Australian Government

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency

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Quarterly Report

of the

Chief Executive Officer of ARPANSA

January to March 2018

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Further information about this publication

If you would like to know more about the content of this publication please contact ARPANSA on 1800 022 333 or **info@arpansa.gov.au**. Further information can be found on the ARPANSA website at **www.arpansa.gov.au**.

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.

Printed by:

CanPrint Communications Pty Ltd
16 Nyrang Street
Fyshwick ACT 2609

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Letter of transmittal

6 July 2018

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie

Minister for Sport, Rural Health and Regional Communications

Senate

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
- 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, and
- 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 January to 31 March 2018.

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

Associate Professor Ivan Williams

Acting CEO of ARPANSA

The operations of the CEO and ARPANSA

ARPANSA sits within the Department of Health portfolio.

ARPANSA has a single outcome, as set out in the 2017-18 Portfolio Budget Statements (2017–18 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 2017–18 PBS, describes four performance objectives against which ARPANSA seeks to achieve its outcome. These criteria are:

- protecting the public, workers and the environment from radiation exposure
- promoting radiological and nuclear safety and security, and emergency preparedness
- promoting the safe and effective use of ionising radiation in medicine
- ensuring risk-informed and efficient regulation.

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

Protecting the public, workers and the environment from radiation exposure

Recent advice issued

The International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) in 2017 (published 2018) re-evaluated its estimates of lung cancer risk from exposure to radon (and its progeny), a naturally occurring radioactive gas, which has no smell, colour or taste. An ARPANSA Advisory Note published during February 2018 describes the new dose coefficients, the figures used to calculate the radiation dose from inhalation of radon progeny, and their impact on Australian workers and the public. The new recommendations may have some impact on workplaces other than uranium mines, such as show caves. In these cases, ARPANSA will consult with relevant agencies to help devise strategies to minimise potential health risks.

Australian National Radiation Dose Register

ARPANSA maintains the Australian National Radiation Dose Register (ANRDR) which stores, maintains and reviews radiological dose histories for occupationally exposed workers in Australia.

The ANRDR holds dose history records for more than 44 000 workers. This includes full coverage of workers from all licensed uranium mining and milling operations, and partial coverage of workers from Commonwealth licence holders, state and territory regulatory bodies, and the mineral sands mining and processing industry.

ARPANSA is working to expand the ANRDR, with a goal to ultimately include all occupationally exposed workers. Project work has commenced to redevelop the ANRDR to include regulator and worker online portals to promote ANRDR implementation within all Australian jurisdictions.

The ANRDR team continued to work with Commonwealth licence holders for whom the submission of dose records to the ANRDR is now a mandatory requirement. Each organisation has submitted their dose records within reasonable timeframes.

Monitor and mitigate population exposures to electric and magnetic fields and electromagnetic radiation

ARPANSA has an ongoing liaison forum with the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association to exchange information and views on radiation safety and radiation protection issues in mobile telecommunications (www.arpansa.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/national-collaboration/amta). There was a meeting of the liaison forum on 29 March 2018. In particular, this meeting noted the need to build a sustainable and independent national funding model to achieve health and safety policy objectives. Anticipated changes to the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*, the introduction of 5G technology, and the need for research to fill current gaps in knowledge were discussed as emerging challenges.

Solar ultraviolet radiation and sun protection

ARPANSA measures solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) at 12 sites around Australia and four sites in the Australian Antarctic territories. During this quarter, ARPANSA expanded the network with the installation of a new detector on the Gold Coast and continued the replacement of UV monitoring infrastructure around Australia. The UVR index data generated by the network is used to raise awareness in Australia of the levels of UVR exposure and the risks associated with excessive sun exposure.

Standards development

The draft *Code for Disposal of Solid Radioactive Waste (RPS C-3)* closed for public comment on 2 March 2018. This Code sets out the requirements in Australia for the protection of occupationally exposed persons, the public and the environment when disposing of solid radioactive waste.

The draft *Code for Radiation Protection Requirements for Industrial Radiography (RPS C-4)* closed for public comment on 26 February 2018. This Code sets the specific radiation protection requirements in Australia for the protection of occupationally exposed persons and the public in planned exposure situations involving industrial radiography. It complements the overarching requirements contained in the *Code for Radiation Protection in Planned Exposure Situations (RPS C-1)*.

