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Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

2026-27 Data Assurance Sheet

Key activity 1.3 – Supporting the safe and secure long-term management and disposal of radioactive waste and spent fuel arising from the nuclear-powered submarine program

Deputy Secretary sign off

As Deputy Secretary of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, in my opinion:

- performance measure information in this Data Assurance Sheet (DAS) is accurate
- methodologies used to verify performance results meet requirements under section 16EA of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule)
- supporting records and data are, and will be, properly maintained.

I acknowledge that the relevant division/s in my group, in consultation with any other contributing areas, is responsible for maintaining the performance measure, including:

- providing accurate and timely evidence to demonstrate results and enable quarterly performance reporting and the preparation of the annual performance statements
- engaging with relevant audit and business improvement activities, such as the Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO's) annual performance statements audit
- maintaining this DAS as a living document over the reporting period in consultation with Analysis, Insights and Strategy Division (AISD) and the relevant Head of Division (HoD) as appropriate.

Name: _____

Position: **Deputy Secretary,** _____

Signature: **Date:** / / **2026**

Purpose

A DAS is the primary control document for departmental performance measures published in the portfolio budget statements and corporate plan. It sets out the measure's rationale and methodology for how results are assessed and reported.

AISD establishes DASs in PDMS each financial year. This involves clearance by the relevant HoD and sign off by the responsible Deputy Secretary. Where responsibility for a measure is shared between business areas, a lead area and contact should be identified through this DAS.

PGPA Rule **requirements** – Section 16EA provides that performance measures need to:

(a) **relate directly** to one or more of those purposes or key activities; and
(b) use sources of information and methodologies that are **reliable and verifiable**; and
(c) provide an **unbiased basis** for the measurement and assessment of performance; and
(d) where reasonably practicable, comprise a mix of **qualitative and quantitative** measures; and
(e) include measures of **outputs, efficiency and effectiveness** if those things are appropriate measures of performance; and
(f) provide a basis for an assessment of **performance over time.**

Key details

External detail published in the Corporate Plan 2026-30	
Performance measure	**Supporting the safe and secure long-term management and disposal of radioactive waste and spent fuel arising from the nuclear-powered submarine program** Note, not for publishing: The 2024–25 performance measure was *17. Supporting radioactive waste disposal policy for Nuclear-Powered Submarines through Australian Radioactive Waste Agency advice*
Type of measure	**Output**
Target 2026-27 to 2029-2030	**On-time delivery of agreed program milestones** Note, not for publishing: The 2024–25 target was *Evidence-based advice provided on or before agreed timeframes*.
Why this matters	Conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines will be acquired by the government as part of the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine pathway announced on 14 March 2023. As a responsible nuclear steward, Australia will be responsible for the management, storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste generated from its conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines. Defueling and decommissioning of Australia's nuclear-powered submarines is not expected to occur for decades. The complexity of the task means that early planning will be important to meet sovereign readiness milestones. No sites have yet been identified to dispose of radioactive waste as a result of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program. The department, through the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency, will support work for future government decision making on end-of-life radioactive waste and spent fuel from the nuclear-powered submarine program.
Data sources	Reporting against program milestones and deliverables agreed with the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA).
Methodology	Periodic status reporting on program milestones and deliverables agreed with the Australian Submarine Agency. Records of inter-departmental communications noting delivery and acceptance of program milestones or agreed variations to them. This measure is met when all milestones due in the reporting period are delivered on time.
Regulator performance	Not applicable
Departmental purpose	Building a better future for all Australians by enabling a productive, resilient and sustainable economy, enriched by science and technology.
Departmental key activity	1.3 Supporting a strong resources sector
PBS program alignment	1.4 Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program
Internal detail	
s 22(1)(a)(ii)	
Responsible Head of Division	Sam Usher Australian Radioactive Waste Agency

