



OFFICIAL

Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date	26-27 March 2025
Time	11:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Day 1), 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM (Day 2)
Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting; 619 Lower Plenty Rd, Yallambie, Victoria
Members	Dr Jane Canestra (Chair), Dr Gillian Hirth (CEO of ARPANSA), Mr Chris Perry, Mr Jim Hondros, Prof Pam Sykes (virtual), Ms Melissa Holzberger, Mr Mark Carey and A/Prof Catherine Olsen, Mr John Piispanen, Mr Stuart Parr.
Apologies	A/Prof Christine Connors.
Presenters and Observers	A/Prof Paul Burgess (all items), Ms Tone Doyle (Items 1-3), Ms Shazz Duijkers-Mahood (Item 2.1), Mr Rohan Mate (Item 2.2), A/Prof Ivan Williams (Items 4 and 20), Dr Marcus Grzechnik (Items 4 and 9), Dr Rick Tinker, Mr Jim Scott (Item 4.2), Mr Stephen Alexander (Item 4.3), Denise De Keyzer (Item 8), Jason Telford (Item 8), Mr Lachlan Whittle (Item 9), Dr Megan Cook (Item 10), Mr Nicholas Crowther (Item 12).
Secretariat	Dr Arne Biesiekierski, Mr James Wheaton.

1 - Meeting Open

The Chair acknowledged the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin nation land on which the meeting was held, paying respect to their Elders past and present, and welcomed invited observer Associate Professor Paul Burgess, Acting Chief Health Officer (CHO) of the Northern Territory (NT), attending for Associate Professor Christine Connors (NT CHO).

No additional potential conflicts were declared at this meeting. The November 2024 meeting minutes were noted as endorsed and published out of session. The secretariat provided the status of action items from previous meetings, and Council agreed to close items regarding discussion of the Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service and establishing a National Environment Protection Authority.

The Council noted various outgoing correspondence to professional bodies seeking views on workforce challenges for radiation professionals; and noted incoming correspondence from the Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS) (regarding item 14 below), and the Australian College of Physical Scientists and Engineers in Medicine (ACPSEM) (regarding item 19 below).

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2 - CEO Update

The CEO of ARPANSA provided an update to the Council on recent ARPANSA activities. These included, but were not limited to, the impact of the federal budget on ARPANSA; the establishment of a new Australian Naval-Nuclear Powered Submarine Regulator (ANNPSR); the activities of the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) and Radiation Health Committee (RHC); the activities of ARPANSA's regulatory, medical radiation, and radiation health branches; and international engagement activities including the Regulatory Infrastructure Development Project (RIDP) Asia and the Pacific.

The Council discussed the increased focus on artificial intelligence applications; strategic leadership on workforce challenges in radiation protection roles; the Australian Radiological Nuclear Event Plan (AUSRNEPLAN) and Australian Clinical Guidelines for Radiological Emergencies; and an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Regional Workshop on the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material.

The position of the member representing the interests of the general public remains vacant. Pending appointment of a new member, the CEO provided a summary of issues raised by the members representing the interests of the general public on the RHC and NSC, which included radiological waste disposal, inspection of nuclear facilities, and workforce challenges for regulators.

Task: ARPANSA to share the draft AUSRNEPLAN when available.

Task: ARPANSA to present on revision of Australian Clinical Guidelines for Radiological Emergencies.

2.1 - Media Enquiries

ARPANSA presented on recent media enquiries received, noting that mentions of ARPANSA remain broadly neutral, with no notable queries regarding civilian nuclear power proposals. The Council sought a further breakdown of themes within media coverage at the next meeting.

Task: ARPANSA to present a summary of media search terms at the next meeting.

2.2 - Public Enquiries

ARPANSA presented on public enquiries to ARPANSA's Talk to a Scientist Program, noting enquiry numbers are comparable to previous years, with key topics being radiofrequency (mobiles), ionising (personal exposure), and extremely low frequency energy (powerlines).

3 - Roles and Expectations of Advisory Bodies

ARPANSA presented on the Roles and Expectations of Advisory bodies published on its website at <https://www.arpansa.gov.au/about-us/advisory-council-and-committees/roles-and-expectations-advisory-committees>. The Council will table the full conflicts of interests register at each meeting.

4 - CEO responses to previous advice

4.1 - National guidance for shielding design, installation and verification

ARPANSA's CEO gave an update on considerations regarding Council's advice of 17 April 2024 regarding issues of national uniformity in shielding design in relation to occupational and public radiation dose exposures in diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy. This included discussion of national guidance which could be referenced for the construction facilities with shielding.

4.2 - National registration of keratinocyte cancer

ARPANSA's CEO presented a response to Council's 17 April 2024 advice regarding the need for a national register of keratinocyte cancers to gather data on the risks of ultraviolet radiation. The CEO undertook to communicate Council's recommendations to relevant stakeholders to further consider these important issues, once the Council's supporting journal publication is available. Council members agreed to provide suggested stakeholder contacts for ARPANSA to further communicate the need for a national register of keratinocyte cancers.