A draft *Code for Radiation Protection in Medical Exposure (RPS C-5)* was released on 23 February 2018 for a three month period of public comment. The Code was accompanied by a Reader's Guide to assist respondents in understanding and commenting on the draft. This draft code aligns with the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) best practice in radiation protection in the medical use of ionising radiation. The Code is intended to be used, where relevant, in conjunction with the *Code for Radiation Protection in Planned Exposure Situations (2016) (RPS C-1)* which sets out the requirements for the protection of occupationally exposed persons, the public and the environment in planned exposure situations.

Promoting radiological and nuclear safety and security, and emergency preparedness

Security of nuclear facilities, radioactive material and associated facilities

ARPANSA attended a meeting on 28 March 2018 with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) to discuss protective security arrangements for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) site at Lucas Heights. ARPANSA regulates this site. ANSTO and the Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office also attended the meeting. Discussions focused on the role and capabilities of the AFP guard force at Lucas Heights.

International monitoring system

As part of Australia's ongoing commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), ARPANSA operates and maintains the Australian CTBT Radionuclide Laboratory in Melbourne and radionuclide air particulate monitoring stations that are part of the CTBT International Monitoring System. Stations are located in Melbourne, Perth, Townsville, Darwin, the Cocos Islands, Macquarie Island, and Mawson Base (Antarctica). Two noble gas monitoring facilities are co-located with the air particulate monitoring stations in Melbourne and Darwin.

The Australian CTBT Radionuclide Laboratory was in service for the entire quarter. Seven samples were analysed during this period.

Emergency preparedness

A Lucas Heights Emergency Sub-Plan Review Working Group meeting was hosted by the Sutherland Shire Council on 27 February 2018. Discussions included revising the plan for responding to radiological emergencies, and ensuring its consistency with international best practice. Members from NSW Emergency Services, ANSTO and the Sutherland Shire Council attended. ARPANSA attended in an advisory capacity.

The bi-annual Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear) (VSP(N)) Seminar was held in Canberra on 28-29 March 2018. ARPANSA presented on its emergency preparedness and response (EPR) strategy and plans, management of data through Geospatial Information System platforms, and automated monitoring systems.

ARPANSA participated in the IAEA's ConvEx-2a exercise on 8 March 2018, designed to test the ability of the National Competent Authorities in each country to send or receive prompt notifications in the event of a radiological or nuclear emergency. ARPANSA responded to the exercise messaging in the correct reporting formats and within the required timeframes. In addition, the IAEA International Radiation Monitoring Information System was successfully used to exchange simulated emergency measurements.

Promoting the safe and effective use of ionising radiation in medicine

Radiotherapy

As a part of ARPANSA's calibration services for radiotherapy providers and industry users of radiation, ARPANSA calibrated eight therapy dosimeters and one neutron monitor. Under national

measurement arrangements, the National Measurement Institute's appointment of ARPANSA as a legal Verifying Authority for 'air kerma' (the measure of energy that a radiation beam releases as it travels through air) was renewed for another three years. Having this authority supports the dissemination of the Australian primary standard of air kerma, maintained at ARPANSA, to other providers of ionising radiation calibrations.

Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service

ARPANSA's Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service (ACDS) provides radiation specialists with a source of independent checks for equipment and patient doses. This enables an integrated national approach to promoting safety and quality in radiotherapy, which is expected to lead to further improvements in radiotherapy treatment outcomes. The ACDS transitioned to a full cost recovery user-pays service on 1 January 2017 and continues the process of negotiating service level agreements with radiotherapy facilities. Sixty-nine percent of Australian facilities have subscribed to the user-pays model of the ACDS as at 31 March 2018, and another 8 per cent are finalising their service agreements. During the quarter, the ACDS completed 31 audits of radiotherapy equipment.

Medical Imaging

ARPANSA's National Diagnostic Reference Level service collects data on patient dose metrics in diagnostic imaging from surveys and uses it to calculate Australian Diagnostic Reference Levels (DRLs) for common multi-detector computed tomography (MDCT) protocols. The size of the data sample collected via the surveys improves the confidence in the DRLs that ARPANSA sets. An extra 290 survey reports were submitted in the quarter. Seventeen new registrants signed up to participate. The composition of the MDCT DRL Liaison Panel formed to review the current DRLs was finalised. The Panel met by teleconference on five separate occasions and has established draft recommendations for the revision of the Australian National MDCT DRLs for adult patients. The draft recommendations were based on survey data collected in 2017.

