



OFFICIAL

Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date	21-22 July 2026.
Time	11.00am – 5.00pm (Day 1), 8.30am – 1.00pm (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 (virtual day 2), Mr Mark Carey, Mr John Piispanen, Ms Tracy Ward, Mr Jim Hondros, Mr Christopher Perry, A/Prof Catherine Olsen, Dr Laura-Lee Innes, Ms Pamela Naidoo-Ameglio, Ms Michaela Orsmond, A/Prof Benjamin Blyth.
Apologies	No apologies.
Presenters and Observers	Mr Jim Scott (Item 1), Dr Ivan Williams (Items 1, 5, 6, 7), Mr Graham Rennie (Item 2), Mr Rohan Mate (Item 3.1, 9), Mr David Sibenaler (Item 3.2) Ms Shazz Duijkers-Mahood (Items 3.2, 13), Mr Christopher Nickel (Item 6), Mr Jamie Osland (Item 7), A/Prof Ken Karipidis (Item 9), Mr Stuart Henderson (Item 9), Mr Chris Brzozek (Item 9), Mr Sean Hewson (Item 9), Dr Marcus Grzechnik (Items 10, 11, 12), Mr Blake Orr (Items 10, 11), Mr Jonathan Sentzas (Item 11), Ms Jenni Stiffe (Item 13), Ms Tone Doyle (Item 13, 14, 15), Ms Sarah Longo.
Secretariat	Mr James Wheaton, Dr Arne Biesiekierski, Ms 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. The Chair welcomed three new members to the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (Council), Associate Professor Benjamin Blyth, Ms Michaela Orsmond and Ms Pamela Naidoo-Ameglio.

1.1 – Housekeeping

No conflicts of interest were declared. The secretariat noted the March 2026 meeting minutes are published and provided the status of prior action items. No out-of-session items were noted. The Secretariat noted CEO replies to previous Council advice tabled at item 3.3.

2 – Annual Security Briefing

Council Members were briefed on current threats, the national security environment, and reporting requirements and procedures.

3 – CEO Update

ARPANSA's CEO gave an update on recent agency activities. These included but were not limited to:

- The agency's parliamentary and international engagement, including attendance at Senate Estimates, participation in the Review Meeting for the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Regulatory Conference (RegCon)
- The recent Radiation Health Committee (RHC) and Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) meetings, including progress of a draft Radioactive Waste Management Code and ARPANSA's proposal to invite representatives from NSC and Council to join that Code's working group
- ARPANSA's recent regulatory Direction to the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) regarding Building 57
- A general update on regulatory, medical radiation services, and radiation health services activities, including ongoing uplift around ARPANSA's primary standards function, engagement with the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator and broader nuclear-powered submarine program, ongoing work to support the Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (DCCEEW)'s reforms of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and updates on its environmental monitoring program and sunscreen testing advice.

Decision: Council agreed to nominate two representatives for the Radioactive Waste Management Code working group.

3.1 – Public enquiries

ARPANSA gave an update on public enquiries including some more unusual queries received in 2026 through its Talk to a Scientist program, noting a shift in the top issued inquiries.

3.2 – Media Enquiries

ARPANSA gave an update on media enquiries received from January to May 2026, including trends and a thematic analysis of the data. Council noted an expected increase in media mentions in July 2026 from an ARPANSA co-authored article relating to electromagnetic energy (EME) exposure published on its website entitled 'Scientists from both sides of the ditch review the latest EME evidence'.

3.3 – CEO Response to advice previously provided

The Council noted CEO responses to Council advice on the National Workforce Competency Framework and on SWA's Deemed Diseases Report have been published on ARPANSA's website.

4 – Member representing the interests of the general public

The Member representing the interests of the general public presented a paper raising two issues. The first related to nuclear power plants as targets in war. The Council discussed ARPANSA's advice to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) in relation to the currency and uniformity of Smartraveller app advice across multiple geographic regions. ARPANSA offered to seek an update on DFAT Smartraveller advice, and to present on risk modelling for zones of conflict at a future meeting.