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

	If applicable – **Assistant Manager (EL1):** s 22(1)(a)(ii) , Assistant Manager, Strategic Governance
Contributing areas	N/A
Performance measure rationale	ARWA's role is to: • develop and maintain the national radioactive waste inventory • develop strategies for the lifecycle management of radioactive waste from generation through to disposal and implement agreed plans for managing, storing, and disposing of radioactive waste • provide advice to Government and waste holders. Since 2022 ARWA has provided expert advice to the Department of Defence and the ASA to support delivery of the nuclear-powered submarines budget. The department was funded for this work under Program 1.4 in 2023–24 and 2024–25. Funding under this program has re-commenced for 2026–27 and 2027–28.
Type of measure	**Output**
Is this measure a proxy?	**No**
Base	**Qualitative and Quantitative**
Is this measure related to a regulatory function?	**No**
Previous year target	2025-26: N/A – new measure
Forward year targets *These are indicative and may change over time*	2027-28: On time delivery of agreed program milestones 2028-29: N/A, time limited measure 2029-30: N/A, time limited measure
Target rationale	Program milestones are agreed between the department and the ASA. On time delivery of agreed milestones supports Defence and the ASA to deliver the nuclear-powered submarines program.
Basis for assessment of performance over time	Delivery of agreed program deliverables and milestones tied to the funding allocated for 2026–27 and 2027–28
Relevant programs and initiatives	Linked program – Department of Defence - Program 2.16 Nuclear-Powered Submarines (refer p30 DISR 2026-27 PBS)
Relevant internal performance arrangements and/or program logics	Refer IAEA DGR roadmap: • L1 - FINAL Introduction to the Roadmap and the Initiation Phase - Karina (1).pptx • https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/p15403-PUB2088_web.pdf
Enabling legislation and policy	AUKUS agreement No applicable enabling legislation
Additional contextual information	**Radioactive waste management** Australia has an obligation to responsibly manage its own radioactive waste, the majority of which results from the production of nuclear medicine. Radioactive waste can take thousands of years to decay. A range of complex issues need to be analysed to help decide the future disposal pathways. The government is committed to ensuring the management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel has minimal impact on the general public, local communities and the environment. All radioactive waste will be managed in line with international best practice and in accordance with Australia's international and domestic legal obligations and commitments, including the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Treaty of Rarotonga* (South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty). **Nuclear-Powered Submarines Program**

	In 2023–24 ARWA provided advice to Defence for their Defence Estate Review to inform the decision-making process to identify locations in the current or future Defence estate that could be suitable to store and dispose of intermediate-level waste and high-level waste, including spent nuclear fuel from Australia's nuclear-powered submarines.

s 47E(d)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESOURCES

GR26-000009

To: Minister for Resources (For Decision)

CC: Assistant Minister Chisolm

INQUIRY INTO NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (SITE SPECIFICATION, COMMUNITY FUND AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2020

Timing: Routine

Recommendations: That you

1. **Approve** the tabling of the Government Response to the Economics Legislation Committee report: National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment (Site Specification Community Fund and Other Measures) Bill 2020 [Provisions].

Approved / Not approved

2. **Sign** the letter to the Chair of the Economic Legislation Committee advising that the Response will be tabled (see Attachment A).

Signed / Not signed

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Minister: Date: 9.9.26

Comments:

Clearing Officer:	Sam Usher	CEO Australian Radioactive Waste Agency	Ph: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Mob
Contact Officer: s 22(1)(a)(ii)			
For Parliamentary Services' use only. Date Submitted to the Minister's office in PDMS:			21/8/2026

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ATTACHMENTS:

A: Draft Letter to the Chair of the Economics Legislation Committee

B: Proposed Government Response

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Australian Government

Australian Government response to the Economics Legislation Committee report:

National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment (Site Specification Community Fund and Other Measures) Bill 2020 [Provisions]

XX 2026

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The Government notes the recommendations. Given the passage of time since this report was tabled, the Government provides the following update:

- On 22 June 2021, the National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment (Site Specification, Community Fund and Other Measures) Bill 2020 was passed.
- On 18 July 2023, the Federal Court set aside the former Minister's declaration of Napandee as the proposed site for the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility (the Facility) on the grounds of apprehended bias.
- On 10 August 2023, the Minister for Resources stated that the Government did not intend to appeal the Federal Court's decision, nor pursue Napandee or the previously shortlisted Lyndhurst and Wallerberdina sites as a potential site for the Facility.
- On 28 August 2025, the land of the former site at Napandee sold at auction.
- The Government remains firmly committed to the safe management and disposal of Commonwealth radioactive waste.
- Work is being undertaken to assess options for the management and disposal of the Commonwealth's low-level and intermediate-level waste.
- A process and timeframes for establishing radioactive waste disposal pathways and associated siting will be determined once the Government has considered options and made decisions in due course.

2026-27 Budget Estimates Hearing

Supplementary Information Index

DIVISION: Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA)	
Topic: Radioactive waste management	
Reference	**Subject**
1	ARWA Senate Estimates Placemat
2.	Radioactive Waste Management • *Request for Information (RFI)*
3.	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
4.	ARWA's Work with Defence
5.	ARWA Engagement with States and Territories and the Private Sector
6.	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
7.	Radioactive Waste Inventory • *Talking Points* • *Differences in figures* • *Main reason for change* • *Key waste holder insights*
8.	ARWA Resourcing • *2026-27 Budget measure – ARWA additional resources* • *2023-24 Budget measures* • *Prior funding carried forward* • *QoN SQ25-000300 response – ARWA Funding – Administered and Departmental (tabled 01/12/2025)* • *Staffing*
8.1.	ARWA Tenders and Contracts (Active and New Contracts) • *Active contracts (as at 31/03/2026)* • *Expired contracts*
8.2	Radioactive Waste Management Data Summary
9.	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
10.	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
11.	ARWA Questions on Notice (QoNs)
12.	s 22(1)(a)(ii)

