



Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC)

Minutes

Date	19 November 2025
Time	9:00 AM to 5:30 PM
Location	Canberra, ACT
Members Present	Dr Tamie Weaver (Chair), Dr Gillian Hirth AO (CEO of ARPANSA), Dr Joanna Wriedt, Mr Michael Parker (online), Dr Peter Karamoskos, Mr Tony Irwin, Dr Peta Miller, Mr Peter Wilkinson, Mr Stuart Parr (recused from item 6), Mr Brent Rogers, Ms Jasmin Diab CSC (online), Mr Cameron MacPhail (recused from item 6)
Apologies	Nil
Attendees	ARPANSA: Mr Chris Nickel, Mr Lachlan Whittle, Mr Jim Scott (CRO of ARPANSA), Ms Christina Arthur (items 5 & 6), Mr Vaz Mottl (item 5), Mr Andrew McCormick (item 5), Mr John Ward (item 5), Mr Grant Beamish (item 5.5), Ms Fran Wigney (items 7 & 10), Mr Ryan Hemsley (item 10) ANNPSR: Mr Michael Drake (DG of ANNPSR), Mr Ryan Gilchrist (Acting DDG of ANNPSR; item 10), Ms Michele Miller (item 10) ARWA: Ms Amanda Fortanier (item 6)

1 - Introduction

1.1 - *Opening*

The Chair opened the Nuclear Safety Committee, with Dr Peta Miller giving an acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the land, paying respect to Elders past and present.

1.2 - *Attendance and apologies*

All Committee members attended this meeting.

1.3 - *Declarations of conflicts of interest, real, perceived or potential*

Mr Cameron MacPhail and Mr Stuart Parr declared a potential conflict of interest relating to their current employment and the recent request for information released by ARWA. As a result, both recused themselves from item 6.

1.4 - *Minutes of the previous meeting*

The finalised [minutes](#) of the July 2025 meeting have been published on the ARPANSA website.

2 - Business arising

2.1 - *Outstanding actions*

The Committee noted that there are no outstanding actions.

2.2 - *Incoming correspondence*

The Committee received no correspondence.

2.3 - *Outgoing correspondence*

The Committee provided the CEO with written advice in October 2025 following discussion at the July 2025 meeting in relation to the Australian Submarine Agency's ongoing community engagement in the Rockingham area, Western Australia. The CEO acknowledged receipt of the letter and thanked the NSC for their advice.

2.4 - *Travel Reports*

The Committee were not provided any travel reports.

3 - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Update

The CEO updated the Committee on recent ARPANSA activities. These included recent work with the Australian Border Force (ABF) on import permit requirements; international engagement including attendance at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference; ongoing work with the US National Nuclear Security Agency (NNSA) to guide decision-making in emergency preparedness and response; and ongoing support to the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR) that was established on 1 November 2025.

3.1 - *Media enquiries update*

ARPANSA gave an update on recent media enquiries received since the last meeting including trends, sentiment, and thematic analysis of the data. Sentiment analysis of where ARPANSA is mentioned, was generally neutral and in line with expectations.

The Committee noted that investigating methods of determining sentiment towards ARPANSA specifically rather than of the article they are mentioned within, may result in a more useful indicator. ARPANSA noted the limitations of sentiment analysis, advising that more precise analysis of sentiment, specifically of ARPANSA, may be possible in the future.

3.2 - *Public enquiries update*

ARPANSA presented on recent public enquiries received through its Talk to a Scientist (TTAS) program.

The Committee inquired about the extent of ARPANSA's proactive media engagement. ARPANSA noted that news/media releases are published on the website approximately twice per month in line with the media strategy.

4 - General reports

4.1 - Update from the Member Representing the Interest of the Public

The member representing the public received no correspondence. The member raised ongoing Committee considerations surrounding social licence and safety communication. The Committee identified existing useful documents as produced by the IAEA and the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP).

