



# Australian Government

## Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

### MINUTES

5-6 November 2015  
Stamford Plaza, NSW

<b>Chair</b>	Dr Roger Allison
<b>Members</b>	Mr Keith Baldry, Mr Niall Byrne, Dr Jane Canestra (5 November only by phone), 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,
<b>Secretary</b>	Ms Julia Carpenter (ARPANSA) , Mr Nick Adamopoulos (ARPANSA)
<b>Apologies</b>	Dr Jane Canestra (day 2)
<b>Observers</b>	ARPANSA Staff: Mr Jack Dillich, Ms Tone Doyle, Dr Stephen Solomon, Dr Ivan Williams, Ms Julie Murray (Item 3.3), Mr Peter Colgan (Items 4.2 – 5.4)

#### 1. STANDING ITEMS

##### Item 1.1 Opening of meeting

Chair

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:05 and welcomed Members and Observers.

##### Item 1.2 Previous minutes & web summary

Chair

Minor changes to the Minutes were requested. Some members requested another opportunity to review the minutes and it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 2-3 July 2015 would be re-circulated out of session for final comments.

Members discussed the level of detail provided in the minutes and the current practice of providing a shorter 'web summary' on the ARPANSA website. Members requested that future minutes be more succinct and that the minutes are made available on the ARPANSA website. Members also agreed that as the full minutes will be available to the public, the short web summary is no longer required.

##### Item 1.3 Business arising from previous minutes and review of Action List

Chair

All actions from the previous meeting are now complete.

##### Item 1.4 Report from member representing the public interest

Ms Robertson

The role of the member representing the public interest was discussed, emphasising the challenges associated with effectively corresponding and interacting with the public. Members discussed the volume and content of public enquiries received by both ARPANSA and the Council member representing the public interest. Members agreed that it is important to also recognise the views of people who do not actively contact ARPANSA.

Council noted that ARPANSA had engaged a consultant to conduct market research on perceptions and knowledge of radiation in the community and the effectiveness of ARPANSA's communications channels. Members discussed ARPANSA's website content and agreed to schedule an agenda item for the next meeting to further discuss ARPANSA's strategies for responding to public enquiries and providing advice to the public.

**Item 1.5 Strategic Directions****Chair**

Members agreed to minor updates to the Strategic Areas identified in the Council's Strategic Directions.

**2. UPDATE ON ARPANSA ACTIVITIES****Item 2.1 Report from the CEO****Dr Larsson**

Dr Larsson informed members that the updated ARPANSA Act was passed through the House of Representatives and the Senate without any amendments. The revised Act has a number of improvements including new powers for ARPANSA to regulate Commonwealth legacy sites.

Dr Larsson also provided an update on the shipment of reprocessed waste from France to Lucas Heights.

**Item 2.2 International Engagement****Dr Larsson**

Council noted the tabled reports on recent international visits and forums attended by ARPANSA Staff. Council noted that ARPANSA plays an important role in the development of the international framework for radiation protection and nuclear safety; and that ARPANSA's international engagement reflects this role and supports the move towards greater implementation of trusted international standards in Australia.

**Item 2.3 Safety Guide: Radiation Protection of the Environment****Dr Larsson**

The draft *ARPANSA Safety Guide: Radiation Protection of the Environment* was endorsed by Council for publication, subject to no major changes being proposed by the Radiation Health Committee at their November meeting. Members commented that this is a measured document, that is easy to understand and fills an important gap in existing guidance for environmental assessments. Council acknowledged the efforts of the ARPANSA project manager and thanked all members of the working group for their work.

**3. CURRENT ISSUES****Item 3.1 Imported Equipment****Mr Critchley**

Mr Critchley raised issues associated with substandard equipment being purchased and imported from overseas. A number of strategies were suggested that could be considered to control this practice but it was noted that this is a complex issue and no single action would provide a solution. Members agreed that this is a problem and suggested that a similar paper be presented to the Radiation Health Committee for further consideration.