*Additional items for Sam's pack (Secretary and Deputy Secretary will be provided with information for these topics by their offices) – these items haven't been uploaded to the PDMS Supplementary Information Pack at EC26-000568

ARWA Senate Estimates Placemat

Topic		Key Points
Progress on disposal pathways	Timing of government decision and length of time this is taking	• Disposal of radioactive waste requires long-lasting, multigenerational government policy and it is complex work. It is important for government to get this right. • While decision points are subject to government processes, ARWA is undertaking a range of important work, including progressing disposal pathways for low, intermediate and high level wastes, preparing for the next update to the National inventory, updating the Australian National Radioactive Waste Management Framework, a geological disposal concepts evaluation framework, a national social licence strategy, developing high level siting process concepts (subject to government decision points), implementing a Workforce Strategy for specialist capability and supporting Commonwealth waste holders and the Defence NPS program. • ARWA released a request for information (RFI) in October 2025 to gather information from the market to better understand the capabilities that exist and any constraints and opportunities relating to Australia's near-surface disposal, and associated services. The RFI closed in February 2026, and the information gathered will be used to inform future government decision making about radioactive waste disposal. • ARWA published the updated Australian National Inventory of Radioactive Waste in October 2025. Based on 2024 data, the inventory provides an estimate of Australia's current radioactive waste requiring disposal and how much waste Australia will produce in the foreseeable future. In line with its international obligations, the inventory supports planning for future waste disposal solutions and developing strategies for the safe and secure, long-term management and disposal of radioactive waste. This understanding is recognised internationally as being central to managing radioactive waste safely and securely.
Engagement with Tellus	Ability to take Commonwealth (including Defence) radioactive waste, reasons for separate options assessment process, whether Commonwealth waste can go to a private facility/whether Tellus considered in options assessment, s 22(1)(a)(ii) , government interactions with Tellus, 7.30 Report	• Tellus holds a licence to dispose of certain types of low-level radioactive waste (LLW) at their Sandy Ridge facility in Western Australia. The facility has reportedly accepted LLW from various sectors but not from the Commonwealth. s 22(1)(a)(ii) • Whether a facility can accept specific types of radioactive waste depends on a jurisdiction's legislative and regulatory framework in addition to the facility's waste acceptance criteria and possession of relevant permits and approvals. • ARWA representatives have engaged with Tellus, including visiting their Sandy Ridge facility. It is important to understand radioactive waste management capabilities in Australia. • 7.30 Report Aug 2024 – Minister indicated private enterprise could be part of Commonwealth disposal solution, but "a decision is not imminent".
Defence	Support for the NPS Program, Storage of radioactive waste at HMAS Stirling, Defence waste review, advice ARWA is providing, Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator	• In the 2026-27 Budget, the Australian Government announced $11.9 million over the next two years for ARWA to work with the ASA to develop DGD concepts for the NPS Program's end-of-life intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel (Brief 4). s 22(1)(a)(ii) • ARWA supported the Defence Waste Review ARWA provides broad advice and support to Defence and ASA in its development of radioactive waste management, storage, and disposal arrangements through the NPS Program (QoN responses to BI-64 (2024) and AI-146 (2024)). (ARWA Funding $5.2 million over 2 years, completed June 2025). Detailed questions are a matter for Defence. • s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ANSTO Waste Volumes	Dates will reach capacity. What government is doing about it	• ANSTO advises that radioactive waste storage capacity at the Lucas Heights campus, with intervention, could be maintained into the 2040s. Any other questions are a matter for ANSTO.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Headline Statement

- The Australian Government is committed to the safe and secure management of Australia's radioactive waste.

Key Points

- Australia's radioactive waste is currently safely managed in temporary storage arrangements.
- Establishing permanent disposal pathways is important to ensure safe and secure management of this waste for generations to come.

2026-27 Budget Measure – ARWA Additional Resources

- In the 2026-27 Budget, the Australian Government announced $11.9 million over the next two years for the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) to work with the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) to develop deep-geological disposal (DGD) concepts for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program's end-of-life intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel.
- The measure will expand ARWA's concurrent DGD program's scope to include intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste generated by the NPS Program, which has specific technical, legislative, regulatory and social licence requirements. These specific NPS requirements are being developed.
- A unified approach presents the most efficient and effective use of Commonwealth time and resources.

