



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



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

HMAS Stirling Submarine Rotational Force West

Communications Protocol

ARPANSA & ASA

1. Background

On 14 March 2023, the leaders of Australia, the UK and US announced the Optimal Pathway for Australia to acquire conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. Under the Optimal Pathway, the first phase is to establish a capability at HMAS *Stirling* in Western Australia to provide operational support to US and UK submarines from 2027. This phase of the Optimal Pathway is known as Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF-West).

In order to provide operational support to US and UK submarines, the Department of Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) will construct several pieces of infrastructure at HMAS *Stirling*. One key piece of infrastructure for radiological controlled work is the ‘controlled industrial facility’ (CIF). The CIF would serve as the location for acceptance, categorisation, and storage of low level solid and liquid waste, in addition to the decontamination of tools and rigs from the submarines and repair work as needed.

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) will be the nuclear safety and radiation protection regulator of activities relating to radiological protection and nuclear safety, including the CIF, until such time as the Australian Naval Nuclear Propulsion Safety Regulator (ANNPSR) is established.

The ASA or a suitable applicant must apply to the CEO of ARPANSA for a licence to prepare a site for and to construct the CIF. The license would be administered under the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency Act 1998* and the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Regulations 2018*.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to formalise communication protocols between ARPANSA, ASA and Department of Defence (Defence) related to the proposed CIF located at HMAS *Stirling*.

This document defines the mechanism for formal communication of information by the identified stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner. Each party will be responsible for ensuring that all its direct reports and subcontractors are aware and follow the Protocol established in this document.

3. Contacts

3.1 ARPANSA personnel

Role	Responsibility	Contact details
Principle Advisor (PM)	All general correspondence. All formal correspondence relating to the CIF licence application(s). Responsible for ensuring that all direct reports are aware of this procedure and its application. Escalate situations.	s22 s22 Principle Advisor Defence Engagement Project Team E: s22s22@arpansa.gov.au

Technical Advisor	Back up when Principal Advisor is absent	s22 s22 Technical Advisor Defence Engagement Project Team E: s22 s22 arpansa.gov.au
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3.2 ASA personnel

Role	Responsibility	Contact details
Assistant Director General, Regulatory Compliance and Assurance Branch	All general correspondence relating to facilities licences. All formal correspondence relating to CIF licence application Responsible for ensuring that all direct reports are aware of this procedure and its application. Escalate situations.	Tim Fry Assistant Director General, Regulatory Compliance and Assurance Branch Stewardship and Security Division s22 @defence.gov.au s22 @defence.gov.au

4. Protocol

4.1 General information/queries

All communications should be raised to the appropriate contact as noted in Section 3. Parties will endeavour to meet a nominal turn around period for a response to a request for information of five (5) working days.

4.2 Meeting communication

Where meetings are held, such as workshop meetings between ARPANSA and ASA/Defence, it is expected that an agenda will be issued at least one (1) working day before the scheduled date, as far as practicable.

Any actions arising from meetings should be captured as actions to be addressed under the agenda of a follow up meeting as required.

The notification that a formal meeting should be held shall be raised electronically via e-mail calendar requests.

Minutes of the meeting shall record only decisions and actions resulting from the meeting agenda. The party hosting the meeting is required to keep minutes of meetings and forward them through to the other party within a reasonable timeframe (for example 10 working days).

4.3 Written Correspondence

Written correspondence should be raised whenever an exchange of information is required to seek an official response from a receiving party in relation to any project related matters.

The preferred mode of formal communication between ARPANSA and the ASA is by way of email correspondence or letter. Correspondence issued in this manner is understood to represent controlled and

reliable information reflecting the position of the transmitting party. Communications must display the appropriate security classification. The parties will ensure that they comply with any relevant legal requirements including obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Where correspondence requires an answer to a specific question(s), the question(s) should, as far as possible, conform to the following principles:

- Clear and definite question(s) should be raised; responses should address specifically the questions raised.
- Attachments relating to the query should be easily accessible for review and where possible included in the query submittal for review.
- The response time from the receiving party should be five (5) working days from issue of the correspondence as far as is practicable, or as agreed.
- Only the party raising the correspondence can close the correspondence.
- Revision control of outgoing correspondence is the responsibility of the issuing party.

Where the intent of a correspondence is to state a position or to inform the recipient of latest information and no response is required, the issuer of the correspondence should raise the correspondence as 'Closed' on the issue.

4.4 Technical queries/correspondence

4.4.1 ARPANSA

- ARPANSA will provide advice to ASA on the regulatory requirements and expectations, including ongoing technical advice regarding the elements important to licence application(s). This may include advice on expectations for the plans and arrangements and the safety analysis report. ARPANSA will not advise on technical solutions to meet its regulatory criteria.
- ARPANSA will only provide advice and information to ASA to clarify ARPANSA's criteria for the protection of people (public and workers) and the environment, and what technical and other information ASA must provide to ARPANSA as part of a licence application.
- ARPANSA may attend, as an observer, ASA workshops and/or working groups, only where ARPANSA assesses that there is not a conflict of interest (real or perceived).
- ARPANSA may be requested to provide material for ASA to use for community engagement for the purpose of clarifying ARPANSA's regulatory requirements and radiation protection/safety concepts to interested parties.
- ARPANSA will continue to act as an independent regulatory authority with all matters related to the Project.

4.4.2 ASA

- ASA will keep ARPANSA informed of proposed timings for submission of licence applications.
- ASA will keep ARPANSA informed of policy matters to which ASA deems it relevant for ARPANSA to be aware.

- ASA may invite representatives from ARPANSA to relevant meetings to discuss the Project.
- RCA Branch to oversee all meetings and engagements between ASA and ARPANSA relating to facility licencing.
- ASA may only request input/advice from ARPANSA if it is related to clarification of ARPANSA’s criteria and regulatory expectations for a licence application.
- All correspondence must be filed in Objective (originating and receiving) to comply with Australian Government record keeping requirements.

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APPROVED by:	
	<div>s22</div> <div>04.03.2024</div>
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