



Australian Government

Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

MINUTES

10-11 March 2016

Yallambie, VIC

Chair	Dr Roger Allison
Members	Mr Keith Baldry, Dr Jane Canestra, Mr Simon Critchley, Prof Adele Green, Mr Frank Harris, Ms Melissa Holzberger, Dr Carl-Magnus Larsson, Ms Geraldine Robertson, Dr Steven Skov, Prof Pamela Sykes, Dr Melanie Taylor,
Secretary	Ms Julia Carpenter (ARPANSA) , Dr Fiona Charalambous (ARPANSA)
Invitees	Ms Jocelyn Taylor (Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Items 5.1-5.3), Prof Chris Baggoley (Chief Medical Officer, Items 7.1-8.1)
Apologies	Mr Niall Byrne
Observers	ARPANSA Staff: Mr Jack Dillich, Ms Tone Doyle, Dr Stephen Solomon, Dr Ivan Williams, Ms Julie Murray (Item 5.1-5.4), Dr Rick Tinker (Items 1.6-4.3; 7.4-10.4); Dr Marcus Grzechnik (Items 2.3-5.4); Ms Lydiawati Tjong (Items 7.1-10.4) Dollis Staff: Mr Richard Lee (Items 5.1-5.3)

1. STANDING ITEMS

Item 1.1 Opening of meeting

Chair

The Chair opened the meeting at 11:10 on 10 March and welcomed Members and Observers.

Item 1.2 Previous minutes & web summary

Chair

Minutes for the November 2015 meeting were confirmed subject to one minor change.

Item 1.3 Discussion on format of minutes

Chair

Members agreed that the minutes for future meetings will be as succinct as possible whilst still capturing the essence of Council discussions. Members agreed that the minutes will be available in full on the ARPANSA website in order to ensure transparency of Council deliberations. This approach has also been adopted by the Radiation Health Committee and the Nuclear Safety Committee.

Item 1.4 Review of action list

Chair

There is one ongoing action from the previous meeting. All other actions are now complete.

Item 1.5 Update from RHC and NSC

Dr Larsson

The recent activities of the Radiation Health Committee (RHC) and the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) were reviewed. Members noted ARPANSA's new approach to adopting Trusted International Standards (TIS) and discussed the outcomes of this approach, such as increasing efficiency and the importance of proactively influencing international standards early in the development process.

Item 1.6 Report from member representing the interests of the general public

**Ms Robertson
Chair**

The member representing the interests of the general public provided an overview of correspondence received since the November 2015 meeting. Members discussed the importance of making ARPANSA's information and advice accessible to the public.

2. UPDATE ON ARPANSA ACTIVITIES

Item 2.1 Public Enquiries: ARPANSA Approach

Dr Tinker

Members were briefed on ARPANSA's approach to risk communication, the volume and topics of public enquiries, and the processes in place to respond to these enquiries. Council noted that social media can be an effective means of engaging in community conversations on topical issues.

Item 2.2 Update from the CEO

Dr Larsson

Dr Larsson acknowledged the fifth anniversary of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant accident (March 11) and provided an update on associated remediation and decontamination activities in Japan.

Dr Larsson also informed Council that ARPANSA has requested that an Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission be held in Australia in 2018; the IAEA has confirmed it will coordinate the review mission. This review will include a self-assessment and review of ARPANSA's procedures against the IAEA safety standards, development of an action plan to address any issues identified, and a formal mission by a team of international experts to verify the review, issue recommendations and identify good practices.

Council commended ARPANSA for requesting and committing to an IRRS mission, and strongly supported ARPANSA's recommendation for the States and Territories to be actively involved in order for Australia to gain full benefit from the review.

Item 2.3 International UV Conference (Melbourne 2015)

**Dr Tinker
Prof Green**

Members were updated on key outcomes from an International UV Conference held in Melbourne in December 2015. Members noted that Australia is a world-leader in skin cancer prevention programs, that investment in these programs is led by Cancer Councils, and that innovation is essential to ensure that the sun protection message remains fresh and effective. Members also discussed the issues associated with incomplete data in relation to skin cancer incidence and the benefits of another national skin cancer survey.

3. SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE ROYAL COMMISSION (SARC)

Item 3.1 SARC Tentative Findings

Dr Larsson

Members reviewed the tentative findings of the SARC and agreed to discuss the outcomes further once the final report is released in May 2016.

4. WORKING GROUP 5: REFERENCE LEVELS FOR EMERGENCY AND EXISTING EXPOSURE SITUATIONS

Items 4.1 Proposed Reference Levels to 4.3

Dr Grzechnik
Chair

Working Group members provided an update on the status of this project and provided an overview of issues discussed to date. Members reiterated the importance of evidence-based decision making for emergency planning, with considerations to include scientific, social and economic factors. It was noted that optimisation of radiation protection can still occur below the selected reference levels.