Australia's Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program

- The Government is clear that Australia will manage all radioactive waste generated by its conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine (NPS) program.
- Any questions about Australia's acquisition of NPS and submarine waste management should be directed to ASA.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Progress on Radioactive Waste Storage and Disposal Pathways

- Radioactive waste can take thousands of years to decay, requiring long lasting, multigenerational government policy.
- ARWA is assessing options for the storage and disposal of the Commonwealth's civilian low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste, as well as future intermediate and high-level waste generated from the nuclear-powered submarine program.
- The Government is progressing disposal pathways for radioactive waste suitable for near-surface disposal (NSD) as a high-priority in the near-term, whilst progressing work for later decisions on waste suitable for deep-geological disposal (DGD).
- A process and timeframes for establishing radioactive waste disposal pathways and associated siting will be determined once the Government has considered options and made decisions in due course.

Department of Industry, Science and Resource's Request for Information ('RFI')

- ARWA has been working through a detailed information gathering process to inform Australia's future radioactive waste disposal solutions and pathways.
- In October 2025, ARWA commenced an RFI process on AusTender to gather information from the market to better understand feasibility options for the management and disposal of all radioactive waste in Australia suitable for near-surface disposal.

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  - The RFI closed on 16 February 2026.

- The RFI scope included all radioactive waste suitable for NSD that may be held or generated by any waste owner, including Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA).
- The RFI enabled ARWA to gather information from the market to better understand the capabilities that exist and any constraints and opportunities relating to Australia's NSD, and associated services.
- There may be present or prospective capabilities which warrant investigation for the disposal of some of Australia's waste inventory.
- The RFI is not a procurement or a or siting process. It is a process to inform the Government's assessment of market capabilities, capacities and constraints, as well as options more broadly.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ARWA'S WORK WITH DEFENCE

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

2026-27 Budget Measure – ARWA Additional Resources

- In the 2026-27 Budget, the Australian Government announced $11.9 million over the next two years for the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) to work with the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) to develop deep-geological disposal (DGD) concepts for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program's end-of-life intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel.
- The measure will expand ARWA's concurrent DGD program's scope to include intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste generated by the NPS Program, which has specific technical, legislative, regulatory and social licence requirements. These specific NPS requirements are being developed.
- A unified approach presents the most efficient and effective use of Commonwealth time and resources.

Defence Radioactive Waste Review (the Review)

- In 2023, the ASA and Defence conducted the Review to inform the site selection process to identify locations in the current or future Defence estate suitable for the storage and disposal of intermediate and high-level radioactive waste, including spent fuel, from Australia's conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines (NPS).
- ARWA supported the Review, working with relevant nuclear agencies.
- All detailed questions on the Review should be directed to the ASA.

Management of radioactive waste associated with Australia's Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program

- As a responsible nuclear steward, Australia will manage, store and dispose of all radioactive waste from its conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine program, including spent nuclear fuel.
- No decision has been made on a location within Australia for the disposal of radioactive waste from the NPS Program.
    - Intermediate-level waste (ILW) and spent nuclear fuel will be stored and disposed of on the current or future Defence estate.

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  - Low-level radioactive waste (LLW) will be stored at Defence facilities until the disposal pathway is developed.

- Questions about the NPS Program, including temporary storage of radioactive waste and licence application(s), should be directed to the ASA (documents have been published on the ASA website).
- Questions about the licencing process and decision should be directed to ARPANSA and/or the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR) as relevant.

The Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR)

- ANNPSR was established in the Defence portfolio on 1 November 2025 under the ANNPS Act as Australia's independent regulator for naval nuclear propulsion. The Act also*:*
  - establishes requirements for public consultation around the designation of future areas where AUKUS activities may occur, including the management of radioactive waste; and,
  - makes clear that it does not authorise the storage or disposal of spent nuclear fuel from other countries, including the US or UK.
- On ANNPSR's establishment, licences issued by ARPANSA in relation to the NPS program were transitioned to ANNPSR.
- Questions about the nuclear safety legislation should be directed to the Department of Defence.
- Questions about the nuclear safety regulations should be directed to ANNPSR.

ARWA ENGAGEMENT WITH STATES AND TERRITORIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

- Following the decision not to progress Kimba, ARWA is considering alternative options for the storage and disposal of the Commonwealth's civilian low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste.
- This is framed around an overarching objective to manage radioactive waste through permanent disposal facilities that ensure long-term safety, security, sustainability and protection of people and the environment, as soon as reasonably practicable.
- In August 2024, the Minister publicly stated (ABC *7.30*) that private enterprise could form part of the Commonwealth's permanent disposal solution, noting that appropriate processes must be followed and that no decision is imminent.

States and Territories

- State and territory governments manage a number of facilities across Australia for the interim storage of radioactive waste.
- In addition, two near-surface disposal facilities are located in Western Australia:
  - Mt Walton East Intractable Waste Disposal Facility (IWDF), which has not undertaken radiological waste disposal operations since 2011
  - Tellus Sandy Ridge Facility.
- In 2025, ARWA held a series of workshops and meetings with state and territory regulators, state government agencies (including waste holders), and other industry waste holders to discuss ARWA's mission, the national inventory update, and challenges in progressing waste to disposal.
- While individual waste holders remain responsible for managing and disposing of their waste, further work is underway to identify constraints and assess legally and technically viable disposal options.

