



## Australian Government

# Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council

## SUMMARY OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13-14 NOVEMBER 2014

The Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council (Council) met at ARPANSA's offices in Miranda, NSW.

### **Confirmation of minutes and agenda**

The Minutes of the 21-22 August 2014 meeting were confirmed with minor changes. No requests were received from members of the public to address this meeting of Council.

### **Business arising from the minutes and correspondence**

Members noted items on the action list that had been resolved and updates were provided for ongoing actions. Members noted the tabled correspondence.

### **Committee Reports**

Members noted and discussed the outcomes of the October Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) meeting and the agenda for the upcoming Radiation Health Committee (RHC) meeting.

### **Council's Strategic Directions**

Members agreed to a number of minor amendments to Council's Strategic Directions.

### **Consultation on appointments to NSC and RHC**

The CEO of ARPANSA consulted with members on the proposed appointments to the NSC and RHC for the next triennium.

### **IAEA DS460: Communication and Consultation with Interested Parties by the Regulatory Body**

Members discussed the draft IAEA Safety Guide DS460 which was recently released for Member State comment. Members generally welcomed the tenor of the document and its overall aims and objectives, but have concerns about the documents style, clarity and usability. Members were invited to send specific comments and proposed changes to ARPANSA.

### **Roles and Functions of Advisory Bodies**

The Chair gave a presentation to members on the governance models of a selection of public sector scientific agencies in Australia, with a focus on the transparency and accountability of boards, advisory councils and committees.

### **Draft Council Statement on the Linear No-Threshold approach**

Members agreed that this is a worthwhile issue for Council to address and that there are important links between LNT and principles of radiation protection that deserve clarification. Case studies were suggested as a good way to highlight both sides of the debate and demonstrate the impacts of not applying optimisation appropriately and not acting proportionately to risk.

### **Precautionary Principle – discussion and next steps**

Members discussed the importance of having a clear understanding of what is meant by 'precautionary,' the differences in applying precaution for ionising and non-ionising radiation, and the need to also define what precaution *is not*, as well as what it is. Members noted that using the term 'precautionary approach' rather than 'precautionary principle' would help avoid confusion as the Precautionary Principle applies in

specific situations and sits within a more general precautionary approach. Members agreed to further work on providing clarification of the Precautionary Approach.

### **Council Annual Report**

Members provided comments on the draft annual report which will be incorporated into the final report.

### **Report from Council Member representing the Interests of the General Public**

Members received a report from the Council Member representing the interests of the general public. This outlined submissions from the community on a number of issues including smart meters and WiFi in schools, and highlighted the wide range of information and misinformation available to the public on EMR issues including newsletters produced by interest groups, blogs, social media and advertising.

### **The approach to members of the public attending and presenting at Council meetings**

Members agreed that the provisional agenda for Council meetings should be available to the public at least two weeks prior to meetings and that, subject to the Chair's approval, members of the public should not be restricted to commenting or presenting only on topics already included in the agenda.

### **Future working arrangements**

The Chair outlined proposed changes to the Rules and Procedures for ARPANSA Council and Committees in order to highlight and clarify the role of the Member representing the interests of the general public.

### **The World Health Organization (WHO) EMF Project**

Dr van Deventer from the World Health Organization (WHO) gave a presentation on the role of the WHO in relation to both ionising and non-ionising radiation protection, specifically in shaping research agendas, setting norms and standards and monitoring health. Dr van Deventer emphasised WHO's appreciation of ARPANSA's work as a Collaborating Centre and raised the possibility of ARPANSA acting as a 'Radiation Champion' for WHO, recognising that radiation is not always a major priority for Health Departments and that there is a need for WHO Member States to highlight the importance of radiation as a health issue.

### **Update on ARPANSA's review of RPS3 (Radiation Protection Standard for Maximum Exposure Levels to Radiofrequency Fields – 3 kHz to 300 GHz)**

Members were updated on ARPANSA's current activities in relation to non-ionising radiation research, services and advice, and on emerging issues in this area. Members were also advised of the outcome of an expert panel review of RPS3, which found that while RPS3 remains fit for purpose there are opportunities for improvement. RHC and ARPANSA have committed to begin reviewing RPS3 in 2015.

### **Arrangements for next triennium**

Members were updated on the appointment process for the next triennium. The Chair and the CEO of ARPANSA thanked retiring Members for their hard work and dedication to Council over a number of terms.

### **Meeting Close**

The meeting closed at 12:55pm on 14 November 2014. The next meeting was scheduled for 15-16 April 2015 to be held in Melbourne.