



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



Quarterly Report

of the

Chief Executive Officer of ARPANSA

July – September 2025

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ARPANSA
619 Lower Plenty Road
Yallambie VIC 3085
email: info@arpansa.gov.au

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Acknowledgement of Country

From our scientists to the world's first scientists, we respectfully acknowledge Traditional Owners and First Nations communities and their rich cultures. We recognise, respect and continue to learn from traditional science knowledges, and the deep understanding and observations of land, waters and sky carried and shared by First Nations peoples over thousands of years.

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Table of contents

Table of contents	1
Letter of transmittal.....	1
The operations of the CEO and ARPANSA.....	2
Provide high quality advice to government and the community on health, safety, and environmental risks from radiation	2
Provide emergency preparedness and response systems for a radiological or nuclear incident	2
Promote patient safety in radiotherapy and diagnostic radiology	3
Ensure protection of people and the environment through efficient and effective regulation.....	3
Details of directions given by the Minister under section 16 of the Act	5
Details of directions given by the CEO under section 41 of the Act.....	5
Details of improvement notices given by inspectors under section 80A of the Act.....	5
Details of any breach of licence conditions by a licensee	5
Facilities licensed under Part 5 of the ARPANS Act	6
The operations of the Council and Committees	6
Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council	6
Radiation Health Committee.....	7
Nuclear Safety Committee	7

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Letter of transmittal

9 January 2026

The Hon Rebecca White MP
Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

The *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* (the Act) requires the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) to submit to the Minister, at the end of each quarter, a report on:

- the operations during the quarter of the CEO, ARPANSA, the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (the Council), the Nuclear Safety Committee (the NSC) and the Radiation Health Committee (the RHC)
- details of directions given by the Minister to the CEO under section 16 of the Act
- details of directions given by the CEO under section 41 of the Act
- details of improvement notices given by inspectors under section 80A of the Act
- details of any breach of licence conditions by a licensee, of which the CEO is aware
- details of all reports received by the CEO from the Council and the NSC under Part 4, paragraphs 20(f) or 26(1)(d) of the Act
- a list of all facilities licensed under Part 5 of the Act.

I am pleased to provide you with a report, meeting the requirements of the Act, covering the period 1 July - 30 September 2025.

Please note that subsection 60(6) of the Act requires you to cause a copy of the report to be laid before each House of the Parliament within 15 sitting days of the day on which this report was given to you.

Yours sincerely



Mr James Scott
Acting CEO of ARPANSA

The operations of the CEO and ARPANSA

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) is the Australian Government's primary authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety. Our purpose is to protect the Australian people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation, through understanding risks, best practice regulation, research, policy, services, partnerships and engaging with the community.

ARPANSA sits within the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing portfolio and has a single outcome, as set out in the 2025-26 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS):

Protection of people and the environment through radiation protection and nuclear safety research, policy, advice, codes, standards, services and regulation.

The Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Program, contained within the 2025-26 PBS, describes 4 key performance measures against which ARPANSA seeks to achieve its outcome. These measures are:

- Provide high quality advice to government and the community on health, safety and environmental risks from radiation.
- Provide emergency preparedness and response systems for a radiological or nuclear incident.
- Promote patient safety in radiotherapy and diagnostic radiology.
- Ensure protection of people and the environment through efficient and effective regulation.

The report on the operations of the CEO and ARPANSA focuses on these.

Provide high quality advice to government and the community on health, safety, and environmental risks from radiation

Enhanced Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Program

During this quarter ARPANSA liaised with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts on several initiatives, including advising on an International Telecommunication Union common proposal, regarding assessment and measurement of human exposure to electromagnetic fields. The proposal has been submitted to the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 on behalf of the Asia-Pacific region.

Provide emergency preparedness and response systems for a radiological or nuclear incident

Emergency Preparedness

During this quarter, ARPANSA was involved in a number of exercises, one operation, and monitored a developing overseas event.

ARPANSA participated in a Conventions Exercise (ConvEx-2b), which required Australia to test its capacity in supporting our conventions under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) when deploying support for an overseas nuclear accident. This exercise rigorously tested arrangements with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). One outcome of the exercise was to establish readily deployable response teams from across government to respond quickly, should DFAT support a deployment.

ARPANSA closely monitored the release of caesium-137 in Indonesia after an accidental release contaminated consumer foodstuffs, consumer goods, and industrial products. As Australia imports such products from the region, ARPANSA worked and continues to work closely with the Australian Border Force to ensure appropriate screening processes are in place to manage this risk.