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Commercial/ Private Sector

- Any engagement with the private sector will be undertaken equitably, with due regard to probity and Commonwealth procurement processes.

Request for Information (RFI)

- In October 2025, ARWA released an RFI on AusTender to seek information from the market to better understand existing and potential capabilities, and constraints, relating to the near-surface disposal of Australia's radioactive waste and associated services.
- ARWA sought responses from domestic and international organisations, including Australian federal agencies and state and territory governments.
- This includes organisations with knowledge and relevant experience on:
  - waste characterisation
  - waste treatment, packaging or transport
  - waste storage or disposal, including new and emerging techniques
  - earning or maintaining social licence and community consent including with First Nations groups; and
  - meeting or maintaining safety, security and environmental protection, including regulatory needs.
- We wanted to better understand:
  - technical capability and capacity in the market
  - stakeholder engagement approaches; and
  - compliance with safety, security and environmental regulations.
- This RFI was an information-gathering exercise only and does not constitute a procurement, evaluation or pre-qualification process. Information gathered may inform future procurement activity, however, participation in the RFI will not confer any advantage in any future procurement process.
- The RFI closed in February 2026, with information gathered to inform future government decisions on radioactive waste disposal.

Tellus

- In 2023, Tellus Holdings Ltd (Tellus) received a licence from the Radiological Council of Western Australia to dispose of specific types of low-level radioactive waste at their Sandy Ridge hazardous waste

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disposal facility in WA. The Sandy Ridge facility is currently the only privately-owned and operated near-surface facility in Australia.

- The facility authorisation permits the acceptance of specified types of low-level radioactive waste generated in Australia.
- The facility has reportedly accepted low-level waste from medical, mining, research and other industrial activities in the past year; however, no Commonwealth radioactive waste has been accepted for disposal.
- ARWA representatives have met with Tellus on several occasions, including a site visit to the Sandy Ridge facility in January 2023.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Challenges

State Prohibitions

- Many of Australia's States and Territories have enacted a "Prohibition" Act to prevent the establishment of nuclear waste storage facilities in that state or territory. These include *the Nuclear Waste Storage (Prohibition) Act 1999* (WA), *Nuclear Waste Storage Facility (Prohibition) Act 2000* (SA), *Nuclear Facilities Prohibition Act 2007* (Qld), *Nuclear Waste Transport, Storage and Disposal (Prohibition) Act 2004* (NT) and

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the *Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act 1983* (Vic).For example, the *Nuclear Waste Storage and Transportation (Prohibition) Act 1999* (WA) prohibits the storage, disposal or transportation in Western Australia of radioactive waste from a nuclear plant, or from the testing, use or decommissioning of nuclear weapons.

- Assessing how this legislation applies to the various waste types within the Commonwealth inventory is complex and may affect the feasibility of disposing of some Commonwealth waste at a WA facility.
- The *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012* (NRWM Act) provides a framework for the selection, establishment and operation of a facility for the safe and secure management of radioactive waste generated, possessed or controlled by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth entity.
- The NRWM Act includes override provisions, under which state or territory laws have no effect to the extent they would regulate, hinder or prevent specified Commonwealth activities, including site characterisation and other works required to establish the facility.
- The NRWM Act applies specifically to the establishment of a facility at a site acquired by the Commonwealth.

<u>Regulatory</u>

- The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) regulates the storage, transport and disposal of Commonwealth radioactive waste and would be required to conduct its own assessment before authorising disposal of Commonwealth waste at a private facility. In doing so, ARPANSA must be satisfied that the facility ensures the safety and security of radioactive materials and protects people and the environment from harmful effects of radiation.
- Given the long-term hazards posed by radioactive waste – ranging from hundreds of years for near-surface disposal to thousands of years for deep geological disposal – the Commonwealth, through ARPANSA, would need assurance of robust long-term liability and indemnity arrangements for any disposal facility, including where a private facility may accept Commonwealth waste.

<u>Social Licence</u>

- Obtaining and maintaining social licence is a key consideration in assessing all potential radioactive waste disposal pathways, including with state and territory governments and their respective communities and Traditional Owners.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE INVENTORY

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

- ARWA will commence the next national inventory exercise in 2027, using updated data provided directly by waste holders.

