



# Radiation Health Committee

## Meeting Minutes

<b>Date</b>	5 – 6 March 2025
<b>Time</b>	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (5 March) 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM (6 March)
<b>Location</b>	11 Waymouth Street, Adelaide SA. Microsoft Teams Meeting.
<b>Members</b>	Dr Joanna Wriedt (Chair), Dr Gillian Hirth (CEO of ARPANSA), Ms Fay Bellis, Mr Tom Sullivan, Dr Selim Mahbub (ACT), Ms Karen Marler (NSW), Mr Bradley Feldtman (NT), Mr Simon Critchley (Virtual, QLD), Mr David Kruss (SA), Mr Nehal Ahmed (Virtual, Tas), Mr Glenn Riley (Vic), Ms Hazel Upton (Virtual, WA)
<b>Presenters</b>	Ms Jenni Stiffe (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 2.1), Mr Rohan Mate (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 2.2), Mr Erin McWilliams (ARPANSA, Virtual, Items 5.1 – 5.3), Dr Brendan Tate (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 6.1), Mr Alex Kalaiziovski (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 6.2), Dr Peter Thomas (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 6.3), Mr Toby Beveridge (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 12.1), Dr Marcus Grzechnik (ARPANSA, Items 7 – 8).
<b>Observers</b>	Ms Michelle Milller (NPSRD), Dr Marcus Grzechnik (ARPANSA), Mr Samir Sarkar (ARPANSA, Virtual, 11), Mr Blake Orr (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 8), Mr Erin McWilliams (ARPANSA, Virtual, Items 1 – 9, 11 – 13.2), Dr Ivan Williams (ARPANSA, Virtual, Item 13), Ms Maya Cooper (SA EPA, Items 4 – 5.3), Ms Kavitha Srinivasan (SA EPA, Items 4 – 5.3), Ms Carly Cilento (SA EPA, Virtual, Item 11), Ms Misha Richards (SA EPA, Virtual, Item 11), Mr Steve Higgins (SA EPA, Virtual, Item 11), Raj Sardarna (SA EPA, Virtual, Item 11), Ms Paula Veevers (QLD Health, Virtual, Items 1 – 9, 11 – 13.2).
<b>Secretariat</b>	Dr Arne Biesiekierski (Secretariat RHC), Dr Fiona Charalambous and Mr James Wheaton (Assistant secretariat RHC).

### 1 - Meeting Open

The Chair acknowledged the Kurna People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which the meeting was held, paying respects to their Elders past and present. The Chair welcomed Dr Selim Mahbub as the new Radiation Control Officer member for the Australian Capital Territory, and observers from QLD Health and the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Regulatory Design team.

#### 1.1 - Housekeeping

The RHC reviewed all outstanding tasks. The November 2024 minutes were accepted with three minor changes. No correspondence or conflicts of interest were noted or declared.

## **2 - CEO Update**

ARPANSA's CEO provided an update on recent ARPANSA activities. This covered ongoing work to address RHC action items; parliamentary and international engagement activities or opportunities; the meetings of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council and Nuclear Safety Committee; and medical or radiation health services work including work on an Australian Radiological-Nuclear Emergency (AUSRNE) Plan and a new clinical dosimetry audit under development.

The RHC discussed work being undertaken to update diagnostic reference levels (DRLs) and ARPANSA committed to provide a progress report on updates to DRLs at the next meeting.

**Task:** ARPANSA to provide a progress report on updates to DRLs at the next meeting.

### **2.1 - Media Enquiries**

ARPANSA gave an update on recent media enquiries. The number of queries was comparable to the same period last year, although there was a decrease over preceding months attributable to the holiday period. No single topic dominated, ranging from electromagnetic energy (EME), to ultraviolet radiation (UVR), historical weapons testing at Maralinga, and the tri-lateral agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS).

The RHC requested the inclusion of a trend analysis of media data going forward, with an analysis of data presented at the current meeting to be distributed out of session.

**Task:** ARPANSA to distribute a trend analysis of media data out of session.

### **2.2 - Public Enquiries**

ARPANSA presented on recent public enquiries received through its Talk to a Scientist program. There was a slight increase in the number of 2024 enquiries compared to 2023, with enquiries in the most recent quarter comparable in number to the previous year. As with previous updates, the greatest number of enquiries related to telecommunications and power infrastructure, followed by personal and occupational exposure to ionising radiation.

The RHC discussed various State and Territory regulator public enquiry programs and agreed to look at what data can be shared at the next meeting.

