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Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date	25-26 March 2026
Time	12.00pm – 5.00pm (Day 1), 8.30am – 12.00pm (Day 2)
Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting; ARPANSA Yallambie Office, 619 Lower Plenty Road, Yallambie VIC 3085.
Members	Dr Jane Canestra (Chair), Dr Gillian Hirth (ARPANSA CEO), Mr Michael Denison, Mr Mark Carey, Mr John Piispanen, Ms Tracy Ward, Mr Jim Hondros, Ms Melissa Holzberger, Mr Christopher Perry, A/Prof Catherine Olsen, Mr Stuart Parr (Virtual Only), Prof Pam Sykes, Dr Laura-Lee Innes.
Apologies	No apologies.
Presenters and Observers	Mr Rohan Mate (Item 2.1), Ms Shazz Duijkers-Mahood (Item 2.2), Dr Amy MacIntosh (Item 8), Ms Alison Pryor (Items 8, 9), Ms Tone Doyle (Items 1, 2, 2.1, 5, 6), Dr Marcus Grzechnik (Items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8), Mr Nathan Wahl (Item 9).
Secretariat	Mr James Wheaton, Dr Arne Biesiekierski, Miss Parmeet Kaur.

1 - Meeting Open

The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land, the *Wurundjeri-willam peoples of the Kulin nation*, paying respect to elders past and present.

1.1 - Housekeeping

No conflicts of interest with the agenda were declared. The secretariat noted the November 2025 meeting minutes have been published and provided the status of prior action items. No items were completed out-of-session. The Council noted correspondence received from Mr Trevor Wheatley regarding lasers, for discussion at item 10.2.

The Council noted late changes to the agenda: an item on the Australian Radiation Incident Register (ARIR) was deferred. In its place, an item discussing Linear No-Threshold (LNT) in regulation was added. Further discussion on emerging issues was also deferred.

2 - CEO Update on the activities of ARPANSA; Radiation Health Committee, and Nuclear Safety Committee

ARPANSA's CEO provided an update on recent agency activities. These included but were not limited to: international engagements including hosting International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regional workshops on regulatory infrastructure development and nuclear security detection; regulatory

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activities; medical research service activities; and radiation research advice including ongoing engagement with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) on sunscreen testing; a publication co-authored with the UK Health Security Agency critiquing a World Health Organisation (WHO) systematic review on animal studies and cancer; and ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) fabric testing for Australia Post. The CEO noted the Radiation Emergency Coordination Centre (RECC) has been stood up to monitor the situation in the Middle East. The RECC provides 24-hour access to expert radiation protection advice in the event of a radiation incident. ARPANSA also noted ongoing work to finalise the Australian Radiological and Nuclear Event Plan (AUSRNEPLAN) and commence exercise planning along with a capability survey of Australian and New Zealand radiological laboratories.

The CEO noted the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) met the previous week and discussed updates on major controlled facilities; ongoing regulatory work at the Australia Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO); the U.S Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) position on the 'ALARA' (as-low-as-reasonably-achievable) radiation safety principle; the TGA's regulation of non-ionising radiation (NIR) cosmetic devices; and received updates from the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR).

The CEO noted the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) met 4-5 March 2026 and discussed its annual workplan; updates to the Radiation Protection Series (RPS); and new and other issues including unsealed source therapies, national competency frameworks and the national radon action plan.

2.1 - Public enquiries

ARPANSA provided an update on public enquiries across 2025 and early 2026 through its Talk to a Scientist program, noting a decrease in enquiries, via email and phone.

Decision: The Council requested that ARPANSA bring any exceptional enquiries, or enquiries that may indicate emerging issues, to Council for future consideration.

2.2 - Media Enquiries

ARPANSA provided an update on media enquiries received across 2025, including trends, sentiment and a thematic analysis of the data.

3 - Member representing the interests of the general public

The Council considered a paper regarding two issues of public concern. The first related to nuclear weapons proliferation due to the expiration of the New START nuclear weapons treaty in February 2026. This raised concerns about the targeting of nuclear and research facilities during conflicts.

The paper also raised concerns on reliable testing of the sun protection factor (SPF) of sunscreens, noting TGA website advice stating 'some testing laboratories may be more reliable than others.' The Council noted that ARPANSA does not currently perform sunscreen testing, although it has previously contributed to the research on alternate sunscreen testing methodologies. The Council noted that a holistic approach to sun protection is recommended (Slip, slop, slap, slide, and seek).

Decision: Council agreed to ARPANSA's offer to invite an appropriate representative from Australian government, to discuss concerns related to nuclear weapons proliferation.

4 - Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiology (RANZCR) Letter

At the November 2025 meeting, Council resolved to reply to a letter from RANZCR regarding radiation protection workforce challenges and opportunities. In consultation with ARPANSA, the Chair of Council prepared and circulated the response letter to RANZCR. Further Council discussions included addressing competency and training for Radiation Safety Officers (RSO). ARPANSA's CEO noted discussion at the March 2026 RHC meeting regarding the use of RSO versus qualified expert, and other terminology across the industry. ARPANSA has contacted the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) for discussion on terminology and identifying competencies and training needs. The Chair noted recommendations to the CEO of ARPANSA in December 2025 regarding a national workforce competency framework for the safe use of radiation sources. The Council suggested waiting for a formal response from the CEO before further discussion. The Council agreed to a standing agenda item on workforce challenges.

Decision: The Council agreed to a standing agenda item on workforce challenges.

5 - UN Sustainable Development Goals Working Group

The Council Working Group lead gave an update on discussion regarding radiation protection and nuclear safety in relation to sustainability, including the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UN SDG). The Council considered a draft letter of advice to the CEO and minor edits were made in session. The Council agreed the draft letter can be finalised.

