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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VISITING SHIPS PANEL (NUCLEAR)**

**HELD AT** § 33 - security **ON 30**  
**AUGUST 2022**

**Attendees:**

§ 47F - privacy

Head Navy Engineering (Chair)  
NPSTF  
HNE COS  
MAROPS  
NPSO  
JHC  
SONPW  
NPSO (Secretary)  
AGNSR  
ANSTO  
ARPANSA  
ARPANSA  
DSTG  
Health  
IPDIV

**Apologies:**

§ 47F - privacy

ANSTO  
ARPANSA  
DAWE  
DFAT

**ITEM 1: OPENING**

1. The Chair declared the meeting open at 1013.

**ITEM 2: WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

2. The Chair welcomed Panel members to the meeting and thanked all for their ongoing commitment to the Panel. Before proceeding, the Chair apologised for their absence at the last meeting, and thanked § 47F - privacy (HNE COS) for standing in as Acting Chair. With a new member of the Panel (§ 47F - privacy Department of Health), the Chair invited all members to introduce themselves. The Secretary tendered apologies from Panel members who were unable to attend the meeting.

**ITEM 3: CONFIRMATION OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES**

3. The Chair requested those Panel members present at the previous Visiting Ship Panel (Nuclear) (VSP(N)) meeting to confirm the minutes of the last meeting. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by § 47F - privacy (ARPANSA) and seconded by § 47F - privacy (ANSTO).

**Decision:** Minutes accepted.

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ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING

**4/3/Jun 14 – 2018 NPW Seminar – Status of Outcomes**

4. The Secretary stated that the Technical Working Group (TWG) continues to progress the open outcomes of the 2018 NPW Seminar, with one outcome (20/18—Ownership of NPW Visit Policy) has been put on hold until the outcome(s) of the Nuclear Powered Submarine Task Force (NPSTF) are known. The Chair clarified that as per outcome 18/18—NPW Visit Policy and Procedures, the revised OPSMANs 1, edition 11 has been divided into Part 1; Policy and Part 2; Procedures, which will be endorsed at the 2022 NPW Seminar. The remaining outcomes are expected to be closed out either prior to or during the NPW seminar scheduled for the last quarter of 2022.

**Decision:** TWG to continue actioning the open recommendations and provide an update at the 2022 NPW Seminar.

**For Action:** TWG.

**4/2/Feb 20 – 2022 NPW Seminar**

5. The Secretary provided an update on the 2022 NPW Seminar, which will be conducted at § 33 - security on 26-28 Oct 2022. The Secretary confirmed all preparations are on track. The TWG have refined the program, which will be finalised and distributed to all attendees by 30 Sep 22. The Secretary and SONPW are finalising the administrative requirements of the Seminar (base access, security, ICT, etcetera), which will be communicated as required. Following a query from the Chair, the Secretary confirmed the Senior Executive Level attendees invited to the Seminar including the Chief of Navy, § 47F - privacy, Chief NPSTF, § 47F - privacy, ANSTO CEO, § 47F - privacy, ARPANSA CEO, § 47F - privacy, § 47F - privacy and § 47F - privacy confirmed that both of their CEOs will attend day one of the Seminar.

**Decision:** Item closed.

**4/1/Feb 21 – Reference Accident**

6. § 47F - privacy provided the Panel with an update on the reference accident as per enclosure 1, confirming the project was on track as per the project schedule. The Chair noted that ARPANSA were yet to bill the Department of Defence for the work completed to date, and queried when ARPANSA was expected to commence billing Defence. § 47F - privacy (ARPANSA) confirmed he would expect Defence to be billed in the near term, but would take the Chair's query on notice.

**Decision:** ARPANSA to follow up on the status of Reference Accident project invoicing.

**For Action:** ARPANSA.

7. The Chair asked ARPANSA what would be required to accelerate the Reference Accident project. § 47F - privacy stated that key components involve the use of consultants, and ARPANSA would need to review the tender process to understand what the consultants can accelerate. § 47F - privacy noted that the internal (ARPANSA) elements of the project could likely be accelerated, depending on how quickly they would need to be completed.

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8. The Chair stated that accelerating the project by 6 months would likely better coalesce with some of the long range planning and objectives of the NPSTF in 2023, and therefore requested ARPANSA be prepared to deliver an option [and cost] of a 6 month acceleration, with a view of closing the project by December 2023. However, the Chair noted that whether or not the Department of Defence decides to accelerate the project, is stated without prejudice to the Departments decision. [s 47F - privacy] stated he would take the request for action, but believes a 6 month acceleration is plausible.

**Decision:** ARPANSA to investigate the option and cost of accelerating the Reference Accident project by 6 months to close the project by December 2023.