**Task:** RHC State and Territory Representatives to look at what jurisdictional-level public enquiry data can be shared at next meeting.

## **3 - Radiation Protection Series (RPS) cost-shared projects**

ARPANSA's CEO provided an update on jurisdictional commitments to cost-sharing arrangements to draft a Radioactive Waste Management Code and a Combined X-Ray Equipment Code. The RHC agreed to add these projects to the 2025 RHC Workplan, with Project Document Plans (PDPs) to be brought to the next meeting. RHC members were also asked to suggest potential authors or contributors to the projects.

**Task:** ARPANSA to bring PDPs for a Radioactive Waste Management Code and a Combined X-Ray Equipment Code to next meeting.

**Task:** RHC members to suggest authors or contributors for the new codes by **2 May 2025**.

#### 4 - Items referred from enHealth

The RHC discussed the referral of Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) items to RHC to consider, including the development of a national competency framework; auditing, reviewing or otherwise testing national capabilities to respond to incidents and emergencies, track security-enhanced and sealed sources, and report radiation incidents; developing a nationally agreed-upon risk matrix in risk management of radiation practices; and, identifying opportunities to use modern technology to improve regulatory practice efficiency.

The RHC considered these items against its existing 2025 Workplan priorities, noting that existing RHC and ARPANSA work now encompasses or supersedes a number of the enHealth items, or that prerequisite work (such as a national glossary of terms) and additional resources are required before some items are addressed. ARPANSA agreed to reply to enHealth outlining the RHC's considerations.

The RHC agreed there remains a need for a national competency-based framework, for consistent qualifications to use radiation sources, and this would still be a significant amount of work. The RHC noted its previous work on competencies referred to enHealth for implementation in 2020, such as for users of fixed radiation gauges and mobile soil density and moisture gauges. However, the RHC noted the need for reconsideration given changes in the contemporary operating landscape.

The RHC proposed a joint working group with the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council. Pending agreement, ARPANSA would prepare a draft terms of reference with working group input.

The RHC further agreed that a national risk matrix would be valuable and warranted further discussion at the next RHC meeting.

**Task:** ARPANSA to reply to the enHealth secretariat outlining the RHC's considerations.

**Decision:** RHC to propose to the Council a joint working group on a national competency-based framework.

**Task:** Pending Council agreement, ARPANSA to draft a term of reference with working group input.

**Task:** Jurisdictions to circulate any guidance about how they develop their own competencies.

**Decision:** A national approach to risk will be discussed at the next RHC, including a presentation from the South Australian Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

#### 5 - Updates to the RPS

##### 5.1 - Gauges Code

ARPANSA previewed the results of the recently closed public consultation on the draft *Code for Practice-Specific Requirements for Fixed and Portable Radiation Gauges* ahead of its circulation out-of-session for RHC review. Possible concerns and challenges with feedback were discussed, including the need for guidance around the safety assessments required in the new code.

**Decision:** RHC agreed to review the revised draft code out-of-session, following amendment based on public feedback.

##### 5.2 - Gauges Standard

ARPANSA presented a draft *Equipment Standard for Fixed and Portable Radiation Gauges* for RHC comment and review out of session. Discussion included current gauge-specific requirements in various jurisdictions, issues testing neutron gauges, the return of gauges to manufacturers, and disposal pathways for gauges.

**Task:** RHC Members to provide comment and feedback by **11 April 2025**.

### 5.3 - RPS Exemption and Clearance Guide

ARPANSA presented preliminary work on a new draft *Guide for Exemption and Clearance of Radioactive Material*, and sought RHC feedback on layout, content, and future targeted stakeholders to consult, including format of material referenced from external documents. The RHC agreed to provide suggested stakeholders and example scenarios and processes to use in the guide, and agreed to a stakeholders' workshop which would also consider the layout of a new guide.

**Task:** RHC Members to suggest industry stakeholders for consultation by **17 March 2025**.

**Task:** RHC Members to suggest common exemption and clearance scenarios to include as examples in the new guide by **11 April 2025**.

**Task:** RHC regulator members to provide flowcharts of jurisdictional exemption and clearance processes, to inform a potential high-level flowchart for the guide, by **11 April 2025**.

