



# KIMBA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE KIMBA ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP MINUTES

## Agenda

### KIMBA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE KIMBA ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP

Wednesday 21 June 2023, 12pm lunch for 12.30pm start  
Kimba Gateway Hotel, 40 High St Kimba

## MEETING AGENDA

Item	Time Allocated	Key points
1. <a href="#">Welcome</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housekeeping</li> </ul>
2. <a href="#">Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) Chief Executive Officer update</a>	(30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledgement of Country</li> <li>Safety thought</li> <li>Introduction of speakers</li> <li>ARWA update               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget update</li> <li>EIS guidelines</li> <li>Staffing and recruitment updates</li> <li>AUKUS update</li> <li>Legal update</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. <a href="#">Technical and Safety Program update</a>	(10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARWA Technical and Safety update</li> </ul>
3a. <a href="#">Site Characterisation Activities update</a>	(45 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on current and future site activities</li> </ul>
3b. <a href="#">Meet the ARWA Expert Series</a>	(45 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction</li> <li>Case study from previous experience</li> <li>How it relates to ARWA's technical program</li> </ul>
<b>Afternoon tea break</b>		
4. <a href="#">Indigenous Engagement</a>	(30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARWA and DISR Reconciliation Action Plans</li> <li>Indigenous engagement activities update</li> </ul>

Item	Time Allocated	Key points
5. <a href="#">Communications and Engagement update</a>	(10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recap engagement activities since last meeting</li> </ul>
6. <a href="#">Other business</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action list and new items</li> </ul>
<b>5.00pm - Meeting close</b>		

## KIMBA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE KIMBA ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP

This meeting record is intended to capture key discussion points and all actions and outcomes agreed by the Committee.

### Attendance list

**Kimba Consultative Committee Members:**

- Allan Suter – Convenor (attended via Microsoft Teams)
- Jeff Baldock
- Pat Beinke
- Randall Cliff
- Kellie Hunt
- Sally Inglis (attended via Microsoft Teams)
- Jeff Koch
- Meagan Lienert
- Kerri Rayson
- Toni Scott
- Peter Woolford
- Laura Fitzgerald
- Christine Lehmann
- Charlie Milton

**Australian Radioactive Waste Agency**

- Sam Usher – Chief Executive Officer
- Amanda Fortanier – A/g General Manager, Technical and Safety
- Daniel Pond – Manager Facility Site, Security and Design
- Bryce Taplin – Technical and Safety
- Jane Uptlen – Manager, Communications and Engagement

- Megan Rusk – Assistant Manager, Communications and Engagement
- Susie Pedersen – Assistant Manager, Parliamentary, Coordination and Secretariat
- Shane Holland – Manager, Indigenous Engagement
- Bill Miller – Manager, National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Integration and Operations, Technical and Safety
- Deborah Francis – Community Liaison Officer
- Rachel Ganczarczyk – Communications and Media Officer
- Rachael Rea – Senior Legal Counsel (attended via Microsoft Teams)
- Craig Davis – Site Supervisor
- Helen Alexander – Parliamentary and Secretariat Officer (attended via Microsoft Teams)
- Catherine Partoon – Assistant Manager, Communications and Engagement (attended via Microsoft Teams)
- Shirley Zhang A/g Manager, Minerals and Resources Division, Radioactive Waste Policy (attended via Microsoft Teams)

**Apologies:**

- Dean Johnson – Deputy Convenor, Kimba Consultative Committee
- Symon Allen – Kimba Consultative Committee
- Heather Baldock - Kimba Consultative Committee
- Debra Larwood - Kimba Consultative Committee
- Amy Wright - Kimba Consultative Committee

## Item summary

### Items 1 – Welcome and apologies

The Convenor opened the meeting at 12.36pm.

The Convenor communicated apologies from three members.

The Convenor welcomed those joining the meeting online and outlined housekeeping matters. The Committee members agreed to photographs being taken throughout the day.

### 2 – ARWA update

#### Summary

ARWA's Chief Executive Officer (ARWA's CEO) gave an Acknowledgement of Country and an update about ARWA's work since the previous meeting. ARWA's commitment to strengthening understanding of Traditional Owners' culture was highlighted and members were informed about two new pieces of artwork by Barngarla artist Emmaline Richards which have been hung at ARWA's Kimba office and that people were welcome to visit to view them.

