

SOUTH AUSTRALIA RADIATION PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

7 December 2023 1.00pm – 3.30pm

EPA 211 Victoria Square Adelaide SA 5000 Australia

Tarntanyangga, Kaurna Country

and via Microsoft Teams video conference

We acknowledge the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work on. We respect their spiritual relationship with Sea and Country and acknowledge their Elders – past, present and emerging. We also pay our respect to the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from other areas of South Australia and Australia.

1. MEETING ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1.1 Introductions and apologies

The Presiding Member opened the meeting at 1:00pm and welcomed the Committee.

Present

- Mr Keith Baldry (Presiding Member)
- Prof Pamela Sykes (Deputy Presiding Member)
- Prof Nigel Spooner (Member)
- Mr Peter (Jim) Hondros (Member)
- Dr Michelle Nottage (Member)
- Ms Kathryn Liedig-Levingstone (Member)
- Dr Charlotte Sale (Member)
- Dr Chris Lease (Deputy Member to Prof Spurrier)

Observers

- Ms Carly Cilento (EPA, Secretary to the Committee)
- Ms Kavitha Srinisavan (EPA)
- Mr Artem Borysenko (EPA)
- Mr Glen Cuttance (EPA)
- Ms Hani Romana (EPA)
- Mr Richard Wood (EPA)
- Mr Chris McCurdy (EPA)
- Ms Brenda Julian (EPA, Minutes)

Apologies

- Prof Nicola Spurrier (Member)

2. MINUTES

2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the 31 August 2023 meeting.

2.2 Action items

The Committee noted the action item:

- EPA to engage with SA Health to explore data sharing opportunities and alignment of radiation incident reporting – Ongoing.

2.3 Forward Agenda

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

3. MEMBERS REPORTS

- The Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS) annual conference was held on the Gold Coast in October 2023. As Immediate Past President, Jim Hondros gave a short presentation on the conference noting it was one of the largest ARPS conferences to date with good attendance from younger and aspiring professionals.
- Researchers at University of Adelaide, led by Danielle Questiaux from the School of Physics, Chemistry and Earth Science, were recently awarded an Australian Economic Accelerator grant to focus on the rapid development of new medical treatment compounds from radioactive mine waste. The targets are the various isotopes of radium, either as direct therapy components or as feedstock for production of Ac-225. Of interest are both uranium mines and the legacy tailings from past operations.

4. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Agenda item 4.2 was considered ahead of agenda item 4.1.

4.2 OneSteel Whyalla – Lost Radioactive Source

Some information regarding agenda item 4.2 has been omitted in accordance with Section 12(9) of the Radiation Protection and Control Act 2021.

- The Committee considered three papers relating to aspects of a lost industrial gauge containing a radioactive source at GFG Liberty OneSteel's Whyalla steelworks.

4.2a OneSteel Whyalla Lost Radioactive Source – Overview of response

- The Committee considered the EPA response after it was notified by GFG on 28 September 2023 of a missing industrial gauge containing a radiation source.
- EPA staff briefed the Committee on the incident management response, that included engagement with MFS and SAPOL under state emergency management arrangements.
- The Committee was advised of measures undertaken to locate the source, including support from the Australian Radiation Safety and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).
- The Committee resolved to:
 1. Note the EPA response to the loss of an industrial gauge containing a Cobalt-60 radiation source at the Whyalla steelworks including incident management arrangements;

2. Note the EPA assessment that the radiation safety risk to workers and public is low, and the matter has moved from incident response and search, to investigating the circumstances;
3. Note that the EPA has undertaken a post-incident review of its incident response, and the report will be made available to the Committee.

4.2b Regulation of Sealed Radioactive Sources

- The Committee was briefed on the sealed radioactive sources currently registered with the South Australian EPA and the regulations in place for the safety and security of these sources.
- The Committee discussed potential control issues arising from the movement of sealed radioactive sources between jurisdictions and noted that the IAEA recommendation for Australia to institute a national sealed source register was still to be delivered.
- The Committee had concerns that there was no established 'closing the loop' following the loss of a radioactive source. It was difficult to find information on the fate of lost sources, including: circumstances of losses, numbers remaining lost, root causes, and lessons learned and implemented.
- A report on the Rio Tinto WA lost source, with root cause analysis and assessment of the effectiveness of State and national regulatory frameworks, was noted as not being available.
- The Committee resolved to:
 1. Advise the SA EPA to review its recording of lost radioactive sources to better 'close the loop';
 2. Ask the EPA to raise the matter with Commonwealth regulator ARPANSA, supporting the following:
 - a. a review of national reporting of lost radioactive sources to enable access to source fate, root cause analysis, and lessons learned;
 - b. a review of the extent of safety risks presented by cross-border movement and the current fragmented jurisdictional arrangements;
 - c. the development of a national sealed source register in line with IAEA recommendations.

4.2c OneSteel Whyalla lost radioactive source – Compliance issues

- The Committee resolved to:
 1. Note that a report on the investigation into the GFG OneSteel Whyalla lost radioactive source would be provided to the Committee for consideration in 2024.

4.1 ABC Proton Therapy Licencing

- The Committee was briefed on the staged approval process for the Australian Bragg Centre for Proton Therapy and Research (ABCPTR) Facility License. EPA staff provided updates on the successful completion of the building construction phase, and subsequent transition to installation of the proton therapy system. The forthcoming phase involves the commissioning process, during which the actual 'BEAM ON' operations will initiate.
- The Committee discussed the particular challenges of this licensing process, including the nature of the facility and radiation safety implications that are unique in Australia.
- The Committee resolved to:

1. Note the progress and staged licensing for the Australian Bragg Centre for Proton Therapy and Research;
2. Asked that the person responsible for the centre's radiation safety outcomes be invited to a future Committee meeting.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

- Nil

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday 7 March 2024, 1:00pm.

The Presiding Member closed the meeting at 2.37pm.



.....
Keith Baldry

Presiding Member

.....
Carly Cilento

Secretary to the Committee

Date: [7 March 2024]