4.2 - Radiation Health Committee (RHC) update

The Chair of the RHC provided the Committee with an update on the most recent RHC meeting held on 25 June 2025. The RHC is developing its structured work plan for 2026. Ongoing and proposed work includes a national glossary of radiation terms; guidance on the management of orphan sources; an ARPANSA code for non-medical human imaging; an update and consolidation of ARPANSA X-ray codes; and the drafting of an ARPANSA guide for exemption and clearance of radioactive material.

Minutes of the [RHC](#) meetings are available on ARPANSA's website.

4.3 - Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (RHSAC) update

The Chair of the RHSAC provided the Committee with an update on recent activities of the RHSAC. The RHSAC Chair noted consultation activities with industry stakeholders on emerging issues and workforce challenges that had been undertaken, throughout the year. The Committee was provided updates on various working groups and discussed matters including: the development of a national radiation competencies framework; Council's engagement with jurisdictional radiation safety advisory bodies on issues related to the Safe Work Australia deemed diseases list in the context of occupational diseases associated with exposure to ionising radiation; initiatives that are being explored to reprocess radioactive mine tailings waste to extract radionuclides for medical applications; work on radiation biodosimetry; and concerns raised around validity of some sunscreen SPF ratings.

The Committee is to be updated at a future meeting regarding a letter of advice being prepared for ARPANSA's CEO regarding the national competencies framework.

Minutes of the [RHSAC](#) meetings are available on ARPANSA's website.

5 - Update on major controlled facilities, inspections and regulatory activities

5.1 - CEO of ARPANSA meeting with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) Board

Following an open invitation by the CEO of ANSTO to meet the ANSTO Board, the CEO of ARPANSA attended part of the October 2025 ANSTO Board meeting. The CEO of ARPANSA provided the NSC with an overview of her meeting with the ANSTO Board, which included provision of an overview of ARPANSA and its regulatory approach to compliance and enforcement, and ARPANSA's approach to regulatory engagement with ANSTO. These discussions covered each entity's respective and independent roles for safety. The CEO of ARPANSA discussed past significant enforcement actions, and more recent events at ANSTO and ongoing challenges associated with managing ageing

infrastructure. The CEO of ARPANSA stressed that, through its regulatory oversight program, ARPANSA must be satisfied that safety is appropriately managed by the operator.

5.2 - ANSTO Actinide Suite

The Committee was provided with an overview of the September 2025 inspection of ANSTO's Actinide Suite, which had been planned to follow up on remediation actions to be taken by ANSTO following a breach of section 57A of the regulations in October 2024, which required the licence holder to take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent and minimise human errors and organisational failure.

The Committee was advised that following this inspection, an improvement notice was issued to ANSTO on 23 September 2025, as inadequate progress had been made to address the breach in October 2024. While the facility remained suspended from normal operations, the improvement notice requires ANSTO to 'make safe' the facility and provide ARPANSA with monthly updates on the status of its actions.

The Committee raised their concerns regarding the length of time over which ANSTO had not made the area safe following the October 2024 breach previously identified by ARPANSA. In addition to these concerns, the Committee advised that clarity should be sought by ARPANSA on the planned end-state for the facility.

5.3 - ANSTO Waste Operations

The Committee noted an update on the recent regulatory activities undertaken by ARPANSA's waste, decommissioning and transport section. The Committee also noted ANSTO self-reported a non-compliance. An investigation is currently being undertaken by ANSTO. ARPANSA will closely follow the investigation and has conducted more than one augmented inspection in relation to this investigation. Further inspections may also be undertaken. Upon receipt of the ANSTO investigation report, ARPANSA will consider any corrective actions that are identified and will take regulatory actions as appropriate.

The Committee noted that clearer timeframes related to delivery of new facilities to support storage and disposal pathways of ANSTO's radioactive waste would help to give greater confidence in ensuring effective ongoing management of waste.

5.4 - Analysis of ANSTO Ageing Infrastructure

The Committee were provided with an update of ARPANSA's broader regulatory response following these incidents, including an increased oversight of the management of ageing infrastructure. ARPANSA provided an analysis of commonalities between the recent events at the Actinide Suite and Waste Operations, and previously reported incidents at ANSTO.