A safety thought was provided about regional travel hazards and road safety and the importance of a safety focus to ARWA's work. ARWA's CEO also highlighted his appreciation of the opportunity to be in Kimba and explained that although he represents the Commonwealth government, he cannot make decisions on behalf of government alone; there are government processes he needs to follow. Members received a commitment that ARWA would always be as transparent as possible and would work in good faith with them and the wider community.

Given some ARWA staff were attending the meeting for the first time, all attendees were asked to introduce themselves. The contribution of former ARWA employees who had worked closely with the Kimba community and now moved on to new opportunities was recognised. Members were further advised that some staff turnover is a factor of working in and with government as people move on to new roles and that as ARWA's work is long-term in nature there will be more change. Staff would continue to be encouraged to visit Kimba to understand the proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Facility (NRWMF) context and the views and perspectives of the community. An announcement was made that an ARWA Economic Development Officer would commence in their role on Monday 17 July 2023 and be based in Port Lincoln.

ARWA secured enduring funding in the recent 2023-24 Budget, with the government committing to ARWA fulfilling its radioactive waste management and governance functions on an enduring basis. ARWA also received funding for the current and next phase of work on the NRWMF. This funding will enable completion of all work until the point of presentation of the business case and also provide for ARWA to continue developing the intermediate level waste (ILW) pathway. ARWA additionally received separate funding to provide guidance to the Department of Defence and the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Taskforce. This demonstration of commitment from the government means significant growth for ARWA, which is expected to double in size over the next 18 months, with a particular focus on adding to its technical and project management capability. As it grows, ARWA would like more staff to visit Kimba without over burdening the community and feedback from members would be welcomed on this.

Kimba Consultative Committee (KCC) members were reminded that the government's AUKUS-related nuclear-powered submarine program process is separate to the proposed NRWMF near Kimba and that any waste generated by Defence will be stored on Defence land. This announcement does not change the government's commitment to the NRWMF, which is driven by

relieving capacity at ANSTO and consolidating legacy waste from around the country into a permanent facility.

Members were provided with an outline of the current status of the litigation process. The judgement is expected between July and September 2023. In the meantime, the government's declaration decision stands and therefore so does ARWA's remit, so site characterisation and other work continues. ARWA noted there have now been a wide range of contractors working at the site and the feedback from them about their experiences in Kimba has been positive; they have felt welcomed by the community and enjoyed their time there.

A question was raised by a member as to what would happen in the worst-case scenario if the government were unsuccessful in defending the current or future litigation, in terms of impact to the NRWMF process. ARWA advised the government would not pre-empt the court's decision and would consider it when it is handed down by the judge. ARWA also informed members the decision was likely to be announced at short notice and committed to keeping KCC members informed as soon as possible afterwards by organising a meeting in the same way as for past important updates.

The final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) guidelines have been received from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), following a lengthy process of consultation. DCCEEW has incorporated feedback from a wide range of stakeholder groups into the final guidelines, which are now publicly available, including on ARWA's webpage, and will be used to assist ARWA's preparation of the EIS. Preparation of the EIS is expected to take 18 months to two years.

KCC members were thanked for their feedback on and inputs to the Community Skills and Development Program (CSDP) grant program and informed this has now progressed to the government approval stage of the process, which could take some time.

Members were updated about the KCC reappointment process, which is in progress, noting current terms expire on 30 June 2023. The Minister has also asked ARWA to engage in establishing the Regional Consultative Committee, which will replace the KCC in due course. ARWA committed to consulting with KCC members about this and proposed including an item on the agenda for the September 2023 meeting to discuss.

**Action: Regional Consultative Committee agenda item to be included for the next KCC meeting.**

### 3 – Technical and Safety Program update

The Acting General Manager, Technical and Safety introduced herself and spoke about her experience working in nuclear medicine before starting with ARWA two years ago, and her personal commitment to the NRWMF project. She advised that site characterisation activities continue and feed into the ongoing design and planning of the facility, with a focus on safety and optimisation of design.

Members were also informed that ARWA is now in the planning stage of addressing the EIS guidelines and there will be a number of opportunities for the KCC to provide feedback.

ARWA is continuing to grow and is recruiting to a number of positions to build technical capability and capacity. The Technical and Safety Branch's new Manager, NRWMF Integration and Operations, who has more than 30 years' experience in radioactive waste management, was introduced to members.