**For Action:** ARPANSA.

#### 4/3/Oct 21 – Review of OPSMAN 1

9. [s 47F - privacy] (SONPW) provided an update on the review of OPSMAN 1. As per para 4, [s 47F - privacy] confirmed the [draft] document has been divided into Part 1 (chapters 1 and 2); NPW Visit Policy, and Part 2 (remaining chapters); NPW Visit Procedures. [s 47F - privacy] is in the process of incorporating final comments/amendments, which will be circulated with the TWG, prior to publishing the document in October 2022, for presentation at the 2022 NPW Seminar.

10. As per para 4, the Chair confirmed that ownership of the document will remain the Department of Defence, as Department of Defence policy. The Chair also recognised that the future regulatory model associated with Nuclear Powered Submarines is still being developed, however the intent will be that any NPW policy will move to whatever the new regulatory model is, and to the authorities and accountabilities associated with that new regulatory model. The Chair also clarified that as those authorities and accountabilities move to the new regulatory model, the VSP(N) and the Chair of the VSP(N) (Head of Navy Engineering (HNE)) will also move, and therefore HNE may no longer Chair the new model.

11. The Chair reiterated to all members of the VSP(N), that this meeting is the Panel's final opportunity to provide feedback on OPSMAN 1, edition 11, because once the document is published, the next review will be as per standard Defence policy, which typically follows a 2-5 year review cycle. Finally, the Chair noted that once the document enters Departmental policy sphere, it is possible some minor amendments/inclusions are made ('administrative editorialism' at the Defence level), in order to align the document with Departmental policy, but any amendments will be immaterial to the substance of the document. With no further comments, the Chair directed [s 47F - privacy] to prepare a brief for the inclusion of OPSMAN 1, edition 11 into the Defence administrative framework.

**Decision:** SONPW to prepare of brief up to VCDF for inclusion of OPSMAN 1, edition 11 into the Defence administrative policy framework.

**For Action:** SONPW.

#### 4/1/Feb 22 – NPW Resource Analysis and Costing—Resource Impact Statements

12. The Secretary confirmed NPW resource analysis and costing impact statements have been received from both ANSTO and ARPANSA, and that with the exception of the Department of Defence, no further impact statements were expected.

13. The Chair reiterated the intent of these impact statements, which is to better understand the impact of an **s 33 - security** on the supporting agencies. The Chair acknowledged that the higher level vignettes (enclosure 5 of the previous [VSP(N)] meeting minutes) do have cross-over with the **s 33 - security** however we would not discuss any further with this forum. The Chair stated that moving forward, the VSP(N) will collate all three submissions; Defence (yet to be received), ANSTO and ARPANSA, for presentation [and consideration] at the next subsequent VSP(N) meeting.

14. The Chair did note there is likely an inflection point with the current Force Posture and Force Structure reviews, which are due to be tabled to the Government in the first quarter of 2023. The Chair stated that these reviews will likely assist with the consideration of the impact statements and how the vignettes relate/align with the Force Posture and Force Structure reviews.

**Decision:** HNE COS to prepare a brief up to Head of Navy Capability (HNC) and Director General Future Navy Workforce (DGFNW) requesting a resourcing impact statement on the impact of the NPW visit vignettes on RAN operating and capital expenses.

**For Action:** HNE COS.

**Decision:** Secretary/HNE COS to collate and present the Department of Defence, ANSTO and ARPANSA resource impact statements at the next subsequent VSP(N) meeting in 2023.

**For Action:** Secretary/HNE COS.

15. ANSTO welcomed feedback on their resource impact statement, and noted that there are immediate **s 33 - security** that need to be addressed; namely the cache of monitoring equipment utilised for NPW visits. **s 47F - privacy** stated that currently, **s 33 - security**

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16. Following queries from the Chair, **s 47F - privacy** indicated the current life of type for the monitoring equipment is approximately 10 years, and ANSTO would likely require **s 33 - security** of deployable [monitoring] equipment. **s 47F - privacy** noted that the current cache was also reaching the end of its life, and recommended that any procurement of additional equipment include the replacement of the existing cache. Therefore, ANSTO likely requires an asset renewal of **s 33 - security** (caches) of mobile monitoring equipment.

17. The Chair noted that in the short term, ANSTO's concerns relate to a level of strategic risk, whereby under current arrangements ANSTO holds **s 33 - security** to support NPW visits. The Chair also noted that should Defence fund the procurement of additional monitoring impact, the assets would be owned by Defence, for use by radiation monitoring personnel (**s 33 - security** or otherwise), however what is not clear is how the equipment would be maintained, etcetera. The Chair therefore requested further detail regarding the required level of redundancy necessary to support current operations (rate of effort), and any [ongoing] sustainment requirements for the equipment.