Decision: The Council endorsed the draft letter of advice to the CEO on sustainability and radiation protection in Australia pending minor edits.

6 - Waste/Minerals Reprocessing Working Group

The Council working group lead gave an update on work regarding the emerging issue of mining waste and radium waste reprocessing for radionuclides for use in theranostics. Discussion included but was not limited to, consideration of theranostics in the RPS, particularly in the areas of waste and operational radiation protection. Council noted that relevant RPS documents in development or under review include the Guide for Classification of Radioactive Waste, the Guide for Decommissioning of Controlled Facilities, the Safety Guide for the Management of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material, and the Guide for Exemption and Clearance of Radioactive Material. Council also noted potential challenges regarding new facilities, workforce competence, as well as regulator competence in this emerging field.

The Council considered amendments to the draft letter of advice to the CEO and requested ARPANSA to maintain a watching brief and provide an update to Council in one year. The working group met out-of-session overnight to discuss changes to the recommendations, which were subsequently agreed upon, and Council endorsed the draft letter to be finalised.

Decision: The Council endorsed the draft letter of advice to the CEO on minerals reprocessing and radium waste for theranostics pending minor edits.

Decision: The Council requested an update from ARPANSA on minerals reprocessing and radium waste in theranostics in one year's time.

7 - Linear No-Threshold (LNT) Model in Regulation

The Council discussed the use of the LNT model in ionising radiation protection, further to its previous position statement provided to ARPANSA on 16 May 2017. The Council reviewed the Heads of European Radiological Protection Competent Authorities (HERCA) statement on maintaining trust in the international radiological protection system and regulatory independence. The Council considered both statements overnight and agreed that the current system of radiological protection, based on scientific evidence and expert advice and employing the LNT model as a precautionary approach, provides an appropriate basis for ongoing regulation and management of radiation in Australia.

8 - Advisory note to Radiation Protection Series Guide No.3 (RPS G-3) - Use of Potassium Iodide During a Radiological or Nuclear Emergency

ARPANSA presented on a draft advisory note regarding the use of Potassium Iodide in a radiological emergency, revised following Council feedback since the November 2025 meeting. The intention is to produce a public facing document, to be published alongside ARPANSA's Guide for Radiation Protection in Emergency Exposure Situations (2019), containing key information and common questions and answers about the use of potassium iodide tablets for members of the public in Australia, and Australian residents and citizens overseas. The RHC noted ARPANSA had also incorporated feedback from the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA), ANNPSR and the NSW Clinical Innovation Medical Imaging Network. The Council discussed opportunities to improve document clarity, commercial availability and potassium iodide delivery, engagement with jurisdictions regarding language needs in communities, and Smartraveller advice to Australians citizens impacted overseas. The Council endorsed the revised advisory note pending minor edits. ARPANSA will provide a final version of the advisory note to Council with any amendments from RHC feedback.

Decision: Council endorsed the draft advisory note regarding the use of Potassium Iodide in a radiological emergency.

9 - RHC and ARPANSA Emerging Issues

ARPANSA outlined considerations in development of the RHC 2026 Workplan and key factors identified in environmental scans as part of ARPANSA's corporate planning cycle, to inform discussion about emerging issues relating to radiation protection and nuclear safety.

Priority RPS updates and issues which RHC identified included updates to the National Directory for Radiation Protection (NDRP), Radiation Gauges Code, Medical Exposure Code Guidance, X-Ray Equipment, Well-Logging Code, Exemption and Clearance of Radioactive Material, Radioactive Waste Management, Non-Medical Human Imaging, Nuclear Safety Code and National Glossary of Terms. Council requested further updates on the approval process set out within the revised NDRP.

An update was provided to Council on ARPANSA's draft 2026/27 Corporate Plan including refreshed key activities and the anticipated operating context over the next four years.

Decision: The Council requested an update on key regulatory activities at a future meeting.

10 - New Issues To Consider

10.1 – Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS)

The Council received an update on ARPS activities and considered ARPS' position on AI in identifying the positive uses, unknown evolving risks and unknown impacts of AI. ARPANSA noted its appointment of a Chief AI Officer in line with new requirements for Australian agencies. The Council agreed to maintain a watching brief on this issue. The Council requested ARPANSA's security briefing cover the use of personal devices when completing Council work.

Decision: Council agreed to consider the issue of artificial intelligence at a future meeting.

10.2 - Laser Issues

The Council discussed correspondence received noting concerns around regulation of consumer related laser products. ARPANSA noted previous work with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), and separately, with online marketplaces regarding items sold on public websites. It also noted current discussions with Safe Work Australia (SWA) on laser welding safety. The Council agreed to establish a working group to consider laser issues further and revisit previous advice to the CEO in relation to personal or other occupational uses of laser technology from August 2021, and draft an emerging issues paper.

Decision: Council agreed to establish a working group to consider laser issues.

Task: The working group will revisit previous Council advice on lasers and the new Australian Standard, recent communications on this topic, and consider what input might be sought from the RHC, and draft an issues paper for further Council discussion.

11 - Further Discussion

ARPANSA and Council agreed to defer further discussion on emerging issues until the next meeting.

12 - Housekeeping and Meeting Close

The Council reviewed its decision and actions from the meeting and noted the next meeting will be between 21-23 July 2026. ARPANSA noted a Ministerial appointments process for seven members is underway in line with new Australian Government Appointments Frameworks. The Council noted deferred items for a security update and ARIR update will be added to subsequent meetings.