**Decision:** RHC agreed a stakeholders' workshop would be beneficial for seeking early feedback.

## 6 - RPS Updates Continued

### 6.1 - Well-Logging Code

ARPANSA presented on the status of the *Draft Code for Practice-Specific Requirements for Well-Logging with Sealed Radiation Sources*. Noting the relevance of public comments recently received on the similarly formatted *Draft Code for Practice-Specific Requirements for Fixed and Portable Radiation Gauges*, the RHC endorsed the incorporation of relevant feedback from that process into the draft Well-Logging Code ahead of its own public consultation process. Following these changes, it was agreed that a draft would be circulated out-of-session.

**Decision:** RHC endorsed the incorporation of changes into the Well-Logging Code, based on public feedback on the Gauges Code.

**Task:** ARPANSA to circulate a draft Well-Logging Code out-of-session for RHC feedback.

### 6.2 - Non-Medical Human Imaging Code

ARPANSA presented the outcomes of a working group discussion on a revised Project and Document Plan (PDP) following RHC's November 2024 decision to produce a Code rather than a Guide. The RHC discussed matters of image interpretation, including training and AI, as well as ethics and justification of use. An updated PDP will be circulated following the meeting.

**Task:** ARPANSA to circulate draft Project Development Plan out-of-session for RHC feedback.

### 6.3 - Medical Safety Guides (RPS 14.1/2/3)

ARPANSA presented for discussion and endorsement the PDPs for the Medical Safety Guides that will replace the existing *Safety Guide for Radiation Protection in Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology* (RPS 14.1), *Safety Guide for Radiation Protection in Nuclear Medicine* (RPS 14.2), and *Safety Guide for Radiation Protection in Radiotherapy* (RPS 14.3) from 2008. The RHC discussed general project timelines and document composition, working group input, and the order of RHC review and external consultation steps. Two members agreed to contribute to the radiotherapy and radiology working groups. The RHC agreed that draft documents should be shared with the RHC prior to targeted consultation.

**Decision:** RHC endorsed the Project and Document Plans for all three guides.

#### **6.4 - DSP Standard**

The working group lead presented all results received from public consultation, and the proposed changes to be made resulting from this feedback. The RHC discussed several matters including dosimeter use, records submission, competition and reporting requirements. The RHC agreed to consider drafting a separate statement on how to wear personal dosimeters. The RHC agreed to the circulation of the revised draft DSP Standard out-of-session seeking final member endorsement.

**Task:** RHC to consider a guidance statement on wearing of personal dosimetry.

**Task:** Working group to circulate finalised Standard and Comments Resolution by **7 March 2025**.

**Task:** RHC to review and decide on endorsement by **14 March 2025**.

#### **7 - IAEA Safety Committees Update**

ARPANSA presented on the current document drafting system and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pipeline of work and discussed the possibility for Australian jurisdictional experts to participate in IAEA drafting work. The RHC agreed that members would review the planned upcoming work of the IAEA Safety Standards Committees and could request further updates on any documents as desired, but that no further action was needed at this time.

#### **8 - Environmental Monitoring and Assessment**

ARPANSA presented on recent work to establish an Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Framework, and the progress of related Pilot Program measurement activities. The RHC discussed opportunities for ARPANSA to collaborate with jurisdictions/peer organisations, such as the co-location of monitors and expansion of existing jurisdictional monitoring programs, as well as protocols around reporting of data, and international examples of comparable programs.

The RHC noted that the public reporting of metrics is beneficial for public confidence and comparisons to background baselines.

#### **9 - Exemption of Tasmanian Medical Radiation Practitioners**

Tasmania presented and sought feedback on the potential exemption of Medical Radiation Practitioners, such as diagnostic radiographers, nuclear medicine technologists and radiation therapists, under the Radiation Protection Act and Regulations in Tasmania, with a shift towards acceptance of their Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) registration as proof of competency. The RHC then discussed individual jurisdiction approaches to licensing, as well as potential concerns. Tasmania also noted that it had circulated a questionnaire through the RHC secretariat on this matter to fellow jurisdictions, seeking information on existing arrangements that are place for training and supervision of MRPs.

#### **10 - Member Representing the Interests of the General Public**

The Member Representing the Interests of the General Public presented their paper on the potential impact of workforce pressures on the public sector regulatory environment. The RHC discussed regulator funding pressures, the quality of industry training and depth of knowledge, alignment of regulator resources with government priorities, and the need for appropriate risk management processes.

## 11 - Regulatory Knowledge Exchange

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. RHC discussed outcomes and the applicability of this type of assessment to other organisations.

The SA EPA presented on its regulatory structure and activities, including recent changes to terminology and regulatory approaches, such as the use of a 'graded approach'.