**Decision:** ANSTO, in collaboration with HNE COS, are to [redacted] for consideration by the Department of Defence.

**For Action:** ANSTO/HNE COS.

18. [redacted] indicated the same [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] stated that whilst covered in their submission (resource impact statement), the requirement for [redacted] (capital investment) based on the current rate of effort was not specifically addressed. Following advice from the Chair, ARPANSA stated they would review their submission, with the view of clearly articulating the additional [monitoring] equipment they will require in order to support current operations (rate of effort).

**Decision:** ARPANSA will review their resource impact statement, to provide greater clarity on the fragility of their needs in delivering the current rate of effort, particularly focusing on their hardware, including obsolescence, redundancy and life of type.

**For Action:** ARPANSA.

19. Finally, the Chair thanked members of the Panel for submitting their resource impact statements.

**4/7/Feb 22 – Treaty of Rarotonga**

20. The Secretary confirmed that the VSP(N) has previously been provided with [redacted] [redacted]

**Decision:** Item closed.

**ITEM 5: BUSINESS ITEM 1: MARITIME OPERATIONS REPORT (STANDING ITEM)**

21. [redacted] (Maritime Operations (MAROPS)) provided a report on known and possible visits for the short to medium term. At the time of the meeting, MAROPS noted there was the possibility of a NPW visit in the last quarter of 2022, potentially late November, to a port in Queensland.

22. **Talisman Sabre 2023.** Whilst [redacted] did not have any specific updates regarding Talisman Sabre 2023, he did note that there will likely be a change to the [redacted] participating in the exercise. [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

Therefore, should any participate, this might impact the disposition of any participating NPWs.

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ITEM 6: DARWIN NPW VALIDATION

23. For the benefit of those members of the Panel who were unfamiliar with the validation process, the Secretary provided a briefing on the validation process; including the steps involved and by whom. The Secretary confirmed Darwin's revalidation activity took place on 25-27 July, which included a desktop review exercising the Darwin Port Safety Plan (PSP), led by the NT authorities. The secretary noted that the NT authorities were finalising a review of their PSP (following feedback from the validation activity), however the final document is awaiting approval by the relevant Territory authorities. Once received, the TWG will review the finalised plan, and pending any issues or concerns, will recommend Darwin be revalidated, which is expected to occur in quarter 4 2022.

24. HNE COS and the Secretary stated there were three key takeaways from the validation activity:

- a. RAN MMU personnel supplementation. HNE COS and the Secretary believe there is a more efficient manner by which the RAN can provide these personnel in support of NPW visits, and will be taken for action internally.
- b. OPSMAN 1 edition 11. A number of amendments have been provided to SONPW for inclusion in edition 11.
- c. Augmented Resources. Potential opportunity for the RAN/Federal Government to provide greater resources (augment State resources) in support of a NPW visit.

25. [§ 47F - privacy] stated the validation activity was very informative, however it was noted the NT are a small Territory with limited resources. ARPANSA provided the NT authorities with further feedback on their PSP during the conduct of the activity, but acknowledged the [§ 33 - security] [redacted] owing to the timeframe since the last NPW visit to Darwin (1996).

26. It was noted by both the Chair and [§ 47F - privacy] (NSPO), that Darwin's validation must be concluded by quarter 1, 2023, in order to support any proposed NPW visit

[§ 38 - secrecy] [redacted] Therefore, the Chair stated the VSP(N) must have confidence by 30 Sep 22 that Darwin will achieve their validation in support of Exercise Talisman Sabre. Addressing the timeframe since Darwin's last NPW visit the [§ 33 - security] [redacted] within the NT, the Chair stated that in order to have confidence the NT authorities can support a NPW visit to Darwin, [§ 33 - security] [redacted]

**Decision:** Secretary to confirm timeline of the Darwin PSP approvals and endorsement by 30 Sep 22.

**For Action:** Secretary.

**Decision:** The TWG are to observe a full deployment exercise, led by the [§ 33 - security] [redacted]

**For Action:** Secretary/TWG.

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27. The Chair also noted that the Defence operations agencies; Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) and MAROPS must appreciate the currency and resource limitations of the validated ports **s 33 - security**. The 42-day notification period as per OPSMAN 1 has underlying assumptions built in regarding the deliberate planning capacity of the States and Territories, some of which, are **s 33 - security** necessary to support a visit within the stipulated timeframe. Therefore, Defence/Navy planning staff must be made aware of the **s 33 - security** when programming NPW visits to certain jurisdictions such as Darwin.

**Decision:** MAROPS are to coordinate the provision of a VSP(N) brief to key HQJOC and MAROPS planning/exercise staff on the NPW port validation process, including the inherent currency and resource limitations of each port.