The paper also raised concerns on the reliability of sun protection factor (SPF) testing for sunscreens noting the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) website advice states 'some testing laboratories may be more reliable than others.' ARPANSA noted its active engagement with TGA over the year since Choice published sunscreen test results. ARPANSA noted that the SPF sunscreen rating is not linear, and that the effectiveness of sun protection does not differ as greatly as the numerical value

of the SPF. Council discussed the rise in social media influencers as the main source of information for younger generations in tackling the misinformation on sunscreens.

The Council also briefly discussed the ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) ratings of outdoor uniforms, including ARPANSA's role in independent testing of occupational workwear.

Decision: Council agreed to receive a presentation from ARPANSA on risk modelling for zones of conflict at a future meeting.

Decision: Council agreed to receive an update from ARPANSA on Smartraveller advice from DFAT.

5 – National Directory for Radiation Protection (NDRP) Update

ARPANSA tabled a paper and presented on the approval process set out within the National Directory for Radiation Protection (NDRP) Second Edition, as requested by Council in March 2026. Council discussed the amendment process, regulatory impacts and proposed amendments to the NDRP, noting the RHC is currently developing a draft amendment schedule to recommend to Council for consideration.

6 – Australian Radiation Incident Register (ARIR) Update

ARPANSA presented an update on the Australian Radiation Incident Register (ARIR) and recent Annual Reports, as requested by Council in November 2025. Council discussed the benefit of having ARPANSA seek information concerning how near misses are used to prevent incidents from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) for comparison to ARIR.

Decision: Council requested that ARPANSA seek data on the approach to near misses from the ACSQHC to compare to ARIR.

7 – Image Transfer

A Council Member tabled a paper on image transfer relating to duplicate scans which increase the cumulative ionising radiation dose that individual patients receive. Council discussed the importance of reducing radiation exposure due to repeat imaging across health services and clinics. It noted the different systems implemented across the jurisdictions, exemplifying the benefit of a nationally consistent approach to image sharing. Council considered the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologist (RANZCR) Image Access Strategy and Consultation Report which addresses this issue. It discussed the benefits of seeking economic modelling to support the introduction of further image sharing capabilities in Australia. Council agreed it would be useful to understand successful image sharing processes implemented in other countries.

Decision: Council requested ARPANSA engage with international external stakeholders in relation to image sharing processes, to understand how national systems have been implemented overseas.

8 - Workforce

A Council Member tabled a paper outlining Council's past work concerning the radiation protection workforce, and the importance of training, recruitment, knowledge management and education in this space noting that considerable work has been done. Council discussed the ongoing need for regulator and broader workforce capability and capacity, training and education, and professional standards recognition. ARPANSA's CEO noted that the RHC had considered Council's December 2025 advice and established a working group to address Council's recommendations to develop a National Workforce Competency Framework. ARPANSA offered to provide Council a presentation on the in-house training of its own regulatory officer workforce.

Decision: Council agreed to a future agenda item on ARPANSA's in-house regulatory officer training.

9 – Laser Issues

The Council considered an emerging issues paper on potential safety concerns around the availability of increasingly higher-powered laser products online for Australian consumers. Examples included fibre-based handheld industrial lasers, such as welders and cutters, and new low-cost high-hazard commercial lasers being promoted for household use. This followed its March 2026 decision to establish a working group to consider laser safety following the recent publication of an Australian Standard (*AS/NZS 50689 Particular Requirements for Consumer Laser Products*), and revisit previous Council considerations and advice to the CEO of ARPANSA (August 2021), follow-up actions taken by ARPANSA, and contemporary input from radiation safety regulators via RHC.

The paper summarised current regulatory approaches to lasers including the roles of relevant Commonwealth agencies. Council noted that ARPANSA had previously engaged the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to discuss consumer safety in relation to laser pointers sold through online marketplaces. In addition to limited injury data from the RHC and SWA, the Council considered the June 2026 Designated Complaint by CHOICE to the ACCC on the sale of unsafe products online in Australia, and the responses received from radiation safety regulators on RHC noting that new laser products are an emerging issue of concern across several jurisdictions.