The head of the Nuclear Power Safety Regulatory Design team gave an update on progress to establish a new regulator under the *Australian Naval Nuclear-Powered Submarine (ANNPS) Act 2024*.

## 12 - Other Issues

### 12.1 - Medical Import Permits

ARPANSA presented the results of a survey distributed to regulators about the issuing of 12-month permits for the import of unsealed radioisotopes for medical purposes. ARPANSA proposed changes to the permit administration process, primarily relating to the collection of additional information from the applicant, with the RHC agreeing to these changes going forward. The RHC also considered a separate project on the alignment of overall objective of imports for tracking.

**Decision:** RHC agreed to proposed changes to information collected during the import permit application process.

### 12.2 - Collarium Definitions

ARPANSA presented the results of a review into the use and regulatory status of 'collariums', as well as jurisdictional definitions regarding tanning units. The RHC discussed next steps and agreed to establish a working group to investigate amending the National Directory for Radiation Protection.

**Decision:** RHC to establish a working group to consider amending the National Directory for Radiation Protection.

### 12.3 - WorkCover Changes

The RHC continued discussions on recent WorkCover changes in Western Australian legislation in regard to ionising radiation exposure as a presumptive cause of disease, and equivalent changes in other jurisdictions. The RHC agreed to refer this issue to ARPANSA's Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council, to consider further representation to Safe Work Australia as the policy lead.

**Decision:** RHC to refer the policy issue of radiation exposure as a presumptive cause of disease to the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council, for representation to Safe Work Australia.

### 12.4 - Scope of Practice Review

The RHC discussed the Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC) *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce – Scope of Practice Review* tabled at the November 2024 RHC meeting. The RHC discussed the review in light of a recent Ahpra survey. ARPANSA undertook to coordinate with DOHAC to determine review timelines and intent and circulate these out-of-session to RHC.

**Task:** ARPANSA to contact DOHAC regarding review timelines and circulate information to RHC.

## **12 – International Standards Organisation (ISO) Technical Committee 85 (TC-85)**

ARPANSA presented on the requirements and challenges to potentially lead Australia's participation in TC-85, noting capacity constraints. The RHC was asked to suggest potential TC-85 stakeholders in Australia, who may be relevant whether or not ARPANSA participates or plays a lead role in TC-85.

**Task:** Secretariat to circulate the form seeking input on stakeholder organisations to be considered for participation in any Standards Australia engagement on ISO TC-85.

## **13 - New Issues to Consider**

### **13.1 - Correspondence from Australian Radiation Protection Accreditation Board (ARPAB)**

The RHC discussed correspondence received from ARPAB Chair Mr Cameron Jeffries. The Queensland RHC member noted a potential Conflict of Interest as a member of ARPAB, and NSW noted that Mr Jeffries was a member of the NSW Radiation Advisory Council. The RHC noted these declarations. The RHC agreed to draft a reply to ARPAB.

The RHC discussed the role of ARPAB and existing RHC work on competencies for radiation professionals, noting while jurisdictions may not licence these experts directly (licenced entities would employ such professionals), some regulators may direct licence holder organisations to employ qualified professionals to conduct expert reviews. The RHC also discussed the potential value of having accreditable base-level competencies for health physicist qualifications.

**Task:** Working Group to draft a reply to ARPAB to note ongoing RHC work on competencies, and noting ARPAB-raised matters which may feed back into this work.

### **Other Business and Housekeeping**

The RHC noted the end of domestic neutron calibration services, representing a loss of Australian sovereign capability in this space, with calibration now posing a significant financial burden for operators. SA EPA noted it may be able to provide a limited check of sensitivity, but not a full calibration service. ARPANSA committed to investigating this issue ahead of the next RHC meeting.

RHC members discussed the revised RHC 2025 Workplan, following changes agreed at this meeting, and requested a current version of the Workplan be included with meeting materials going forward.

NSW EPA noted they have hired a consultant to contribute to research into regulatory approach around cosmetic use of non-ionising radiation. ARPANSA agreed to share the work and details of the Swedish regulator due to their ongoing investigations in this matter. NSW EPA further noted a recent study into radiation shielding, which it will present at the next RHC meeting.

The RHC noted that the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) could share a guidance document prepared for the exemption and clearance of radiological material.

The date of the next RHC meeting was moved to 25-26 June 2025 in Brisbane.

**Task:** ARPANSA to explore issue of neutron calibration and report to RHC at next meeting.

**Task:** ARPANSA to share details of Swedish regulator work on impacts of cosmetic laser uses.