Task: Council members to provide suggested stakeholder contacts to ARPANSA to further communicate the need for a national register of keratinocyte cancers.

4.3 - National preparedness and response capability for radiological emergencies

ARPANSA's CEO presented a response to Council's 17 April 2024 advice regarding Australia's national preparedness and response capabilities for radiological emergencies. It notes activities underway in the context of visiting naval ships, including ongoing discussions with State and Territory emergency planners, development of scenario playbooks, and support for geographical information systems and communication messaging, and regular deployment of liaison officers.

The Council discussed Australia's radiation bio-dosimetry capability, and separately, how the number of participants 'on the ground' would connect in the event of an actual emergency, noting that education is key for enabling first responders. ARPANSA noted ongoing cooperation within the Commonwealth including the Department of Defence on emergency preparedness.

Task: ARPANSA to provide outcomes of bio-dosimetry research to Council when available.

Task: ARPANSA to update the Council on further Commonwealth engagement discussions.

5 - Items Referred from the Radiation Health Committee (RHC)

The RHC, consisting largely of jurisdictional radiation regulators, advises the CEO and the Council on matters relating to radiation protection. It formulates draft national policies, codes and standards for consideration by the Commonwealth, states and territories.

5.1 - Exemption and Clearance Guide of Radioactive Material

ARPANSA presented a summary of the RHC's work to develop a national code for the exemption and clearance of certain radioactive materials from regulatory control, requesting feedback on suggested relevant stakeholders for targeted consultation during the drafting phase.

Task: Council members to suggest stakeholders for targeted consultation on exemption and clearance of certain radioactive materials from regulatory control, by 11 April 2025.

5.2 - Dosimetry Service Provider (DSP) Standard

The Council considered a revised Draft DSP Standard following the incorporation of feedback received from public consultation and noting RHC endorsement at its 5-6 March 2025 meeting. The Council noted that ARPANSA had received advice about the draft DSP Standard's application and applicability to ARPANSA's own Personal Radiation Monitoring Service (PRMS) and then recommended the draft to the CEO of ARPANSA for publication.

Decision: Council agreed to recommend the DSP Standard for publication.

5.3 - WorkCover Item

The Council discussed an issue referred from the RHC regarding recent Safe Work Australia (SWA) guidance which has resulted in changes to jurisdictional work safety regulations. The changes appear to consider exposure to ionising radiation as a presumptive cause for a number of diseases without any reference to magnitude of exposure or legislated limits.

The Council noted International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifications, which establishes a causal link, but do not stipulate levels of exposure or consider controls for exposure, both of which are important factors in radiation safety. The Council noted large occupational studies of radiation exposure have not shown evidence of disease. The Council agreed to establish a working group to write a letter of advice to the CEO outlining key concerns to inform engagement with SWA, and separately seek input from jurisdictional radiation advisory bodies.

Task: Council to draft advice to CEO, outlining concerns to inform further engagement with SWA.

Task: Chair to write to jurisdictional radiation advisory bodies to seek input for further discussion.

5.4 - Items referred to RHC from enHealth

Discussion of this item was deferred to item 13 on Day 2.

6 - Standards Australia (TC-85)

Standards Australia presented on the process for Australia to participate, via Standards Australia, in the International Standards Organisation (ISO) Technical Committee 85 (TC-85) on nuclear energy, nuclear technologies, and radiological protection. The Council discussed the risks and benefits of engaging in ISO standards, including resource limitations. Council also acknowledged the close engagement of IAEA with ISO, and ARPANSA's reliance on IAEA standards, and agreed to make no recommendation regarding further engagement with ISO TC-85.

7 - Implementation of the QLD skin cancer register

The Council received an update on Queensland Health's implementation of reporting requirements in relation to certain basal cell carcinomas (BCC) and squamous cell carcinomas (SCC), via an amendment of relevant legislation, to capture incidence data in the Queensland cancer register. This related to Council's 17 April 2024 advice which recognised the need for State and Territory cancer registries to work towards statutory notification and routine reporting of keratinocyte cancers.

8 - AI Governance

ARPANSA presented on its risk and governance frameworks for artificial intelligence (AI), including the Commonwealth's whole of government policy on AI and ARPANSA's recently published transparency statement on the use of AI. The Council discussed the increase in flawed scientific papers written by AI and noted a draft Australian Radiation Protection Society's (ARPS) paper on AI.

9 - ARPANSA Safety Culture Assessment

ARPANSA presented on the motivation, methodology, and outcomes of a recent internal safety culture self-assessment, noting the publicly available summary on ARPANSA's website. The Council discussed the results analysis, valid intercomparisons, and action plan implementation.

10 - United Nations (UN) Independent Scientific Panel on Effects of Nuclear War

The Council noted a UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/79/238 'Nuclear war effects and scientific research') on 24 December 2024, to establish an Independent Scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear War. The Council discussed its broad relevance to ARPANSA's work and role.

11 - Australian Societies Update

The Council received updates on the activities of the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA), the Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS) conference and paper on AI, and work towards co-accreditation with the United Kingdom Society of Radiation Protection.