#### 3a – Site Characterisation Activities update

ARWA updated members on the site characterisation team and work. The team provided a presentation on activities that have been completed since the last KCC meeting in February 2023

reiterating that this work does not signify the start of construction and that some aspects of the work will continue through to the operational phase of the NRWFM.

ARWA gave an update on the topographic survey and geotechnical investigations of Tola Road and the services routes which was completed in December 2022. They explained the techniques used and the reasons for certain tests and that while some areas have already been remediated, others will be monitored over an extended period. AECOM will provide modelling of the ground water on site, which ARWA explained is saline at a depth of between 25 and 50 metres below ground.

The flora and fauna studies are ongoing with previous work having been done on Malleefowl and more work on this still to come. Discussion moved on to the issue of threats to the Malleefowl and possible baiting (of introduced predators) or fencing requirements to protect them.

**Action: As part of the EIS work, ARWA will report back to the KCC on the plan for managing the Malleefowl and possible baiting of animals threatening the current population.**

A weather station and data logger was installed onsite in January 2023 alongside an air quality sampler. AECOM is trying to arrange for the weather station to be registered with the Bureau of Meteorology so that the data can be made available to the public. Dust and air sampling will be conducted for an initial 12-month period. Surface soil sampling will also be conducted to check for naturally occurring radioactive material.

Following a broad magnetic survey undertaken in July last year, which identified a feature AECOM wanted to assess further, known as a dyke, which can function as a barrier for water flow below ground. Drilling will be undertaken into the dyke to understand the composition and determine the impacts on water flow. Initial groundwater monitoring was completed in June 2023 and there will be additional ongoing monitoring for an extended period to obtain data about seasonal fluctuations.

A team from Western Australia conducted a light survey in mid-January providing a baseline of light in the area to. The group reported the proposed NRWFM site was one of the most naturally dark places they have visited.

Another large survey completed in April 2023 was a geophysical seismic survey of the soil and rock layers over a large area of the site. The results provide detailed understanding of the composition of the layers and strength of the ground down to hundreds of metres below the surface and assists with understanding what could happen in a rare seismic event, which is important for the NRWFM design and safety case. It was noted that this is a very long-term process and Geoscience Australia regularly does this work on a vast scale for mining and other purposes across Australia.

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) is conducting cosmic ray moisture sensor checks to measure soil moisture content across the site. These sensors are in place in a number of locations around Australia, and the data will be available online eventually. The data from this work will feed into research and development activities on the site later in the project.

Pile driveability testing has also been completed on site to understand the soil strength in selected locations where the NRWFM solar farm might be installed.

Members were told that the data provided by the site characterisation tests will be used in coming years to inform the facility's design, develop the safety case, and inform the EIS.

A member queried the impact of the proposed NRWFM on water availability in the area and enquired about the possibility of installing a desalination plant, as this would be of benefit to the local population. ARWA responded that the ground water flow rates are reported to be low so this would probably not be viable. The discussion moved on to water availability to fill fire tanks and

water for use during the construction phase, including rainwater collection options. ARWA commented that this will all be investigated and assessed for the EIS.

Members asked about the release of site characterisation data for public use and were informed that the information has to be analysed and assessed and go through a quality/validation process first and then be shared with other agencies as required. Much of the information will eventually be released more broadly to the public via regulatory submissions such as the EIS.

Discussions then occurred about the landholder surveys that AECOM has undertaken; one for land holdings within 10km of the site and another for those between 10 and 30km from the site with a registered bore. Examples of the information sought included the presence of groundwater bores, dams, livestock, aircraft usage (for spraying etc) to inform risk assessment and future site characterisation work.

Members were advised that reports are starting to be received from the contractors, which are initially focusing on factual data and will be followed up later with interpretive reporting.

Members heard about how site characterisation activities are managed. Before work occurs on site, AECOM collaborates with their sub-contractor partners to develop technical work plans, which are peer reviewed to ensure they meet ARWA's requirements and industry standards. As ARWA progresses design and safety work the plans will be reviewed. The Contractor Works Notification Process is functioning well. Notifications are submitted to ARWA before each site activity commences to ensure health and safety, legal, communication and cultural heritage protection requirements are met. Contractors cannot commence work without an approved notification; 20 have been submitted to date.

