

## Appendix 8: Operations of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council and Committees

### Operations of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council 2012–13

Council met on three occasions during the year (August in Adelaide, December in Melbourne and April in Brisbane) and considered a wide range of radiation protection and nuclear safety topics.

Council for the 2012–14 triennium is composed of the following:

**Chair:**

Ms Sylvia Kidziak AM (NSW)  
(until December 2013)

**CEO of ARPANSA:**

Dr Carl-Magnus Larsson (NSW)

**Person to represent the interests of the general public:**

Em Prof Ian Lowe AO (Qld)

**Radiation Control Officers:**

Mr Keith Baldry (SA), Mr Simon Critchley (Qld)

**Nominee of the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory:**

Dr Stephen Skov (NT)

**Up to 7 other Members:**

Dr Roger Allison (QLD)  
Ms Jill Fitch (SA)  
Dr Brad Cassels (VIC)  
Dr Denise Wheeler (QLD)  
Ms Melissa Holzberger (QLD)  
Mr Frank Harris (NT)  
Professor Ray Kemp (VIC)

Summaries of the meetings as well as other relevant Council information can be found at [www.arpansa.gov.au/AboutUs/Committees/rhsacmt.cfm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/AboutUs/Committees/rhsacmt.cfm).

#### **Adoption of Codes of Practice and Standards**

During the year, Council advised the CEO to adopt a safety guide developed by the Radiation Health Committee into the Radiation Protection Series as RPS 2.2: *Safety Guide for Approval Processes for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials*, which would support the implementation of the Transport Code RPS 2.

#### **Other Issues Considered**

The Council meetings held in Adelaide and Brisbane afforded members the opportunity to meet with representatives of the local radiation regulatory authorities (South Australian Environment Protection Authority and Queensland Health respectively) and be briefed on current radiation regulatory issues facing those jurisdictions.

The focus of the August 2012 meeting in Adelaide was on radiation issues in mining and management of radioactive waste. Council revisited its 2010 scoping review on the management of intermediate level radioactive waste and discussed recent ARPANSA activities in this area. Council also had valuable interaction with representatives from the Department of Resources, Environment and Tourism who provided an overview of their national strategy for waste disposal. In an open forum with representatives from a number of mining companies and organisations Council discussed specific radiation issues facing the Uranium mining industry. Council also had the opportunity to discuss such topics as: the Australian National Dose Register, the recent International Commission Radiological Protection recommendations on assessment of radon progeny dose, education of radiation safety officers, safe transport of radioactive material and risk perception. Council followed up with recommendations to the CEO ARPANSA on these issues.

One of the three strategic priority areas of work for Council is the field of medical radiation. At the December 2012 meeting in Melbourne, Council welcomed the Chief Medical Officer who attended. This provided an opportunity for members to be briefed on his role and for the Chief Medical Officer to gain an understanding of Council's interest in radiation related health issues impacting Australia. Council's visit to Melbourne's Austin Health Hospital facilities to tour a range of medical radiation departments and laboratories allowed members from non-medical backgrounds to better comprehend the clinical and research settings of medical radiation matters discussed. A forum was held following the tour to discuss various aspects of operations at the centre.

Council requests regular briefings from the ARPANSA Medical Radiation Branch which has a number of ongoing activities of interest including the Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service, the development of national Diagnostic Reference Levels and the survey of Australian Per Capita Dose from Nuclear Medicine and Diagnostic Radiology.

The April 2013 meeting in Brisbane expanded on both mining and medical related topics. Queensland plan to reintroduce uranium mining and Council was briefed on the recommendations of a recent report into this proposal. When considering mining operations and particularly the aspects of transport and disposal of radioactive materials, Council frequently discusses the importance of risk informed decision making to ensure radiation protection. Engagement with stakeholders and the wide range of cultural groups in Australia with an interest in radiation risk and safety is emphasised in all reports to the CEO ARPANSA.

Council made good progress with achieving the outcomes of its 2008-12 strategic directions which focussed on three priority areas: medical radiation, communication with decision makers and constituency building and training. Key priority areas for ongoing Council consideration in 2013-14 have also been agreed.

The Chair continued the practice of attending the Radiation Health Committee and Nuclear Safety Committee meetings aimed at assuring an understanding of work being conducted by Council and the committees. The Chair also met with the CEO of ARPANSA and other entities prior to each Council meeting for discussion on radiation matters both domestically and internationally.

## Operations of the Radiation Health Committee 2012–13

The Radiation Health Committee met on three occasions during the year in July, November and March.

Summaries of the meetings as well as other relevant committee information can be found at [www.arpansa.gov.au/AboutUs/Committees/rhcmf.cfm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/AboutUs/Committees/rhcmf.cfm).

### **National policy and publication development program**

Part of the Committee's remit is to develop policies, codes and standards that reflect international best

practice. During the year, the Committee considered progress on development or revision of various publications.