**For Action:** MAROPS.

28. Finally, and in line with the third key takeaway from Darwin's validation activity (para 24.c.), ARPANSA and ANSTO noted the **s 33 - security** within their emergency response capabilities, such as provision of first responders such as ambulance services. The Chair noted that in order for the VSP(N) to better support the jurisdictions; augment State/Territory resources, the VSP(N) must understand the **s 33 - security** of the jurisdictions. The Secretary noted there is an opportunity for the jurisdictions to discuss **s 33 - security** during the gaps, risks, issues and opportunities workshop at the 2022 NPW Seminar.

**Decision:** Secretary to request each State and Territory be prepared to discuss their limitations and/or capability gaps in support of NPW visits at the 2022 NPW Seminar.

**For Action:** Secretary.

**Decision:** OPSMAN 1 edition 11 to include a requirement for each State and Territory to clearly demonstrate and furnish any capability gaps, and the mitigation and deliberate planning strategies to fill those gaps in advance of any NPW visit to the State or Territory.

**For Action:** SONPW.

29. **s 47F - privacy** (Joint Health Command (JHC)) noted JHC, in conjunction with the Services (Navy, Army, Air Force), are conducting a review of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) contingency medications holdings, including potassium iodine. The review will inform an updated specialist medication contingency list - *Technical Advice CBRN Medical Countermeasures Load List*. **s 47F - privacy** sought clarification as to whether potassium iodine held by the jurisdictions, in support of a NPW visit, is sourced from **s 33 - security**

30. ANSTO confirmed potassium iodine, in support of a NPW visit, is sourced from the **s 33 - security**. In response to a question from the Chair regarding Defence medical countermeasure holdings, **s 47F - privacy** explained the differences between Defence contingency holdings and those of the NMS, which is **s 33 - security**. The Chair also enquired whether future post visit/reviews should have a JHC representative in attendance. Stakeholders present proposed that health representation, due to the DoH NMS aspects, is best placed with either the DoH or local State/Territory health agency.

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ITEM 7: OTHER BUSINESS

7/1/Aug 23 – ANSTO Radiological and Nuclear Emergency Preparedness and Response Training

31. ANSTO conducts a week long (5 days) radiological and nuclear emergency preparedness and response (RNEPR) training that is available for government agencies to attend. Of note, the [redacted] The course is not specifically focused on NPW activates, but more generic in nature, however ANSTO would encourage [and invite] members of the Panel to participate in the training.

32. [redacted] noted the course is conducted 3 times per year at Lucas Heights, NSW, however they can offer a bespoke course at a government agencies location at an agreed time. The scheduled courses are [redacted] with the bespoke courses quoted on application. Following a query from the Chair, several members of the Panel, including the NPSTF, JHC and HQJOC expressed interest in conducting the training. The Chair requested ANSTO provide details of the course, for consideration at the next VSP(N) meeting.

**Decision:** ANSTO to provide details on the RNEPR training, including options for both the existing training program and the indicative costs for a [bespoke] Department of Defence course.

**For Action:** ANSTO.

[redacted]

33. [redacted] (IPDIV) remarked that CDF [redacted] [redacted], of which there are likely some outcomes of interest to some members of the Panel. However, [redacted] noted this information was [redacted] not for open discussion with the Panel. The Chair noted [redacted] comments and confirmed [redacted] was aware of those outcomes.

ITEM 8: NEXT MEETING

34. The Chair concluded by thanking everyone for their attendance. The next meeting will be held in the [redacted]. The meeting was closed at 1151.

[redacted]

[redacted] RAN  
Chairperson

[redacted]

[redacted] RAN  
Secretary

**Enclosure:**

- 1. ARPANSA Reference Accident Project Update

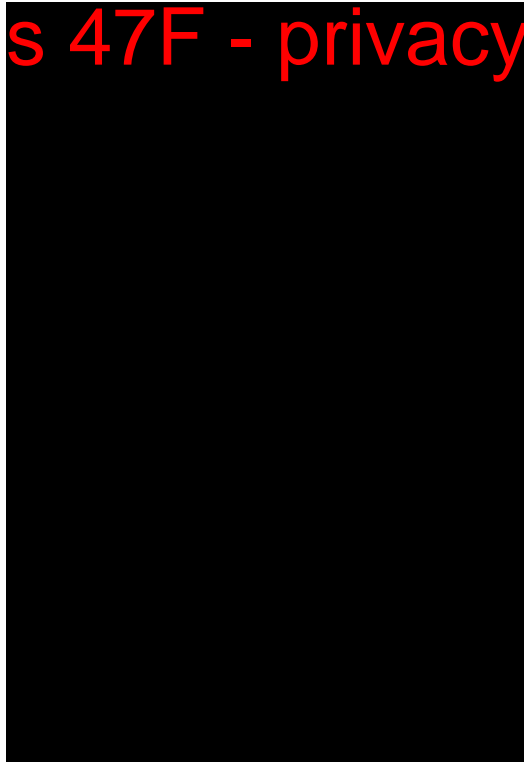
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