Waste Storage Capacity for Commonwealth Waste Holders

- ANSTO estimates radioactive waste storage capacity at Lucas Heights can be maintained into the 2040s, assuming current generation rates and volume reduction measures. ANSTO is pursuing a range of actions to extend capacity, including disposal of exempt waste, compacting low-level radioactive waste (LLW), and increasing storage capacity.
- CSIRO is undertaking a program of waste characterisation and storage consolidation. CSIRO has advised that its current storage arrangements are sufficient to manage legacy, existing and forecast future waste.
- Joint Logistic Command (JLC) manages a diverse range of radioactive wastes arising from historical and ongoing Defence activities. ARWA is working with JLC to assess potential future storage constraints.
- ARWA is working with waste holders to optimise storage capacity and support strategies while permanent disposal pathways are progressed.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Will future inventories include more information about submarine waste, including spent nuclear fuel?

- Planning for the safe and secure storage and disposal of waste arising from the AUKUS Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) program is led by the ASA within Defence.
- ASA is undertaking work to quantify projected waste streams, which are not expected to represent a significant proportion of the national radioactive waste inventory.
- ARWA continues to provide technical expertise to ASA and Defence to support safe, secure waste management and disposal in line with Australia's domestic regulations and international obligations.

If the waste is being managed well where it is, why do we need a disposal facility at all?

- Storage is a temporary measure which is occurring at various locations around Australia. While this is safe, it is not the permanent solution.
- The inventory provides the insights required to inform the important work of disposal and helps guide potential design options for disposal facilities so that they can meet current and projected needs for anticipated waste.

- In line with international good practice and obligations, Australia requires safe, secure and long-term storage and disposal pathways for both existing and future radioactive wastes.

Why are we allowing the accumulation of this waste without a clear plan in place for disposal? Is that responsible practice?

- Radioactive waste storage and disposal are managed under strict national regulations and international standards. Any facility storing Commonwealth waste must be licensed by ARPANSA, which only issues licences when safe lifecycle management and contingency plans are demonstrated, including capacity for secure interim storage until permanent disposal is available.
- The Government is committed to identifying final disposal pathways, and the inventory is a key tool for informing that planning process.

When will we know what is happening with the waste disposal pathways? How different or similar will this be to the previously proposed NRWMF?

- No siting processes are underway, and no decisions have been made on waste disposal pathways.
- ARWA's work, however, including the new 2024 inventory, will contribute to the development of options on disposal pathways that ensure Australians, and our environment continue to be safe, and are in line with international best practice.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ARWA RESOURCING

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ARWA Funding

2026-27 Budget Measure – ARWA Additional Resources

- In the 2026-27 Budget, the Australian Government announced $11.9 million over the next two years for the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) to work with the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) to develop deep-geological disposal (DGD) concepts for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program's end-of-life intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel.
- The measure will expand ARWA's concurrent DGD program's scope to include intermediate- and high-level radioactive waste generated by the NPS Program, which has specific technical, legislative, regulatory and social licence requirements. These specific NPS requirements are being developed.
- A unified approach presents the most efficient and effective use of Commonwealth time and resources.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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- Following the Minister for Resources' statement to Parliament on 10 August 2023 that the Australian Government would no longer pursue the Napandee site for the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility, staff have progressed a program of work focused on:
  - developing pathways for disposal of low, intermediate and high level waste
  - developing a generic reference case for inventory
  - a framework for evaluation of geological disposal concepts
  - a national strategy to build and maintain social licence for radioactive waste management activities
  - design of a high-level siting process, adaptive to government decision making
  - implementing the Technical Workforce Strategy to attract and retain niche and scarce skillsets
  - supporting Commonwealth waste holders
  - supporting the Department of Defence's consideration of radioactive waste management in relation to the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program; and
  - updating the National Radioactive Waste inventory
  - updating the National Radioactive Waste Management Framework.

ARWA TENDERS AND CONTRACTS (ACTIVE AND NEW CONTRACTS)

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Market Tenders/ Quotes as at 31 March 2026

- Develop Model to calculate GDF disposal variables ATM_2026_3124 – Request for Quote is out to Market, closed 09/04/2026, under evaluation

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Radioactive Waste Management Data Summary

2029-27 – DISR – ARWA Administered Funding (page 40 and 41)
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Where will Australia store and dispose of radioactive waste? (from Defence Nuclear Stewardship Fact Sheet)
No decision has been made on a location within Australia for the disposal of radioactive waste from nuclear-powered submarines. Further technical work and consultation is required to determine preferred disposal pathways. Operational radioactive waste will be stored on Defence sites in Australia.

ANSTO Storage Capacity at Lucas Heights
ANSTO has advised that radioactive waste storage capacity at the Lucas Heights campus, with intervention, could be maintained into the 2040s.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ARWA Support for Nuclear Powered Submarine Program
In the 2023-24 Budget ARWA received $5.2 million (Administered and Departmental) over 2 years to support the Australian Nuclear Submarine program.