The Committee noted that ARPANSA has developed processes that enable improved identification and/or analysis of common issues and trends, and this supports continuous improvement in regulatory practice and ARPANSA's regulatory capability. The Committee questioned the length of time in resolving these incidents and advised the CEO to consider further regulatory actions due to these delays and the potential severity of these incidents.

The CEO advised the Committee that she may seek advice from the Committee on any proposed future enforcement actions. This would occur only once she had all of the required information to

inform a proposal. Additionally, the Committee advised that ARPANSA may benefit from more fully documenting the internal guidance to help to determine which regulatory enforcement options should be taken.

The Committee noted the importance of transparency in ensuring that information on these events and issues is appropriately and clearly communicated to the public and other stakeholders.

5.5 - ANSTO's Nuclear Medicine Manufacturing Facility (NMMF) siting licence application

The Committee received an update on the assessment of ANSTO's NMMF siting licence application. The NMMF is planned to produce nuclear medicines and is a proposed replacement to the existing ANSTO Health Products Facility. ARPANSA received over 200 documents as part of the application. Document review resulted in multiple questions/clarifications sent to ANSTO, and these have been resolved. ARPANSA's assessment report of the siting application is currently under internal review.

For the siting stage, an important consideration is what design basis accidents could occur. As part of the assessment ARPANSA reviewed the modelling provided in the safety case and compared this with ARPANSA's own modelling to ensure that the design basis accidents were adequately considered.

A licencing decision is expected in the near future. ARPANSA intends to seek further input from the Committee at future licensing stages.

5.6 - Other facility updates

ARPANSA updated the Committee on recent developments regarding a facility at ANSTO. The facility was subject to a breach in 2023 due to the discovery of water ingress into the storage tank bund. Since then, multiple samples have been collected by ANSTO, tested and found to be water, with no evidence found of a tank leak and no corrosion of the tanks found or suspected.

ANSTO have reimplemented sensors in the bund which have been demonstrated to be functional, and regular visual inspections by video are conducted.

The Committee agreed that frequent water ingress could result in the failure to recognise and take appropriate action if there were a leak from a tank. Noting work to understand and remediate the issue should continue.

6 - Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) – Radioactive Waste Management update

ARWA briefed the Committee on its current areas of work, including updates to the 2018 Australian Waste Management Framework, accounting for changes to the radioactive waste landscape since 2018; its development of draft principles for the decommissioning of facilities; its publication of the latest inventory of radioactive waste in temporary storage and projected for the future; challenges, purpose, and future improvements to capture information; its request for information (RFI) on the management of radioactive waste for near-surface disposal.

The Committee noted the update and that the decommissioning principles would be useful for ARPANSA to consider applying in the future. The Committee raised the need to ensure the principles sufficiently address security in the design phase, as international operators identify this as the most significant ongoing cost to waste management.

7 - Australian Submarine Agency's (ASA) construction licence application for the Controlled Industrial Facility (CIF) and handover to the Australian Naval Nuclear Powered Safety Regulator (ANNPSR)

The Committee was updated on the ARPANSA regulation of the construction licence for the Controlled Industrial Facility (CIF) at HMAS Stirling. The regulation of this facility transitioned to ANNPSR automatically on 1 November 2025, when the *Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024* (Cth) (ANNPS Act) commenced along with the *Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety (Transitional Provisions) Act 2024* (Cth) and the [Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulations 2025](#). Any sources or controlled apparatus in the CIF or at HMAS Stirling not related to naval nuclear propulsion activities, for example, calibration sources or equipment used to measure radiological activity, remain under the jurisdiction of ARPANSA.

ARPANSA is continuing to work with ANNPSR to support the smooth transition of regulatory responsibility and to provide technical support.

The Committee were given an update on the draft Regulatory Assessment Principles noting that Committee feedback had been incorporated in the draft, which is due for publication by the end of November. ANNPSR will also adopt the Regulatory Assessment Principles as appropriate.