Other activity management tools were outlined, such as site management plans, the site induction process, general contractor works requirements and land access agreements. Together, the processes provide robust controls to ensure activities being conducted are managed appropriately.

A baseline noise survey will be undertaken later in 2023 to model the impact of construction and operation, together with more flora and fauna surveys in the Spring and additional sampling from landowners to feed into baseline data. Further offsite geotechnical work will be undertaken along with onsite activities around the location of the planned solar microgrid for electrical infrastructure design.

A question was asked about the impact of the sale of the site land on Council land valuations and consequently rates charges with members reporting a recent 34 per cent increase in Council rate levies. ARWA explained that the land was acquired, and compensation paid to the landowner, which was different from buying the land but committed to look into the matter.

**Action: ARWA to look into potential impacts of the site acquisition on Council rates in the area.**

ARWA provided an explanation of Synroc volumes in response to previous action item **KCC20230902/AO4**. This concerned the proportion of space that would be taken up in an ILW storage building by existing ANSTO liquid ILW once it has been converted into Synroc. ARWA provided an update about this action commenting that as the Australian radioactive waste inventory is updated every few years, this information can also be updated. A question was asked about when the Synroc waste treatment plant would commence operating. ARWA explained that this is a question for ANSTO and committed to checking with them.

**Action: ARWA to check when the Synroc waste treatment plant operation is anticipated to commence with ANSTO.**



## 3b – Meet the ARWA Expert series – Manager, NRWMF Integration and Operations

ARWA's Manager, NRWMF Integration and Operations provided a presentation on his previous roles and career path prior to coming to work for ARWA. He outlined his work on radioactive waste disposal projects worldwide for 30 years explaining how his previous projects relate to the NRWMF.

Members heard about international best practice and how ARWA can work with it and adapt it in line with national laws and regulations. Details were provided about experiences working at the low-level waste repository (LLWR) site at Drigg near Sellafield in the United Kingdom (UK), a national facility situated close to the sea which has been in operation since the 1950s; how the UK currently manages its radioactive waste; and the plans it is working on for future disposal.

Members were informed that the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority was set up in the UK with the aim of introducing better practices, that this has improved every stage of the process and that it continues to do so. The quantities of radioactive waste in the UK are vastly different to those we have in Australia, with the UK's LLWR total capacity being 1300000m<sup>3</sup> - the equivalent to approximately 200 NRWMF vault complexes. Members heard how waste is transported to the LLWR and loaded into the vaults and that once closed it is covered with an earth cap. The methods of disposal used at the low-level waste (LLW) facility in Dounreay in Scotland and at sites in France were also described and the high level of regulation and multiple layers of engineered barriers applied to UK nuclear waste disposal highlighted.

The question of bushfire risk at Kimba was discussed. Members were advised that no fires were known of on nuclear waste disposal sites worldwide over the past 60 years.

An outline of the clean-up of the Hanford Nuclear site in the United States was provided. This is a 1500km<sup>2</sup> site with the corresponding LLW disposal facility being built to accommodate 8 million m<sup>3</sup> of waste. The differences from and similarities to the NRWMF at Kimba were described, and information provided about the processes currently in place at Hanford.

Further discussions took place about the number and types of radioactive waste facilities in the UK, waste management and waste conditioning there, what was being proposed at the NRWMF, and international best practice and international and Australian industry standards.

An outline was provided of time spent working at Fukushima, with an explanation as to why what happened at Fukushima in February 2011 cannot happen at the proposed NRWMF. Details were given about how the post event clean-up operations have followed international best practice, the magnitude of the situation and the processes being applied under the guidance and monitoring of an independent regulator and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

## 4 – Indigenous Engagement

ARWA shared information about their engagement with regional stakeholders and how they have been managing and coordinating opportunities for First Nations people.

An update was provided on the Cultural Heritage Assessment (CHA) work that has been taking place over the past 12 months and should be completed by the end of the year. Over the last months there has been full and robust consultation with cultural knowledge holders about the proposed NRWMF area, including AECOM meetings and consultation with Barngarla People to seek their input. Positive feedback on the engagement process has been received recently from Elders, some of whom have been unable to travel but where this has been the case, ARWA has travelled to them



and recorded their verbal inputs. Other Elders attended the site to undertake a survey and provided feedback.

