



Australian Government
Australian Radiation Protection
and Nuclear Safety Agency



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Ref:D2412932

Dr Jane Canestra
Chair, Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council
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619 Lower Plenty Road
Yallambie VIC 3085

Dear Dr Canestra

Re: ARPANSA response to Council advice to the CEO on the principles and attributes of an effective independent regulator for nuclear-powered submarines

I would like to formally acknowledge the advice from the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council ('the Council') dated 13 October 2022 on radiation protection and nuclear safety in relation to the future regulation of nuclear-powered submarines in Australia.

Since the announcement of the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) in September 2021, ARPANSA has been supporting whole-of-government work to establish a framework which would enable to Australian Government's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. I wanted to take the opportunity to place on record that the advice from Council covering principles, attributes and challenges has continued to be a key reference point for ARPANSA as we have engaged with other government stakeholders on this matter.

The Australian Government has, as a matter of policy, decided to establish a new regulator within the Defence portfolio to regulate the nuclear safety aspects of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine enterprise. A Bill is before Parliament to establish the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR). The new regulator will be independent of the Australian Submarine Agency and the Australian Defence Force's chain of command, and ARPANSA will continue to be an important part of the system of regulation for nuclear-powered submarines. We are continuing to work with the Department of Defence to determine ARPANSA's appropriate interfaces and boundaries with the proposed regulator.

ARPANSA recognises that the Australian Government's approach aims to strike a balance between the operational needs of a strategic military capability and the requirement for a regulatory approach which meets the principles and attributes outlined in the Council's letter. ARPANSA also recognises that many areas, such as radiation emergency preparedness and response, will continue to present an ongoing program of work and ARPANSA remains committed to providing advice on these issues into the future.

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I thank the Council for taking their time to provide me with this advice.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Hirth
CEO of ARPANSA

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