The Council noted the availability of affordable Class 1M, 2M, 3B and 4 lasers to unwary consumers represents a potential for immediate serious injury. It discussed the issues of access to appropriate laser expertise to inform regulatory decisions; interest in overseas data to inform Australian policy makers; the need to identify groups most at risk; obtaining information from online marketplaces on the quantity of unsafe lasers being imported or sold in Australia; and the need for national guidance.

The working group made recommendations which the Council agreed to amend out-of-session, pertaining to ARPANSA (in its advisory capacity) reviewing its public advice on potential injury risks and seeking greater coordination between agencies involved in the regulatory control of lasers, especially in relation to high-powered laser products marketed to the Australian public.

Decision: Council considered the working group’s recommendations and suggested amendments which will be circulated out-of-session for review and endorsement.

Task: Council members to consider the amended recommendations circulated out-of-session.

Task: Chair to reply to Trevor Wheatley.

10 – Clinical Decision Support (CDS) Tools

A Council member presented on the status of the Alfred Health (Melbourne) Clinical Decision Support (CDS) tools implementation and considerations for radiation safety. It noted factors related to integration with existing systems, staff engagement, the inclusion of clinicians throughout ‘back-end’ development, and the adaption of United Kingdom guidelines to the Australian context.

The Council noted a trend of a significant drop and then ‘flattening’ in the rate of imaging requests, following the introduction of the CDS tool, from a reduction in low or no-value imaging. It also discussed presentations by the Alfred to Commonwealth agencies and other Melbourne health services, and an anticipated paper to be published on the financial savings from reduced imaging.

Decision: Council agreed to a future agenda item in 1-2 years’ time to hear further updates on progress and see if the new trend in lower imaging rates is sustained through staff turnover.

11 – Australian Guidelines for Medical Response During a Radiological or Nuclear Emergency

ARPANSA presented its ongoing work to revise the Australian Guidelines for Medical Response During a Radiological or Nuclear Emergency, including its purpose, stakeholder engagement process, draft progress and future actions. In April 2024, the Chair of Council recommended the review of the Australian clinical guidelines and in May 2025 ARPANSA formed a working group with ANSTO and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (PMCC) to review and update the document.

The updated Australian Guidelines aim to align with current international best practice for medical response to radiological and nuclear emergencies, providing guidance to clinicians and public health professionals in the Australian context. ARPANSA provided an updated draft of Part One of the guidelines to Council for review, and members were encouraged to join future consultations.

Decision: Council agreed to receive the draft Guidelines out-of-session for review and feedback directly to ARPANSA by individual members.

12 – International Radiation Protection Frameworks

Council discussed the correspondence to ARPANSA from Associate Professor Tilman Ruff AO on behalf of the Medical Association or Prevention of War, Doctors for the Environment Australia, and the Public Health Association of Australia, highlighting that the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has released a proposed revision to its radiation protection framework. The proposal leaves dose limits largely unchanged, however would replace the 'As Low As Reasonably Achievable' (ALARA) regulatory principle with a graded dose-management approach for greater flexibility around public dose management, occupational exposure and effluent control.

The Council agreed to establish a working group to draft a statement on radiation protection standards in collaboration with RHC and NSC and propose co-signing by all three advisory bodies.

Decision: Council agreed to establish a working group to draft a statement in collaboration with RHC and NSC on Australia's approach to radiation protection standards.

Task: Working group to draft a statement on radiation protection standards.

13 – In-Camera Session

The Council held an in-camera session. Ms Pamela Naidoo-Ameglio declared an interest in relation to an item discussed.

Decision: The Council considered the declared interest and decided Ms Pamela Naidoo-Ameglio could remain present to participate fully in the discussion.

14 – Additional Discussion/New Issues to Consider

Council considered future agenda items including an update on the Australian Government Radiological and Nuclear Events Plan (AUSRNEPLAN), radioactive waste management, changes to environmental regulations, emergency advice in relation to nuclear power plants and an update on workforce challenges.

15 – Housekeeping and Meeting Close

The Council reviewed its decisions and tasks from the meeting and noted the next meeting is scheduled for 25-26 November 2026 in Adelaide.