection update

- Defence completed 17 internal inspections for FY19/20 compared to the previous year's 42 internal assurance inspections. 65% (11) were found to be conformant and 16 corrective action reports were issued.

Facility and precinct update

- The initial version of the JPEU Linac Safety Analysis Report (SAR) and Radiation Safety Plan (RSP) was submitted to ARPANSA in March 2020, in response to a special licence condition. Defence

continues to develop the SAR/RSP in concert with ARPANSA advice. Development of the SAR for the Koolymilka facility was in progress.

- Due to a number of retirements of staff at Wirlinga, there would be a significant transition of staff including doubling up of full-time equivalents (FTEs) during a training, development and handover period.
- The Betatron commissioning trials were underway with support from ANSTO and the associated commissioning report was being drafted.

General business

- Defence advised that a review of passive dosimetry was conducted against a suite of criteria. ARPANSA recommended that a scientific technical exchange be held between ARPANSA and Defence on dosimetry technology and limitations to ensure that regulatory expectations and licence holder dose action levels are appropriate and realistic.

Next meeting

- It is proposed that the next meeting around mid-2021 be hosted by Defence in Canberra, at a date yet to be agreed.

Follow up tasks

- Hold an ARPANSA-Defence scientific technical exchange workshop on personal dosimetry technologies and limitations.
- ARPANSA and Defence to revise the source inspection program to reflect regulatory priority.