8 - Update from the CEO of Rockingham Council

The CEO of Rockingham Council noted ongoing community concerns regarding the proximity to nuclear-powered submarines, and that addressing concerns requires clearer communication, strong regulatory oversight and the rebuilding of social licence. The CEO of Rockingham noted a recent example of a newspaper advertisement that some readers had misconstrued as indicating that access to recreational areas would be restricted, which is not accurate.

The CEO of Rockingham Council reported on recent town hall meetings undertaken by the ASA, in both Rockingham and Fremantle during the week 16-20 September 2025. The Rockingham town hall meeting was well attended despite the short notice of the event, indicating the public's interest. The majority of attendees were understood to be neutral, enquiring or supportive. This differed from the Fremantle town hall meeting, where there were a number of protesters. The CEO of Rockingham expressed that the information presented on nuclear literacy was well received and identified that further sessions would be beneficial.

ARPANSA did not participate due to the need to maintain clear independence from the operator, as well as the late notice provided to ARPANSA. ARPANSA will continue to engage with impacted communities as appropriate to its role, alongside ANNPSR.

9 - The ConvEx-2b international exercise and emergency preparedness.

The Committee was updated on ARPANSA's involvement in an IAEA Convex-2b exercise. This exercise was useful in assessing the operation of the Australian Government Radiological and Nuclear Events Plan (AUSRNEPLAN), and ARPANSA's role as lead agency for domestic radiological or nuclear events - as designated by the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework. This exercise served to assist the

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in understanding ARPANSA's role. The exercise demonstrated that ARPANSA understands government capabilities, IAEA processes, and is able to respond in a timely manner.

The Committee was updated on ARPANSA's development of a Radiation Emergency Coordination Centre (RECC). The RECC serves to coordinate national response, including communication with local jurisdictions. Through the RECC, ARPANSA modellers can release information directly to police and other emergency agencies across jurisdictions within Australia. The RECC is designed around the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) and is scalable in response to the severity and status of the event.

10 - Update on the establishment of ANNPSR

ANNPSR updated the Committee on the work undertaken to establish the agency on 1 November 2025. This included meeting the requirements as set out in the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024 (ANNPS Act). These requirements were met through the recruitment of ANNPSR Director General Michael Drake and the issuing of the ANNPS Regulations 2025. The regulations went for public consultation between 2 July and 30 July 2025, received royal assent on 2 October 2025, and were enabled with the commencement of the ANNPS Act 2024 on 1 November 2025.

Under the ANNPSR Act and Regulations, licence applications relating to the nuclear-powered Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne, SA are required to be resubmitted to the ANNPSR for assessment. ARPANSA will provide technical support to ANNPSR for this licence application, noting that the first part of this application was originally submitted to ARPANSA in April 2025. ARPANSA was not able to complete full assessment prior to the 1 November change in regulatory oversight due to the timing of ASA's submission of the final application materials.

Under the ANNPS framework, responsibility for community consultation rests with the operator rather than the regulator. As such, the Australian Naval Infrastructure (ANI) will be required to undertake public consultation in conjunction with its licence application.

ANNPSR informed the Committee of a Test and Assurance Plan to be conducted by independent experts including ARPANSA's Chief Regulatory Officer. ANNPSR is resourced to meet the requirement of the Act and support current work but recognises the need for capability uplift as operational demands increase. ANNPSR intend to engage with ARPANSA to supplement and improve capabilities under a technical and scientific service arrangement.

The Committee commented on the likely additional staff resources needed to support both ARPANSA and ANNPSR. ANNPSR and ARPANSA emphasised the desire to keep workers within the nuclear industry (both regulators and operators) and to provide opportunities for graduates and those entering the workforce. The Committee also asked about funding of ARPANSA's support to ANNPSR. ARPANSA advised of current funding arrangements to 30 June 2026 and noted that longer-term funding arrangements were still to be confirmed. ANNPSR noted that accessing specialised services through ARPANSA would be the most efficient way of accessing relevant capability when required.

11 - Meeting close

The next meeting of the NSC is scheduled for 18-19 March 2026 in Melbourne.