Ensuring risk-informed and efficient regulation

Significant regulatory activities

The CEO of ARPANSA tabled a report in Parliament on 26 February 2018 under Section 61(1) of the Act. The report provided information and outcomes following an accident at ANSTO Health in August 2017, where an employee received a radiation dose to the hands in excess of the annual statutory dose limit.

Significant licensing activities

ARPANSA assessed and approved an application to remove spent fuel from the Open Pool Australian Light-water (OPAL) nuclear reactor service pool, for transport overseas and reprocessing by Orano (formerly known as AREVA) in France.

A construction licence application was received from ARPANSA's Medical Radiation Services branch in order to install a modern clinical linear-accelerator at ARPANSA's Yallambie (Victoria) campus. To ensure there are no conflicts of interest, the regulatory decision on this application will be referred to an external radiation regulator (Queensland Health) for review.

Inspections

A series of 12 inspections and 22 site visits were conducted during the quarter which identified four areas for improvement. No non-compliances were identified during the inspections. The inspection reports can be found on ARPANSA's website at *www.arpansa.gov.au/regulation/inspections/reports*.

Stakeholder engagement

ARPANSA met with staff from the ANSTO OPAL nuclear reactor twice in the quarter to plan for the next OPAL Periodic Safety and Security Review which is due in 2021.

ARPANSA hosted the second Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) - ARPANSA Liaison Forum meeting in February 2018. The respective CEOs of each agency provided updates and discussed CSIRO's waste inventory management and planned waste management activities. The meeting minutes are posted on ARPANSA's website at: *www.arpansa.gov.au/regulation-and-licensing/licensing/information-licence-holders/csiro-arpansa-liaison-forum*.

Regulatory guides

The Regulatory Guide on *Reporting Compliance* was updated. This Guide describes how licence holders will report their compliance with the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* (the Act), the Regulations and licence conditions. In addition, the *ARPANSA Licensing and Assessment Manual* has been updated and is expected to be published online shortly. This manual covers the assessment and approval of applications from stakeholders and the continuous improvement of those processes.

The draft *Regulatory Guide: Decommissioning of Controlled Facilities* was released for stakeholder consultation from 5–23 February 2018. This Regulatory Guide provides guidance to licence holders, technical support organisations, and other interested parties on planning, conducting and completing the decommissioning of nuclear installations. It aims to assist in ensuring that the decommissioning of these facilities is conducted in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner in accordance with good international practice. ARPANSA also uses this document for regulatory assessment of a licence application for decommissioning a controlled facility.

Radioactive material import permits

The importation of radioactive material into Australia requires permission under Regulation 4R of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956. These regulations are made under the *Customs Act 1901*. Under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956, the Minister for Health may authorise ARPANSA officers to issue import permits.

ARPANSA's authorised officers approved 136 permits for non-medical radioisotopes in the form of 63 urgent permits, 68 standard permits and five 12-month permits.

ARPANSA's authorised officers approved 176 permits for medical radioisotopes in the form of seven 12-month permits and 169 single shipment permits.

Thirteen permits to export high activity radioactive sources were approved.

Transport of radioactive material

ARPANSA endorsed four security plans for the transport of radioactive material.

ARPANSA issued a certificate of approval for a package design for transport of radioactive material. The package was manufactured by French company Orano, and will be used for the transport of spent fuel.

International engagement

ARPANSA's international engagement provides the agency with the means of influencing the international radiation protection and nuclear safety and security framework, and for taking stock of international developments. ARPANSA's regulatory framework and radiation protection standards are based on international risk assessments and best practice. It strengthens ARPANSA's engagement with domestic stakeholders in order to grow awareness and collaboration on national interests and policy objectives. The following is a summary of key international engagement activities undertaken in this quarter.

Asian Nuclear Safety Network Regional Workshop on Regulatory Inspection Programmes for Research Reactors, 5–9 February 2018, Sydney, Australia

ARPANSA hosted this workshop with additional expert support from the IAEA and the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Delegates from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam attended. The workshop provided practical information to enhance countries' capabilities for regulatory inspections. It also provided a forum to discuss national practices and exchange experiences, as well as identify good practices and areas for improvement in regulatory supervision, licensing, licence compliance and enforcement.

Nuclear Debris Collection and Analysis (NDC&A) and Atmospheric Sciences Advisory Panel Experts Panel 12-16 February 2018, Melbourne FL, USA

ARPANSA participated in these panels which provided an opportunity to exchange techniques and experience in the assessment of detections that occur as part of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) International Monitoring System. Of particular focus was the largest-to-date underground test which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted in September 2017, and the ruthenium-106 detections through Europe from late September to early October 2017. ARPANSA funded this travel.