12 - Minerals Council of Australia

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) attended virtually to provide input from a MCA member survey which noted concerns around opposition to uranium mining in Australia; the need to review the *Code of Practice and Safety Guide for Radiation Protection and Radioactive Waste Management in Mining and Mineral Processing* (RPS 9); and, the need to set limits to exempt or clear material from regulatory control for off-site transport. ARPANSA noted current RHC work underway review RPS 9, and to draft a code on the exemption and clearance of material from regulatory control.

13 - Competencies

This item was deferred from Day 1 (Item 5.4). It related to a proposal from RHC to consider the need for a national competency-based framework, for consistent qualifications to use radiation sources. The RHC noted previous work on competencies, such as for users of fixed radiation gauges and mobile soil density and moisture gauges, referred to enHealth for implementation in 2020. The RHC also noted the need for its reconsideration given changes in the contemporary operating landscape.

The Council discussed the overall objectives, highlighting the RHC's previous work as a starting point. It also noted the importance of a common approach to radiation risk and acknowledging overlapping competency frameworks in established industries such as mining or the Australian Defence Forces.

Decision: The Council agreed to a joint working group with RHC on national competencies for radiation protection competencies for radiation protection.

14 - Radiation Protection Workforce

The Council further discussed workforce issues generally, including in relation to items 5.4 and 12, and the DOHAC *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce – Scope of Practice Review Final Report*.

15 - Security briefing

The Council received a security briefing about current threats, a degraded security environment, and reporting requirements and procedures. This routine briefing is repeated periodically.

16 - Sustainability in Radiation Protection in Australia

The Council discussed outcomes of its working group meeting to discuss the role of sustainability in radiation protection in Australia, considering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, noting the IAEA is already working on three main focus areas: food production and clean water issues; health and wellbeing with equity and access to services; and energy and climate change. Council recommended that the working group consider where ARPANSA's existing work aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Task: The working group to further progress possible paper on the role of sustainability in radiation protection in Australia in relation to ARPANSA's activities.

17 - Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (PeterMac) Correspondence

The Council further discussed the November 2024 correspondence received from the CEO of PeterMac, in response to the Council's letter on 9 July 2024 inviting input on any issues of concern.

ARPANSA's CEO noted subsequent discussions with PeterMac covering their role in the World Health Organization (WHO) Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network (REMPAN), as well as supporting the revision of the Australian Clinical Guidelines for Radiological Emergencies.

Further to the CEO update (Item 2), the Council discussed the clinical guidelines review process, noting that it should have a 'multiple scenario' approach to acknowledge the complexity of radiological scenarios. The Council noted that ARPANSA will hold focus groups on selective parts of the guidance to test stakeholder views before redrafting work commences. Further to the task recorded under Item 2, for ARPANSA to share the draft AUSRNEPLAN when available, the Council decided to discuss the AUSRNEPLAN and broader revised Australian Government Crisis Management Framework (AGCMF) in further detail at its next meeting. The Council also noted ARPANSA's work on a memorandum of understanding with PeterMac which will be published online.

Decision: Council to further consider the draft AUSRNEPLAN and revised AGCMF at its next meeting.

Task: Chair to send letter to Peter Mac acknowledging prior correspondence.

18 - ARPANSA CEO ARPS Presentation

The CEO of ARPANSA delivered an abridged version of the keynote presentation given to the 2024 ARPS conference, which noted the new Australian Public Service value of stewardship in the context of a changing operating landscape, and the impact of sustainable development goals on regulation.

19 - Australasian College of Physical Scientists & Engineers in Medicine (ACPSEM) correspondence

The Council discussed Australasian College of Physical Scientists & Engineers in Medicine (ACPSEM) correspondence of 28 February 2025. Associate Professor Ivan Williams (observing as Branch Head, Medical Radiation Services, ARPANSA) and Mr Chris Perry each declared a potential conflict of

interest through affiliations with ACPSEM, which the Council noted. The Council discussed various issues around professional standards recognition and the quality of workforce training in healthcare professions such as radiation oncology and radiography, including the likelihood of qualitative harm from unregistered practitioners despite good clinical governance frameworks. The Council agreed to acknowledge and then refer ACPSEM's correspondence to ARPANSA for further consideration.

Decision: Council referred the 25 February 2025 ACPSEM correspondence to ARPANSA to consider.

Task: Chair to write to ACPSEM acknowledging receipt and referral to ARPANSA.

20 - Discussion and Housekeeping

Council members noted an International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) webinar on young professionals 1-2 April 2025 entitled "*Shaping the future of Radiological Protection: Engaging the next generation*", and an ICRP publication out for public consultation on the "*Scientific Evidence Relevant to the Assessment of Solid Cancer Radiation Risk at Low Dose and Low Dose Rate*".

The Council also discussed interventional neurological radiology diagnostic reference levels (DRLs), noting that ARPANSA is on the process of drafting new DRLs, which will be published in due course. It also further discussed the AGCMF (see action at item 17) and an ongoing interest in AI policy developments.

The next meeting was noted as scheduled for 31 July to 1 August 2025 in Adelaide.