The current top level document in the Radiation Protection Series: RPS 1, *Recommendations for Limiting Exposure to Ionizing Radiation and National Standard for Limiting Occupational Exposure to Ionizing Radiation (republished 2002)*, is being revised to incorporate recent changes to international best practice. The Committee has identified the replacement of RPS 1 with two separate documents: *Fundamentals for Protection Against Ionizing Radiation* and a *Code of Practice for Radiation Protection in Planned Exposure Situations For Occupational and Public Exposure*, as a high priority project. Drafting of the documents has been progressing and at the March 2013 meeting the Committee approved the Fundamentals document to be released for public consultation.

In July 2012 the Committee agreed with a recent review of the Medical Safety Guides (RPS 14.1, 14.2 & 14.3) that indicated revision of these publications was not required at this time. It was noted however that the Medical Code (RPS 14) would need to be revised to align with the IAEA's *General Safety Requirements - Part 3 (BSS)*. The Committee agreed in principle that this should be undertaken when the requirements within the new planned practices code are well defined.

At its July 2012 meeting, the Committee approved a draft *Safety Guide for the Approval Processes for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials* for publication as RPS 2.2 and recommended that it be forwarded the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council for its recommendation on adoption. This safety guide supports RPS 2 the *Code of Practice for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material* (2008). In March 2013, the Committee approved a project plan to revise RPS 2 to bring Australia up to date with the 2012 edition of the IAEA *Regulations for Safe Transport of Radioactive Material*.

The Committee was updated regularly on progress on the suite of amendments currently under development and soon to be proposed for the *National Directory for Radiation Protection (NDRP)*. At its July 2012 meeting, the Committee endorsed NDRP Amendment 6, which includes exemptions for certain lighting products; additional authorisation criteria for chiropractors; and minor changes

to Schedule 13 (incident reporting) for public consultation. This amendment was later approved and forwarded through the relevant national approval channels, with publication of the revised NDRP expected in late 2013.

### **Other matters considered**

The Committee noted the moves by several jurisdictions to ban the use of commercial solaria from 2015 and recognised that if a national ban was proposed the NDRP would need to be revised.

The Radiation Health Committee statement on *Safe Handling of Deceased Persons Recently Treated with Radioactive Material* was updated and reissued in July 2012. A new *Statement on Expectations for a Qualified Expert* in relation to the Medical Code (RPS 14) was issued in September 2012 to clarify the competency requirements for each required function in RPS 14.

The Committee considered interim statistics on radiation incidents reported to the Australian Radiation Incident Register as occurring in the 2012 calendar year at the March 2013 meeting. The Committee was also provided with a presentation on the causes and consequences of a series of radiotherapy mistreatments in France. It was noted that the NDRP Schedule 13 revision currently underway would include a review of criteria for reporting radiotherapy incidents to the Incident Register.

At each meeting, the Committee was briefed on international developments, including the IAEA publication program, and on IAEA, the International Commission on Radiological Protection and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation meetings. Committee members provided comments on several drafts of the IAEA Safety Standards Series, which had been issued to Member States for comment. The Committee considered reports from meetings of the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council, the Nuclear Safety Committee and the Transport Competent Authorities Forum.

### **Operations of the Nuclear Safety Committee 2012–13**

The role of the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) is to advise the CEO and the Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council on matters relating to nuclear safety and the safety of controlled facilities. This

includes reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of standards, codes, practices and procedures. During the first year of the new triennium, the Committee was chaired by Dr Carl-Magnus Larsson, CEO of ARPANSA. The CEO appointed Dr Tamie Weaver to Chair the Committee from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2014.

A summary of each meeting is available on the ARPANSA website at [www.arpansa.gov.au/AboutUs/Committees/nscmt.cfm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/AboutUs/Committees/nscmt.cfm).

Topics discussed and reviewed by the NSC during this financial year include:

- Reports relating to the nuclear accident at Fukushima, Japan and its ongoing management. Discussions considered the impact of the accident and implications for the management of nuclear safety within Australia, which highlighted the relevance of a holistic approach to safety ARPANSA is currently implementing in its regulatory activities.
- The nuclear safety aspects of the proposed applications from ANSTO including the Moly-99 Facility, the Interim Waste Store and the Synroc facility. The NSC provided the CEO with formal advice on the safety implications of these proposed applications.
- ARPANSA regulatory guidance and assessment methodologies regarding the holistic management of safety. Holistic approaches look at the impact and integration of all influences to safety including technological systems, organisational controls and environments and human aspects of operation.
- Draft ARPANSA regulatory guidance on the ranking licence holder risks and providing advice regarding standards of risk assessment that ARPANSA should expect is undertaken by its license holders.
- Briefings and discussions on: the management of Australian Commonwealth Nuclear facilities including the 20MW OPAL Reactor; Radiopharmaceutical production facilities; and storage of Commonwealth radioactive waste.

The Committee toured the Australian Synchrotron in Clayton, Victoria, which transferred to ANSTO control on 1 January 2013 under an ARPANSA facility licence. The Committee was briefed on the Australian Synchrotron's ongoing and future projects that will be subject to regulatory assessment and oversight.