IAEA Expert Mission to Review Regulations Concerning the Safety of Radiation Sources and Facilities, 12-15 February 2018, Denpasar, Indonesia

ARPANSA participated in this expert mission to review the current status of Indonesia's radiation safety regulatory system and to identify where improvements are needed in medical radiation safety and radioactive waste management. The mission concluded that, since the IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Services (IRRS) review undertaken in August 2015, Badan Pengawas Tenaga Nuklir (also known as BAPETEN) staff in medical radiation safety and in radioactive waste management have made impressive progress in addressing the 'Recommendations and Suggestions'

in the IRRS report. The experts perceived a strong culture and enthusiastic commitment by BAPETEN staff to continue this work, and address wherever possible all remaining recommendations ahead of the follow-up IRRS mission. The IAEA funded this travel.

Consultancy Meeting to consider the Implications of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) 2012 report on Attributing Health Effects to Ionizing Radiation Exposure and Inferring Risks for the development of Safety Standards, 14-16 February 2018, Vienna, Austria

ARPANSA's Deputy CEO attended this meeting, held at the direction of the IAEA Commission on Safety Standards (CSS), on Attributing Health Effects to Ionizing Radiation Exposure and Inferring Risks for the development of Safety Standards, and in particularly the Safety Fundamentals that overarch the IAEA Safety Standards. The meeting recommendations will be presented at the April 2018 meeting of the CSS. The IAEA and ARPANSA jointly funded this travel.

IAEA mission for establishment of a National Dose Register, 26-28 February 2018, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

ARPANSA participated in this mission to discuss the development of a National Dose Register for the UAE. The Australian National Radiation Dose Register and Canadian dose register were used as examples of effective systems from which to gain knowledge and experience. A key outcome was the development of conceptual design specifications. The IAEA funded this travel.

IAEA Regional Training Course on the Analysis of Strontium-90 and Tritium in Seawater, 12-23 March 2018, Mumbai, India

ARPANSA participated as an expert in an IAEA Regional Cooperative Agreement training course on the Analysis of Strontium-90 and Tritium. The course focused on increasing the capability of countries in the analysis of these two radionuclides. The IAEA funded this travel.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) 50th Session of Working Group B, 12-23 March 2018, Vienna, Austria

ARPANSA attended this meeting which considered seismic detection, radionuclide detection and modelling, and the prospect of on-site inspection for nuclear testing events. Key outcomes were the strengthening of ties with bilateral and unilateral partners relating to the Workshop on Signatures of Man-Made Isotope Production. ARPANSA funded this travel.

Details of directions given by the Minister

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

Details of directions given by the CEO

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

Details of improvement notices given by inspectors

No improvement notices were issued by ARPANSA under section 80A of the Act.

Details of any breach of licence conditions by a licensee

Four minor breaches were recorded in the quarter. All breaches were for failing to comply with licence conditions under the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Regulations 1999. A summary of the breaches is as follows:

- non-compliance with a code of practice listed under Regulation 48
- non-compliance with Regulation 49 by failing to comply with plans and arrangements for managing safety
- failing to maintain a current source inventory under Licence Condition 1
- failing to notify the CEO of breach under Regulation 45(3)

There were no breaches identified with significant safety implications this quarter.

Facilities licensed under Part 5 of the ARPANS Act

No facility licences were issued in the period.

The operations of the Council and Committees

Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

The Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (Council) met on 7-8 March in Melbourne. This was the first meeting following the Minister's appointment of two Radiation Control Officer (RCO) members for the next triennium, including a new RCO representative from Tasmania. The meeting had a special session on the health impacts of ultraviolet radiation (UVR), and potential role of ARPANSA in promoting the health benefits of UVR protection. Various eminent guest speakers presented, including from Cancer Council, the Bureau of Meteorology, and QIMR Berghofer. Cancer Australia's CEO also attended as an observer. Council agreed that ARPANSA has a key role to play as a coordinator within Commonwealth, and in seeking agreement between jurisdictions, to form the reliable advice and unified messaging that is needed for awareness campaigns.