ARPANSA placed the Radiation Emergency Coordination Centre (RECC) at 'ALERT' under the Australian Radiological and Nuclear Event Plan (AUSRNEPLAN) during the transportation of radiological material from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) at Lucas Heights to Port Kembla in NSW, in preparation for a shipment to France.

Promote patient safety in radiotherapy and diagnostic radiology

The first meetings of the Medical Radiation Safety Guide Working Groups have been held. The 3 Working Groups are reviewing and updating the Radiation Protection in Medicine safety guides: Radiation Protection Series Publication Nos. 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3 – which cover Diagnostic & Interventional Radiology, Nuclear Medicine and Radiation Therapy respectively.

This quarter, staff from the Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service, Primary Standards Dosimetry Laboratory and Medical Imaging teams attended the International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine conference in Adelaide. Staff provided support at an ARPANSA information booth and delivered presentations on a range of topics, including dosimetry and film analysis, ARPANSA's diagnostic reference level (DRL) program and commissioning equipment to support dosimetry calibration.

Medical Imaging

ARPANSA's National Diagnostic Reference Level Service (NDRLS) received 1,543 surveys of patient dose in computed tomography (CT) scans during the quarter, bringing the cumulative total for the 2025 calendar year to 2,841. The target for the 2025 calendar year has been met. The numbers of surveys received per procedure category are sufficient to infer national characteristics.

NDRLS surveys, completed by participating imaging facilities, collect data on patient dose from ionising radiation in diagnostic imaging, particularly for (CT). ARPANSA uses this data to calculate Australian DRLs for common types of CT scans. The DRLs provide a point of comparison, so a given imaging facility can compare their practice with that of their peers. DRL comparisons encourage imaging facilities to review their practice and thereby ensure an appropriate balance of benefit and risk for patients. This helps to avoid excessive radiation dose to patients from medical imaging.

Ensure protection of people and the environment through efficient and effective regulation

Significant regulatory activities

During the quarter, ARPANSA conducted inspections and held discussions with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) in relation to several of its ageing facilities that store and contain radioactive materials, including intermediate level radioactive waste. The decommissioning of these ageing facilities has been delayed due to a range of factors. ANSTO's stewardship of its ageing

infrastructure does not currently meet ARPANSA's regulatory expectations. The issues which were recently identified have resulted in additional inspections being conducted. The outcome of these inspections is likely to result in non-compliances being found, and a need for corrective actions to be undertaken by ANSTO. In September 2025, one improvement notice was issued requiring ANSTO to 'make safe' one of its facilities.

Approvals

ARPANSA reviews and, where appropriate, issues approvals for controlled activities. This quarter approvals included 3 applications to amend licences, 2 changes with significant implications for safety, the surrender of one licence and the exemption of one low risk apparatus from regulation:

- An amendment to remove a licence condition on the ANSTO Synchrotron licence after confirming that a dose rate survey, required by the condition, was completed. This survey provided confidence that dose rates were less than the safety constraint adopted for the facility.
- An amendment of an ANSTO Synchrotron licence condition allowing ANSTO more time to review and update its hazard identification and risk assessments, and, if needed, implement further risk controls to demonstrate safety of the MX3 beamline. The extension was granted in consideration of the time and resources needed to complete the work and competing ANSTO priorities. The updated timeframe for completion is now March 2026, which does not have an ongoing safety risk.
- A request to amend the ANSTO Nuclear Medicine Production Facility licence to extend the time periods for provision of the Periodic Safety and Security Review (PSSR) and the plan for conducting the PSSR. The approval took account of ANSTO's capacity to deliver multiple PSSRs, and the need to prioritise the review of an older facility.
- A change with significant implications for safety to the OPAL reactor safety case regarding part of the primary cooling system. The change regarded the design criteria used for the OPAL riser based on the conditions of the facility. It was concluded that the change to the design criteria could be made without affecting the required safety functions of the component during normal and accident conditions.
- A change with significant implications for safety allowing ANSTO an exemption for 6 months from a normally monthly Operating Limit and Conditions waste tank measurement. The exemption was based on a temporary unavailability of ANSTO's Mass Spectrometer and adequate justification with supporting analysis. Additional administrative measures were implemented to mitigate the risk.
- ARPANSA accepted the surrender of the Department of Defence licence for a Betatron, as it is no longer required.
- ARPANSA granted an exemption to the Royal Australian Mint, allowing it to use a low-dose controlled apparatus without a licence. This was granted in consideration that in all reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the apparatus does not pose an unacceptable hazard to the health and safety of people or to the environment.

