



Australian Government
**Australian Radiation Protection
and Nuclear Safety Agency**



National Radioactive Waste Management Facility

Communications Protocol

**ARPANSA and Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science**



Australian Government
**Australian Radiation Protection
and Nuclear Safety Agency**



National Radioactive Waste Management Facility

Communications Protocol

**ARPANSA and
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science**

May 2017

1. Purpose and scope

The National Radioactive Waste Management Project ('the Project') has been established to implement Australia's radioactive waste management policy. This requires that all waste generated in Australia be stored or disposed of within Australia at suitably sited facilities. The Department of Industry, Innovation & Science ('the Department') is assisting the Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia to select a suitable site for a radioactive waste management facility on voluntarily nominated land in Australia for the Commonwealth to establish and operate a facility. Prior to any appointment of the responsible operating organisation for the facility, the Department is acting as the de facto responsible organisation and as such holds responsibility for managing the risks associated with radiation protection and nuclear safety.

The purpose of this document is to formalise a communications protocol between the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), and the Department during the Project. The document defines the mechanism for formal communications of information by the identified stakeholders in a timely and efficient manner, and seeks to remove duplicative activities of the Commonwealth with respect to the Project.

Each party will be responsible for ensuring that all its direct reports and subcontractors are aware and follow the Protocol established in this document.

2. Relevant documents

- ARPANS Act 1988
- ARPANS Regulations 1999
- National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012
- Regulatory Guidance for Siting a Controlled Facility
- Regulatory Guide: Applying for a licence for a radioactive waste storage or disposal facility (REG-LA-SUP-240L v3)
- Radioactive Waste Storage and Disposal Facilities: Information for Stakeholders

3. Communication agreement

ARPANSA and the Department will communicate in accordance with this Protocol working collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community.

ARPANSA and the Department will observe the terms and conditions of any applicable confidentiality agreement, noting that both parties are serving the interests of the Commonwealth.

4. Contacts

4.1 ARPANSA personnel

Role	Responsibility	Contact details
Project Manager (PM)	All general correspondence. All formal correspondence relating to the nationwide site identification process and site licence application. Responsible for ensuring that all direct reports are aware of this procedure and its application. Escalate situations. Monthly meetings.	Project Manager National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Support Project E: NRWMF.Support@arpansa.gov.au
Alternate PM	Where the PM is not available, undertake the same role as the PM.	E: NRWMF.Support@arpansa.gov.au
Project Administrator	Nominated administrator for the NRWMF Project. Responsible for the maintenance and continuous improvement of this procedure.	E: NRWMF.Support@arpansa.gov.au

4.2 Departmental personnel

Role	Responsibility	Contact details
Manager	All general correspondence. All formal correspondence relating to the nationwide site identification process and site licence application. Responsible for ensuring that all direct reports are aware of this procedure and its application. Escalate situations. Monthly meetings.	Department of Industry, Innovation and Science GPO Box 2013 Canberra ACT 2601 E: radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au
Assistant Manager	Responsible for the maintenance and continuous improvement of this procedure.	Department of Industry, Innovation and Science GPO Box 2013 Canberra ACT 2601 E: radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au

5. Protocol

5.1 General information/queries

All formal communications should be raised to the appropriate contact as noted in Section 4, and copied to the ARPANSA Project Administrator and the Department Assistant Manager. Parties shall use their current official forms and templates for information exchange.

As required by the Commonwealth, Parties will maintain records of all correspondence sent and received. Parties will endeavour to meet a nominal turn around period for a response to a request for information of ten (10) working days.

If it is unclear who has direct responsibility for the matter of inquiry then contact the respective Project Manager nominated in this Protocol. The Project Manager will refer the matter to the appropriate staff member if it goes beyond their role.

5.2 Meeting communication

Where formal meetings are held, it is expected that an agenda will be issued at least five (5) working days before the scheduled date, insofar as practical.

Where this is not practical, both parties will ensure an agenda is issued prior to the meeting date. Any actions arising from the initial meeting should be captured as actions to be addressed under the agenda of a follow up meeting as required.

The notification that a formal meeting should be held shall be raised electronically via e-mail calendar requests. Requests shall include the list of participants, the agenda, the Chair of the meeting, the date and the venue.

Minutes of the meeting shall record only decisions and actions resulting from the meeting agenda. The party hosting the meeting is required to keep minutes of meetings and forward them through to the other party within five (5) working days, insofar as practical.

5.3 Formal correspondence

Formal written correspondence should be raised whenever an exchange of information is required to seek an official response from a receiving party in relation to any project related matters.

The preferred mode of formal communication between ARPANSA and the Department is by way of email correspondence. Correspondence issued in this manner is understood to represent controlled and reliable information reflecting the position of the transmitting party. Communications must display the appropriate security classification. The parties will ensure that they comply with any relevant legal requirements including obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Where correspondence requires an answer to a specific question(s), the question(s) should as far as possible conform to the following principles:

- Clear and definite question(s) should be raised; responses should address specifically the questions raised.

- Attachments relating to the query should be easily accessible for review and where possible included in the query submittal for review.
- The response time from the receiving party should be ten (10) working days from issue of the correspondence, or as agreed.
- Only the party raising the correspondence can close the correspondence.
- Revision control of the outgoing correspondence is the responsibility of the issuing party.

Where the intent of a correspondence is to state a position or to inform the recipient of new information and no response is required, the issuer of the correspondence should raise the correspondence as “Closed” upon issue.

5.4 Technical queries/correspondence

Parties agree to communicate directly with the Project Manager or Manager nominated in this Protocol for raising and responding to technical queries within the scope of this Protocol.

5.5 Nationwide site identification process and siting licence application

5.5.1 ARPANSA

- ARPANSA will provide advice to the Department on the regulatory requirements, including the provision of waste management criteria, ongoing technical advice regarding the elements important to the safety case throughout site characterisation studies and during the development of the detailed business case, as required.
- ARPANSA’s advice and information to the Department is intended to clarify ARPANSA’s criteria for the protection of people (public and workers) and the environment, and what technical and other information the Department must provide to ARPANSA as part of the siting licence application.
- ARPANSA may attend, as an observer, Department workshops and / or working groups (Independent Advisory Panels (IAP) or Waste Acceptance Criteria Working groups for example), and other as requested from time to time, and, only where ARPANSA assesses that there is not a conflict of interest (real or perceived).
- ARPANSA may be requested to provide material for the Department’s Community Engagement Program for the purpose of clarifying regulatory requirements and radiation protection/safety concepts to interested parties.
- ARPANSA will continue to act as the independent regulatory authority with all matters related to the NRWMF Project.
- ARPANSA will not advise on technical solutions to meet its criteria.
- ARPANSA may invite representatives from the Department to relevant meetings to discuss the Project. These meetings may include the ARPANSA Licence Forum for example.

5.5.2 Proposed IAP workshop dates and important dates (announcements)

- To be updated when a Program has been developed and accepted by both parties.

5.5.3 Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

- The Department will keep ARPANSA informed of the progress of the site selection process with updates as required.
- The Department may invite representatives from ARPANSA to relevant meetings to discuss the Project. These meetings may include the Radioactive Waste Management Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) for example.
- The Department may request input / advice from ARPANSA during all stages of their Project, such as the development of Terms of Reference for site characterisation studies or overall approach to the development of the safety case.

6. Issue resolution

In the event there is a communication breakdown and/or an issue cannot be resolved in a timely and adequate manner, both parties have the right to escalate an issue to the next highest level within their own respective organisations.