



ARPANSA – ARWA Liaison Forum 1 (31 August 2022)

Summary of Notes

1. Introduction & Welcome

CEO ARPANSA welcomed all participants to the Yallambie site and conducted the Acknowledgement of Country. All participants introduced themselves.

CEO ARWA provided a ‘Safety Thought’ on a recent visit to a licenced Commonwealth facility. It was agreed that such a ‘safety moment’ will be added to the agenda as a standing item.

Both the CEO ARPANSA and CEO ARWA agreed and signed the ARPANSA – ARWA Liaison Forum Terms of Reference (ToR).

CEO ARPANSA provided an overview of the established liaison forums with Dept of Defence, CSIRO and ANSTO and advised they provide an important environment for senior officers to discuss matters of interest at the strategic level. Further, as ARWA is a prospective licensee, it was considered a good opportunity to establish this forum now.

CEO ARWA welcomed the opportunity to discuss common issues given there is a shared interest in the nuclear industry in Australia, however it was noted the importance of ensuring there is the appropriate separation of roles and responsibilities between regulator and prospective licensee.

ARPANSA advised of the established ARPANSA – ARWA Communications Protocol and that it requires updating to reflect the current position of both agencies.

2. ARPANSA Strategic Overview

CEO ARPANSA advised of several challenges around having a workforce ready for the potential submission of licenses from ARWA for a NRWMF, noting emerging resourcing challenges across the sector. ARPANSA are ensuring appropriate planning for the resources and capability to be prepared for the assessment of licence applications related to the NRWMF, including outreach. ARPANSA will look at re-engaging with the Kimba community and noted historically ARPANSA engagements have been done independent of ARWA and other Government agencies and will continue to do so to ensure independence is well understood.

ARPANSA officials discussed a range of engagement activities, particularly around understanding the community’s expectations of meaningful consultation if a licence application is received, how ARPANSA looks at the wellbeing aspect, and how ARPANSA manage and address this.

ARPANSAs future priorities revolve around resources and ensuring a competent workforce that is ready, as well as ensuring its regulatory guidance and standards are up to date and providing relevant information to support potential licence holders.

3. ARWA Strategic Overview

The CEO discussed ARWAs operating model, including program management approach, the fundamental strategic challenges faced, the importance of an integrated management system and the scope of the program of work including the overarching priorities of safety, security and environmental protection, radioactive waste management program delivery. The strategic challenges and overarching principles for addressing those challenges were discussed at a high level, including steps to ensure that resources were in place to deliver the programs.

A 'One ARWA' concept was highlighted, noting the importance for both the technical and policy areas to work closely together, recognising the complexity and interrelated nature of the work activities. Work is being done across the organisation into culture, how ARWA expects to work and behaviours.

4. ARPANSA Matters of Interest

An overview of the amendment to the ARPANS Regulations in 2022 was provided. A number of questions were raised on the impact for licence holders around reaching compliance, specifically the timeframe for implementation. ARPANSA advised the cycle of changes required as per the ARPANSA Regulatory Guide – Plans and Arrangements (effectively the 3 yearly review of Plans and Arrangements).

A high-level discussion was held on the depth of information expected for licence application submissions. It was noted that the safety case development and licensing process is an iterative process, however the safety concepts which underpin the design requires significant thought and would not be anticipated to change significantly as the design progresses.

A discussion on the concept of optimisation and the level required by ARPANSA was sought by CEO ARWA. Of note, ARPANSA advised that a demonstration of both safety and cost optimisation would be required as well as other factors.

In order to assist ARWA with their planning, ARPANSAs timeframes for licence application assessment were discussed. While an indicative timeframe was provided, there was a range of dependencies discussed, such as the comprehensiveness of the application submitted.

General advice was provided around the need to ensure openness, transparency and separation of roles and responsibilities, including how ARPANSA would engage with ARWA. The ARPANSA-ARWA Communication Protocol was highlighted as a document that requires review and updating to reflect the current circumstances.

5. ARWA Matters of Interest

Detailed discussion on the NRWMF program was provided under item 3. An update on the future organisational framework for ARWA was provided.

ARWA officials advised that the Australian Radioactive Waste Management Framework update will not occur this calendar year, noting there are a range of stakeholders to engage on the subject, for example the Department of Industry, Science and Resources as a core policy stakeholder.

CEO ARPANSA highlighted the IAEA Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS) as a possible strategy to bring all of the stakeholders together to discuss radioactive waste management, reflecting on the positives that came out of the 2018 IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission to Australia.

6. *Mutual Areas of Interest*

It was agreed that a separate meeting to discuss the national inventory and reporting under the Joint Convention would be organised given there was not enough time to discuss the current process and provide both agency's expectations in detail.

ARPANSA advised they are heavily involved in a range of international fora, specifically the IAEA Safety Standards committees, including the Waste Safety Standard Committee (WASSC), and the OECD NEA Radioactive Waste Management Committee (RWMC), among others. ARWA advised that ARWA is in the early stages of considering formal IAEA/NEA committee membership which will develop over time as ARWA grows.

7. *General Business*

Both CEOs agreed that this liaison forum enabled constructive and helpful discussion.

8. *Conclusion*

The next meeting was not confirmed during the meeting, however approximately six months from now.