Information collected from all sources will be used to inform and update the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), as well as future CHMPs, the site design and the EIS. ARWA noted that social sciences information is important for all this work alongside technical inputs.

Members discussed ARWA's relationship with the Barngarla community and heard that although some have been willing to work with ARWA to protect their culture, ARWA acknowledges this does not mean they necessarily support the facility going ahead. ARWA explained that the Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation is the group they must work with and there is ongoing engagement with some members, but the level of involvement varies. ARWA listens to all views and incorporates them into their decision-making processes, such as Dr Gorrings' survey report, which was incorporated into the CHMP.

Members then briefly talked about the current litigation and discussed the decision points that need to be completed before construction can commence. These include the EIS, which needs to be submitted to DCCEEW and includes a section on working with Indigenous communities, as well as the required nuclear regulatory approvals that need to be obtained.

ARWA has a Reconciliation Action Plan in place now setting out tangible delivery points for matters such as the retention of employees, procuring services and cultural work.

## 5 – Communications and Engagement update

ARWA provided an update on community engagement since the February 2023 meeting. They had a stand at the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association Conference in Port Lincoln on 16 and 17 March 2023, where ARWA's CEO was a guest speaker and ARWA's Communications and Engagement Team was able to engage with councils across the Peninsula.

ARWA attended the launch of the Eyre Peninsula new branding to support Mel Garibaldi, Kimba Council's Economic Development Manager, where ARWA staff were also able to speak with other council staff and industry groups.

ARWA was pleased to attend the opening of the refurbished Kimba Medical Centre with the Kimba Council and Senator Karen Grogan and later took the Senator out to the NRWMF site.

ARWA provided an update on their recent interactions with councils across South Australia. This included a South Australia Regional Organisation of Councils meeting and tour of Kimba hosted by the District Council of Kimba. ARWA supported the Council and facilitated a site tour, promoting the NRWMF and ARWA and its work more broadly. ARWA also highlighted that if an organisation would like to visit the site, this can be arranged through ARWA.

ARWA's sponsorship program continues to progress, with the new simplified version of the form that was updated thanks to KCC feedback working well. Planning for the Kimba Show 2023 is underway.

## 6 – Other business

Members discussed a number of items, including the CSDP grant criteria, including how to apply the cultural heritage component and whether the District Council of Kimba should arrange their own cultural heritage survey to ensure non-Indigenous cultural heritage was captured. ARWA explained that as two consultation sessions on the grant selection criteria have taken place, ARWA could provide a summary of these to the members if required but they would not see the actual guidelines

until they are finalised. It was agreed that this item would be carried forward to the next meeting when Council representatives would be present to discuss further.

One of the members raised the issue of the heightening of concern in the community about the uncertainty created by the upcoming court case and whether the court decision could stop the entire process. ARWA committed to providing information to the KCC as soon as possible after the court decision was handed down.

The Convenor advised members that the next meeting will be held on 14 September 2023.

ARWA's CEO thanked attendees for their participation, the helpful questions asked at the meeting and for their interactive discussions.

**Action: CSDP grant criteria to be carried forward as an agenda item to the next KCC meeting.**

#### **Past Actions**

Updates were provided about the following previous action items and attendees agreed they could be closed:

**KCC20230902/AO2** - ARWA will look into information received as part of recent nearby landowner surveys with the potential aim of sharing this information at the next KCC meeting.

This item was discussed during the meeting and can be closed.

**KCC20230902/AO4** - Representative from ANSTO to be invited to attend the next KCC meeting on 21 June 2023. ARWA to confirm the estimated amounts in response to the question about the proportion of space that would be taken up in an ILW building by the existing ANSTO ILW waste once it has been converted into Synroc.

This item was discussed during the meeting and can be closed.

**KCC20230902/AO3** - A summary of the CSDP Grant Design Workshop discussion is to be provided to members separately and an opportunity to discuss this further is to be arranged.

ARWA has confirmed that KCC members were sent an email on 26 April 2023 with a summary of the CSDP Grant Design Workshop discussion and were also provided with a further discussion session which took place in May 2023. This item can therefore be closed.

There are now no action items to carry forward from previous meetings.

The Convenor thanked the meeting organisers and attendees for their flexibility, which enabled this meeting to go ahead despite the Convenor and Deputy Convenor being absent from Kimba and apologised for having to dial into the meeting from elsewhere.

**Meeting closed 4.21pm.**