In 2025-26 Budget ARWA will receive $11.9m (Administered only) over 2 years to progress a deep-geological disposal solution for higher activity radioactive waste for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Cleared by: Sam Usher, Chief Executive Officer, ARWA: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Current as at: 14 May 2026

RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Lead: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Date	Parliament QoN Ref.	PDMS Ref. Nos. & Links	Topic & Links to Questions & Responses	Senator/MP
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23/02/2026 Tabled 10/04/2026	AI-60	SQ26-000064	RFI on managing low-level radioactive waste	Senator David Shoebridge
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01/12/2025 Tabled 21/01/2026	351	PQ25-000046	Napandee Valuations	Senator Jacqui Lambie
21/10/2025 Tabled 28/11/2025	291	PQ25-000021	Napandee land acquisition	Senator Jacqui Lambie
20/10/2025 Tabled 28/11/2025	289	PQ25-000020	Napandee site near Kimba	Senator Jacqui Lambie
10/10/2025 Tabled 01/12/2025	SI-166	SQ25-000300	ARWA Budget	Senator Susan McDonald
10/10/2025 Tabled 28/11/2025	SI-165	SQ25-000299	ARWA Contracts	Senator Susan McDonald
27/02/2025 Tabled 01/07/2025	AI-13	SQ25-000012	ARWA New Employees	Senator Susan McDonald
27/02/2025 Tabled 19/06/2025	AI-10	SQ25-000011	ARWA Contracts	Senator Susan McDonald
19/11/2024	SI-184	SQ24-000582	Radioactive Waste Management	Senator Lidia Thorpe

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Cleared by: Sam Usher, Chief Executive Officer, ARWA: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Current as at: 16 April 2026

Date	Parliament QoN Ref.	PDMS Ref. Nos. & Links	Topic & Links to Questions & Responses	Senator/MP
Tabled 16/12/2024				
15/11/2024 Tabled 16/12/2024	SI-100	SQ24-000497	Social Licence for building a NRWMF	Senator Barbara Pocock
15/11/2024 Tabled 16/12/2024	SI-14	SQ24-000411	National Radioactive Waste Management Facility	Senator Barbara Pocock
24/10/2024 Tabled 29/01/2025	7	IQ25-000001	Inquiry into nuclear power generation in Australia – Australian International Nuclear Obligations	Mr Ted O'Brien MP
24/10/2024 Tabled 18/11/2024	1	IQ24-000024	Inquiry into nuclear power generation in Australia – International Nuclear Disposal Facility Timeframes	Mr Dan Repacholi MP (Chair)
04/09/2024 Tabled 30/09/2024	3569	PQ24-000036	Costs incurred in legal proceedings	Senator Barbara Pocock
26/06/2024 Tabled 03/09/2024	648	PQ24-000021	Long-term management of Australia's radioactive waste	Mr Garth Hamilton MP
26/06/2024 Tabled 21/08/2024	647	PQ24-000020	ARWA's management of Australia's radioactive waste	Mr Garth Hamilton MP
26/07/2024 Tabled 26/07/2024	BI-64	SQ24-000230	ARWA advice to ASA	Senator Susan McDonald
26/02/2024 Tabled 05/04/2024	AI-148	SQ24-000149	National Radioactive Waste Management Facility	Senator Barbara Pocock
26/02/2024 Tabled 05/04/2024	AI-147	SQ24-000148	IAEA Review	Senator Barbara Pocock
26/02/2024 Tabled 02/05/2025	AI-146	SQ24-000147	AUKUS waste management	Senator Barbara Pocock
15/02/2024 Tabled 11/04/2024	AI-76	SQ24-000077	ARWA staff	Senator Susan McDonald
15/02/2024 Tabled 05/04/2024	AI-55	SQ24-000056	Costs to develop the National Radioactive Waste Facility (also see Question No. 3569	Senator Susan McDonald

Date	Parliament QoN Ref.	PDMS Ref. Nos. & Links	Topic & Links to Questions & Responses	Senator/MP
			above which refers to this response)	
15/02/2024 Tabled 22/04/2024	AI-54	SQ24-000055	Advisor notes on briefing	Senator Susan McDonald
15/02/2024 Tabled 11/04/2024	AI-53	SQ24-000054	Suggestions on draft legislation	Senator Matthew Canavan
15/02/2024 Tabled 06/05/2024	AI-52	SQ24-000053	Kimba decision – other briefing notes	Senator Susan McDonald
15/02/2024 Tabled 06/05/2024	AI-51	SQ24-000052	Kimba decision	Senator Susan McDonald
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21/02/2024 Tabled 02/05/2024	AI-15	SQ24-000016	Changes to interdepartmental committees	Senator Susan McDonald
03/11/2023 Tabled 09/01/2024	SI-84	SQ23-000393	UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics mission	Senator Barbara Pocock
03/11/2023 Tabled 09/01/2024	SI-83	SQ23-000392	ARWA enabling legislation	Senator Barbara Pocock
26/10/2023 Tabled 15/12/2023	SI-11	SQ23-000320	Letter of support from Senator McDonald	Senator Susan McDonald
26/10/2023 Tabled 05/02/2024	SI-10	SQ23-000319	Legal advice regarding court decision	Senator Susan McDonald
26/10/2023 Tabled 05/02/2024	SI-09	SQ23-000318	National Radioactive Waste Management Facility	Senator Susan McDonald
12/09/2023 Tabled 14/11/2023	359	PQ23-000070	Radioactive Waste Facility	Senator Rowan Ramsey
11/08/2023 Tabled 08/09/2023	2341	PQ23-000059	NRWMF Project	Senator Gerard Rennick