Inspections

ARPANSA conducted 9 inspections this quarter, including 5 facilities and 4 source licences. ARPANSA's inspection program is used to monitor compliance with the Act and the ARPANS Regulations. The inspection report findings assist each licence holder to meet their compliance requirements and attain high safety standards by benchmarking against international best practice.

Radioactive material import and export permits

The import and export of radioactive material to and from Australia requires permission under Regulation 4R of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 and Regulation 9AD of the Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958. Under these regulations, ARPANSA officers are authorised to issue import and export permits.

Permits issued this quarter:

Type of permits	Urgent (Single shipment)	Standard (Single shipment)	12 months
Import of non-medical radioisotope	35	41	4
Import of medical radioisotope	0	126	9
Export of high activity source	0	9	0

Transport of radioactive material

ARPANSA provided three approvals for a transport package of a Type B(U) package of an overseas design. The package will be used to transport a radioactive source used in radiation therapy. ARPANSA also provided a transport shipment approval for spent reactor fuel for transport overseas for reprocessing. One transport safety package approval was rejected, as the application did not include information needed to validate the package.

Details of directions given by the Minister under section 16 of the Act

No directions were given by the Minister under section 16 of the Act.

Details of directions given by the CEO under section 41 of the Act

No directions were given by the CEO under section 41 of the Act.

Details of improvement notices given by inspectors under section 80A of the Act

Following an inspection, an improvement notice was issued to ANSTO on 23 September 2025. It addressed deficiencies in the management and maintenance of gloveboxes containing radioactive materials at one of its ageing facilities. The gloveboxes were a hazard to workers, as routine maintenance to ensure containment of the material had not been undertaken. The notice requires ANSTO take the actions to 'make safe' the facility and provide ARPANSA with monthly updates on the status of its actions. These actions are necessary to ensure worker safety and maintain proper safety margins to prevent the release of material to the environment.

Details of any breach of licence conditions by a licensee

ARPANSA publishes performance history of licence holders on the ARPANSA [website](#).

There was one breach with significant safety or security implications during this quarter.

- ANSTO self-reported a breach related to the transport of irradiated ytterbium oxide. The breach involved dispatching a transport package containing 137% of the allowable radioactive activity for a Type-A package, exceeding the limits set by the Transport Code. ARPANSA reinforced the need for ANSTO to prevent, investigate, and rectify breaches as required under sections 56 and 57 of the ARPANS Regulations 2018. ANSTO is required to provide the results of its internal investigation into the incident to ARPANSA. The transport of radioactive material from ANSTO Health will remain under ARPANSA's inspection program.

Three breaches were confirmed this quarter with no significant safety or security implications:

- During an inspection of Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, it was found that the external dose rate limit of a radiation store was exceeded.
- ANSTO self-reported not maintaining an accurate inventory, which is a condition of licence; this breach was considered administrative in nature.
- An inspection found the Australian Signals Directorate had not maintained an accurate source inventory, which is considered an administrative breach.

Facilities licensed under Part 5 of the ARPANS Act

There were no facility licences issued this quarter.

The operations of the Council and Committees

Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

The Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (the Council) met on 31 July – 1 August 2025 in Adelaide.

The Council discussed how sustainability is or might be applied in radiation protection policy or practice; how ARPANSA may contribute to Safe Work Australia's Deemed Diseases List in relation to occupational diseases from ionising radiation; the state of national competency frameworks for the use of radiation sources; updates to emergency management governance for radiological events in Australia; and academic research being conducted into the reprocessing of minerals and other material to produce therapeutic radiopharmaceutical products. It also discussed common strategic priorities with the South Australian Radiation Protection Committee, and ways to better coordinate national approaches to radiation safety.

Minutes of previous Council meetings are available on the [website](#). The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for the 26 – 27 November 2025 in Sydney.

Reports to the CEO from the Council under paragraph 20(f) of the Act

No reports were provided by the Council to the CEO this quarter.

Council statements are available on the [website](#).

Radiation Health Committee

The Radiation Health Committee did not meet during the quarter. The next meeting of the RHC is scheduled for the 25 – 26 November 2025.

Minutes of previous RHC meetings are available on the [website](#).

Nuclear Safety Committee

The Nuclear Safety Committee met on 29 – 30 July 2025 in Adelaide.

The Committee discussed progress and challenges with the applications for the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard siting licence and the construction licence for the Controlled Industrial Facility at HMAS Stirling, including the adequacy of the public consultation process. The committee also received updates on regulatory activities, including new guidance on holistic safety approaches.

The minutes of the meeting are available on the [website](#).

Reports to the CEO from the NSC under paragraph 26(1)(d) of the Act

No reports were provided during this quarter.