Members also emphasised the need for clarity when discussing reference levels with stakeholders.

5. WORKING GROUP 1: NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY (NRWMF) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Item 5.1 Current Status of the NRWMF Project

Ms Taylor

Mr Harris declared a potential conflict of interest for discussions related to the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility (NRWMF) as he is a member of the Independent Advisory Panel on the NRWMF to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS). The Chair and members acknowledged Mr Harris' position and agreed to ensure that the conversation was kept general in nature so as not to compromise Mr Harris' position or the integrity of Council.

Ms Jocelyn Taylor (DIIS) updated members on the current community engagement activities being undertaken by DIIS in association with the site selection process, and the main concerns that have been raised by local communities. Members were advised that a number of surveys are currently underway in order to formally measure community sentiment in the nominated regions.

Item 5.2 ARPANSA Approach to Community Engagement (NRWMF)

Ms Murray

Members were briefed on ARPANSA's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Plan for the NRWMF Project. Members reiterated the importance of continuing to demonstrate and emphasise ARPANSA's independence from DIIS with regards to this project.

Items 5.3 NRWMF Consultation Processes – 5.4

Ms Holzberger

Following from the previous discussion regarding the importance of maintaining both actual and perceived independence, Council recommended to the CEO that ARPANSA should carry out an independent consultation process, separate from the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act review process, with affected communities if a licence application is received for the proposed NRWMF.

6. UPDATE FROM WORKING GROUPS

Item 6.1 Working Group 3 : Low doses and low dose rates

Mr Harris

Working Group 3 provided an update on the development of a Council statement on radiation protection at low doses and low dose rates. Members agreed to continue this work and discuss in more detail at the next meeting.

Item 6.2 Working Group 5: ARPANSA's Communications Strategy

Chair

Members were advised that Working Group 5 is currently on hold pending the commencement of a new Communications Manager at ARPANSA.

Item 6.3 Working Groups: Practical arrangements

Chair

A representative from each working group was assigned a 'Lead' role to coordinate future work programs and out-of-session communication. Each working group was also assigned an ARPANSA point of contact. Each Group will report back to Council on progress at the next meeting.

7. WORKING GROUP 2: MEDICAL RADIATION

**Items 7.1 Update from Medical Radiation Branch
– 7.3**

Dr Williams

The chair welcomed Prof Chris Baggoley, Chief Medical Officer, to the meeting. Prof Baggoley provided a brief overview of his work as CMO and highlighted a number of topics of mutual interest.

Council were updated on the variety of work currently undertaken by Medical Radiation Branch, with an emphasis on the continuously changing nature of medical practice and the opportunities and challenges this presents for ARPANSA. Members discussed the positive outcomes of the Australian Clinical Dosimetry Service (ACDS) and strongly supported the expansion of the Australian National Radiation Dose Register (ANRDR) to the medical industry.

Item 7.4 Update from Working Group 2

**Mr Wallace
Chair**

Council discussed the difficulties associated with developing Diagnostic Reference Levels (DRLs) for paediatric imaging from a small dataset. It is hoped that a revision of the survey structure based on feedback from users will assist with increasing data submission rates.

Members also discussed guidelines for medical practitioners to use when requesting medical imaging procedures. It was noted that while a number of guidelines exist their uptake has been variable.

8. DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY IN SCIENCE

Item 8.1 Uncertainty in Science

Dr Tinker

Council discussed the challenges associated with adequately and proactively addressing the concerns of the community and affected individuals in cases where the perceived risk and experienced health effects/symptoms from radiation exposure is higher than the scientifically established estimate of actual risk. The gap is generally largest for exposures to low doses and low dose rates of both ionising and non-ionising radiation.

Members also discussed the importance of providing clear and accessible information, yet recognised that this is a very complex and sensitive issue. The chair thanked Prof. Baggoley for attending this part of the meeting and for his participation in Council discussions.

9. RADIATION PROTECTION IN MEDICINE

Items 9.1-9.3	Uniformity and radiation protection in the medical industry	Chair
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Members discussed a number of issues associated with national uniformity in radiation protection. Council suggested that State and Territory participation in the 2018 IRRS mission could help address some uniformity issues as participating jurisdictions would be benchmarked across the same IAEA standards.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Item 10.1	Update on Council Appointments	Dr Larsson
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Dr Larsson advised members that appointments of two Council Members will expire on 31 December 2016. ARPANSA plans to begin the appointment process for these positions shortly.

Item 10.2	Upcoming meetings – location and dates	Chair
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The next meeting will be held on 23-24 June, 2016. The location will be determined in consultation with the Chair and information circulated to members out of session.

Item 10.3	Review of Action List	Chair
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Members agreed the actions arising from the meeting.

Item 10.4	Close of meeting	Chair
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The Chair closed the meeting at 12:55 on 11 March.