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Date	Parliament QoN Ref.	PDMS Ref. Nos. & Links	Topic & Links to Questions & Responses	Senator/MP
16/06/2023 Tabled 21/07/2025	BI-76	SQ23-000219	Alternative plans for the disposal of waste	Senator Barbara Pocock
01/06/2023 Tabled 02/08/2023	BI-68	SQ23-000208	ARTEMIS visit from IAEA	Senator Barbara Pocock
01/06/2023 Tabled 21/07/2023	BI-67	SQ23-000207	Proposal at Kimba	Senator Barbara Pocock
01/06/2023 Tabled 14/07/2023	BI-65	SQ23-000205	Napandee	Senator David Shoebridge
01/06/2023 Tabled 14/07/2023	BI-64	SQ23-000204	ARWA Vacancies	Senator Susan McDonald
01/06/2023 Tabled 02/08/2023	BI-63	SQ23-000203	ARWA interactions with PwC	Senator Barbara Pocock
01/06/2023 Tabled 14/07/2023	BI-62	SQ23-000202	ARWA Staffing Numbers	Senator Susan McDonald
31/05/2023 Tabled 31/07/2023	150	PQ23-000036	Legal expenses related to the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility	Senator Rowan Ramsay
31/05/2025 Tabled 13/07/2023	2163	PQ23-000035	Compensation paid for the Napandee property	Senator Barbara Pocock
19/05/2023	2150 & 2151	PQ23-000031	Entire legal spend on work on the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility	Senator Barbara Pocock

Question No. AI-62, 23 February 2026 – Senator David Shoebridge – ARWA's Engagement with Organisations – Response tabled in Parliament 10 April 2026

What has been the nature of ARWA's contact and engagement with:

1. ASA in relation to waste management and licensing at both HMAS Stirling and Osborne Shipyard
2. Tellus Resources in relation to operations at Sandy Ridge (WA) and ambitions at Chandler (NT)
3. The new dedicated Naval Nuclear Regulator?
4. ANSTO in relation to the decommissioning of the former HIFAR reactor

ANSWER

1. ARWA has provided expert technical input into work delivered by ASA regarding the generic waste acceptance criteria for the HMAS Stirling Controlled Industrial Facility.

2. Representatives from ARWA have met with representatives from Tellus on several occasions, including visiting their Sandy Ridge Facility (WA) in January 2023.

3. ARWA engages with the new dedicated naval nuclear regulator, ANNPSR, in relation to the sharing of experience and radioactive waste management.

4. ARWA regularly interacts with ANSTO in relation to decommissioning, but not with regards to the HIFAR reactor.

Question No. AI-61, 23 February 2026 - Senator David Shoebridge – University of Newcastle Study - Response tabled in Parliament 10 April 2026

ARWA engaged the Uni of Newcastle in a study to define contemporary understandings of what constitutes 'community' in relation to radioactive waste management.

1. What are the principal findings – has the understanding of community evolved over time?
2. What consideration was given to the view of First Nation communities in this project?
3. What advice or assumptions around consent – especially Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) underpinned this process?
4. What is the status of this work? Is it public -and if not, when will it be or why won't it be?

ANSWER

The study is internal, preparatory research to inform future work. The Department has been advised that key concepts included in the report will be published through the University of Newcastle's Open Research Collection in due course.

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Question No. AI-60, 23 February 2026 – Senator David Shoebridge – RFI on Managing Low-Level Radioactive Waste - Response tabled in Parliament 10 April 2026

ARWA have released a request to the market for information (RFI) on managing low-level radioactive waste: https://www.industry.gov.au/news/radioactive-waste-management-market-scan-request-information.

1. Will ARWA publish a summary of companies and entities that responded to this initiative?
2. What public visibility will there be of this process – can you provide detail on the planned public consultation aspect of the RFI?

ANSWER

The RFI responses will inform advice to government on market capabilities, capacity and constraints in radioactive waste management for wastes suitable for near-surface disposal.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47C, s 47E(d)

s 47C

s 47C, s 47E(d)

s 47C, s 47E(d)

s 47C, s 47E(d)

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