**Item 3.2 Reference Levels: Existing and Emergency Exposures****Dr Solomon**

The IAEA safety requirement in GSR Part 3 to develop reference levels for existing and emergency exposure situations was noted, as well as the way in which the IAEA framework is moving towards ensuring protection in these situations through optimisation and justification. A number of challenges associated with implementing GSR Part 3 in Australia were identified. Members provided initial advice and agreed to consider this issue and continue the conversation at the next meeting.

**Item 3.3 National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Project****Ms Murray**

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 (DoIIS). 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.

An overview was provided of ARPANSA's advisory and regulatory roles in relation to the NRWFMF Project, the status of the volunteer site selection process and current and future work for ARPANSA in this area. Council noted that the CEO may request advice from Council in relation to this matter in the future.

Members discussed the importance of good communication with the public as the project progresses, including communities along transport routes.

**Item 3.4 South Australian Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission**

**Dr Larsson**

Members were updated on ARPANSA's contributions to the South Australian Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission (the Commission). ARPANSA (Dr Larsson and Dr Solomon) have provided verbal evidence at public hearings. Mr Baldry reported that he has also given evidence (in his capacity as Director Mining Radiation and Regulatory Support at EPA South Australia) at two sessions on legacy sites and regulation of uranium mining.

Members agreed that a great deal of information has been generated throughout this process that will be valuable in the future. Members noted that an interim report from the Commission is expected in February 2016, with the final report scheduled for 5 May 2016.

#### **4. WORKING SESSION**

**Item 4.1 Discussion Paper: Working Group Topics**

**Dr Larsson**

Dr Larsson tabled a paper outlining five working group topics and providing additional detail on the issues and ARPANSA's needs in relation to each topic.

**Item 4.2 Working Groups**

**Chair**

*Topic 1: Effective and inclusive community engagement in relation to the licence assessment for the proposed national radioactive waste management facility, with a particular focus on engagement with local communities.*

Members reiterated the importance of ensuring that ARPANSA is, and is perceived to be, independent from DoIIS in relation to the NRWFMF project. ARPANSA will likely seek advice from Council on ARPANSA's role in consultation in regards to this project, and on how ARPANSA could best communicate this role to the public.

*Topic 2: Medical radiation – focusing on paediatric doses, computed tomography, breast screening and optimising radiation safety and efficaciousness in diagnostic imaging and radiation treatment.*

Council considered the question, 'Is there an optimal level of health care outcome for medical imaging while reducing radiation exposure?' Council members commented that this is a very complex question to answer and that there are (at least) two components to this: the frequency of imaging and the dose per procedure.

Members identified the largest gap in knowledge in relation to dose per procedure is for paediatric imaging and agreed to start by considering exposures from paediatric medicine and breast screening.

*Topic 3: The extent to which a precautionary approach should be applied with respect to low doses and low exposures to ionising and non-ionising radiation.*

Members agreed to consider UV radiation and EMR separately as the scientific evidence on effects of exposure to UV and EMR is considerably different. Members resolved to initially produce three separate documents in order to provide authoritative statements that would be useful for ARPANSA.

*Topic 4: Appropriate reference levels for public exposure in emergency and existing exposure situations.*

Members agreed that no further discussion on this topic was needed at this meeting as the subject was sufficiently addressed in the discussion following Dr Solomon's presentation for Item 3.2.

*Topic 5: Improving communication of public health messaging by radiation protection professionals to enable individuals and community groups to make informed decisions about radiation risks.*

Members discussed the importance of ARPANSA promoting awareness within the community and being recognised as experts in radiation protection and nuclear safety. This can be achieved by providing timely and consistent information over many years. Strategies were suggested to improve communication, including targeted use of both social and traditional media.

**Item 4.3 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.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Item 5.1 Overview and arrangements for ANSTO tour** **Chair**

Members were informed of arrangements for ANSTO tour on day 2.

**Item 5.2 Review and agreement of action list** **Chair**

Members agreed the actions arising from the meeting.

**Item 5.3 Proposed meeting dates for 2016** **Chair**

Members agreed on proposed meeting dates for 2016. Dates and locations will be finalised by the Secretariat and circulated to members out of session.

**Item 5.4 Close of meeting** **Chair**

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:45.

<b>Close</b>	17:45
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