The meeting also discussed the upcoming IAEA's Integrated Regulatory Review Services mission to Australia, as well as regulatory issues around naturally occurring radioactive material (such as the type encountered in the mining industry), ARPANSA's approach to risk management, the agency's emergency preparedness and response strategy, and its role to educate and provide information prior to any radiological emergencies. Council also discussed the issue of sustainable funding for ARPANSA's current activities maintaining an Australian electromagnetic (EME) program, which exists to address public concerns about EME radiation from current and emerging sources such as power lines or 5G technology, which resulted in a letter from Council to ARPANSA's CEO supporting APRANSA's continued efforts to address this issue.

The minutes of the meeting are on ARPANSA's website at www.arpansa.gov.au/rhsac. The date of the next meeting is yet to be confirmed.

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

The RHSAC did not provide any reports to the CEO during this quarter.

Radiation Health Committee

The Radiation Health Committee (RHC) met on 14 March 2018 in Melbourne. RHC welcomed the four new members who have been appointed for the current triennium.

The RHC endorsed in-principle a recommendation to proactively implement a 2nd Edition of the National Directory of Radiation Protection (NDRP), subject to minor amendments. The NDRP is the national framework for uniform radiation protection across jurisdictions in Australia. The RHC will seek approval from the Council of Australian Government's Health Council, for the final draft of the NDRP 2nd Edition and for the RHC to be the approving authority for future amendments to regulatory elements of the NDRP (such as technical information and limits, and other requirements). The RHC also agreed to continue to explore the options of a model law or single national law, for reform towards a seamless regulatory experience for the safe use of radiation in Australia.

The RHC endorsed the publication of a *Code for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste by the User*, as a stand-alone code, which was previously Schedule 14 of the existing NDRP. It separately noted that the ARPANSA guidance documents for the safe application of cosmetic procedures using lasers and intense-pulse-light devices, and accompanying draft advisory note for users, are undergoing finalisation and will be placed on the ARPANSA website for public consultation. It also approved the draft *Code for Radiation Protection Requirements for Industrial Radiography, Radiation Protection Series (RPS) C-4* for publication, which is subject to endorsement by the Council. This Code applies to all aspects of industrial radiography, from the sale and supply of radiation equipment and sealed radioactive sources, to the use and safe storage of such equipment or sources. Finally, RHC approved the revision of the *Code for Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials RPS C-2* adopting the IAEA *Regulations for safe Transport of Radioactive Material SSR-6 2018 Edition*, and the associated guide.

The RHC agreed to form a working group to progress and finalise the Radiation Security Background Checking Framework, which all Australian jurisdictions use to assess individuals or entities, in light of the *Code of Practice for Security of Radioactive Sources, RPS-11*.

The RHC noted and agreed in-principle to endorse the Radiation Regulators Network (RRN) terms of reference, subject to amendments to include procedural items and a summary of the RRN's relationship to RHC. RHC also noted the RRN'S draft annual work program to address national uniformity issues related to radiation regulation.

A working group was established to develop a scope and draft terms of reference for drafting Australian guidance on radiological considerations on closure, handover and post closure monitoring and surveillance of practices.

The minutes of the RHC are provided online at www.arpansa.gov.au/rhc. The next RHC meeting will take place in Hobart on 17-18 July 2018.

Nuclear Safety Committee

The Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) held a meeting on 16 March 2018. The NSC also welcomed the four new members who have been appointed for the current triennium.

The NSC reviewed and provided comment on the draft *Regulatory Guide: Decommissioning of Controlled Facilities* (the Guide). The NSC supported the preparation and publication of the guide, which will clarify the requirements and expectations for licence holders. The NSC provided feedback at the meeting, including to ensure that key issues such as the transition to decommissioning, waste segregation and records management were adequately emphasised.

ARPANSA received an application from ANSTO to operate the ANSTO Nuclear Medicine (ANM) Facility. ANSTO currently hold a construction licence for this facility. The CEO of ARPANSA prepared a draft Statement of Reasons (SOR) summarising the key information considered as part of the decision making process, including information submitted with the application. The NSC reviewed and discussed the information supplied with the application including the assessment of risk and benefit, resourcing, and waste. Minor amendments were proposed to enhance the SOR. The NSC supported the CEO's intended decision and agreed that the information provided in the draft SOR adequately supports the decision proposed.

ARPANSA provided the NSC with an overview of ANSTO Health, the Gamma Irradiator Suite, and the OPAL reactor, regulatory performance since the previous NSC meeting.

The minutes of the meeting are provided online at www.arpansa.gov.au/nsc. The next meeting of the NSC is scheduled for 22 June 2018.

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

The NSC did not provide any reports to the CEO during this quarter.