

Statement of Intent

Director-General

Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator

April 2026

1. Introduction

This Statement of Intent responds to the Statement of Expectations issued by the Minister for Defence. As the Accountable Authority of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR), I set out below how I will meet the expectations you have outlined and ANNPSR's approach to fulfilling its statutory obligations and strategic aims. ANNPSR recognises the critical importance of nuclear safety in protecting Australia's people, environment, and national interests, particularly as the nation advances its capability in conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs). This document sets forth our commitment to regulatory excellence, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that our activities align with the priorities articulated by the Minister and the National Defence Strategy.

2. Purpose, strategic direction and delivery of objectives

The ANNPSR's mission is to protect the environment and people by providing assurance of nuclear safety of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine (NPS) enterprise, while supporting Australia's defence interests and the AUKUS partnership. Our vision is to be a trusted, independent regulator for Australia's SSNs delivering assurance to Parliament, the public, and stakeholders. We will uphold the objects of the *Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024* (ANNPS Act), and competently carry out the regulatory functions, which include licensing, monitoring, and enforcement of regulated naval nuclear power activities.

ANNPSR undertakes its legislative mandate with diligence, also upholding the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, the *Public Service Act 1999*, and other relevant laws. We apply rigorous standards to licensing, monitoring, and enforcement functions, cognisant of best practice while pursuing continuous improvement. Our regulatory approach is anchored in transparency, accountability, and independence, enabling us to assure the public and Parliament that all activities associated with naval nuclear power are conducted with the paramount consideration of nuclear safety.

3. Risk-based regulation and enforcement

ANNPSR applies a graded regulatory approach, employing both prescriptive and outcomes-based regulation, to achieve nuclear safety outcomes. Our graded regulatory approach ensures that requirements are proportionate to nuclear and radiological risk. ANNPSR employs an evidence-based and data driven approach to policy and future regulation development. This approach also underpins our assurance of nuclear safety management systems and nuclear safety incident

reporting, which is inclusive of near misses. Our assessment and oversight intensity is adjusted based on complexity, scale, and hazard profile, ensuring resources are directed where they have the greatest safety impact. In doing so, the approach will contribute to the optimisation of resources and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory control.

As a responsive regulator, we will tailor our enforcement approach to the specific context, behaviour, and willingness of a regulated entity to proactively comply with the legislated framework. ANNPSR aims to predominantly encourage and assist the regulated community with compliance. However, we will not hesitate in directing compliance (such as through improvement notices) or pursue sanctions (including penalties and civil prosecution) if required, to minimise harm and enhance nuclear safety outcomes. This approach enables us to mitigate risks effectively while promoting operational efficiency and innovation. We leverage an integrated management system to streamline processes and reduce unnecessary duplication. By engaging with regulated entities early, we identify and address emerging risks, ensuring regulatory interventions are tailored, timely, and evidence-based.

4. Collaboration and reducing burden

ANNPSR collaborates closely with other Commonwealth and state regulators, as well as international counterparts, to minimise regulatory and administrative burden. Notably this includes regular engagements with co-regulators in the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA); the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office; the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; and the Defence Seaworthiness regulatory authorities. Where appropriate, we support harmonisation of national radiological, nuclear and environmental requirements, and will leverage our AUKUS partner regulator's experience. Joint initiatives, such as cross-agency engagement forums, foster consistency and efficiency. We are committed to high regulatory standards and clearly communicating compliance requirements to regulated entities operating in a complex environment, thereby reducing regulatory burden across the NPS enterprise.

5. Engagement

Engagement with regulated entities, other Commonwealth and state regulators, and stakeholders is central to our approach. We facilitate regular forums and consultations to gather feedback and foster collaboration. Our communication channels are designed to be accessible and responsive, ensuring the regulated community are informed and empowered to meet regulatory requirements. We also maintain open dialogue with community groups and the public, promoting understanding and trust in the safety of naval nuclear power activities.

ANNPSR actively engages with international regulatory bodies, notably our AUKUS peer regulators in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. We benchmark our standards and practices against global norms, such as those set by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and participate in knowledge-sharing and staff development initiatives. We ensure that Australian naval nuclear power safety aligns with best practice and that our personnel are equipped and competent to fulfil our current regulatory obligations.

These engagements will strengthen Australia's reputation as a responsible steward of naval nuclear power technology and fosters continuous improvement in our regulatory framework.

6. Alignment with regulatory policy framework

Our operations are aligned with the government's Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework. ANNPSR embeds these principles in policy development, licensing, oversight and enforcement, decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. For example, our inspection

program is targeted and risk-based, aligned with current and emerging activity hazards, and underpinned by a continuous improvement mindset within our intentional safety culture. We will regularly review our practices to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose and are responsive to changing risks and expectations. This alignment supports our accountability to yourself, Parliament, and the broader community.

7. Delivery of Minister's expectations

To deliver on your expectations, ANNPSR is implementing sound agency governance structures, robust risk management systems, and targeted staff development programs. We foster an intentional safety culture through ongoing professional development, strong leadership, a questioning attitude, open communication and a respectful work environment. Our governance arrangements include independent audit committees and third party reviews, regular internal audits, and transparent reporting processes. These measures ensure that our regulatory activities are consistently high quality and that our workforce is empowered and competent to uphold the highest standards of nuclear safety and radiological protection for naval nuclear power.

8. Performance

ANNPSR's performance measures and targets focus on assessing the delivery of our key activities. They are aligned with our objectives to promote nuclear safety for the environment and people in relation to Australia's naval nuclear power, as well as promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the ANNPS Act. We monitor and report on these metrics regularly, enabling continuous improvement and demonstrating accountability for our regulatory outcomes. Progress against your expectations is measured through internal governance reviews, performance statements, and publicly released annual reports.

9. Engagement with the Minister and in regulatory reform fora

ANNPSR will maintain engagement with you and external regulatory reform fora, supported by periodic briefings, and structured reporting mechanisms. Beyond explicit measures in the ANNPS Act, ANNPSR will balance independence with an effective working relationship with Defence, the Australian Submarine Agency, Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd and related industry by maintaining arm's-length collaboration and working with existing regulators, such as ARPANSA. I will satisfy my reporting obligations under the ANNPS Act, including the reporting of certain nuclear safety incidents. And we will provide you with updates on regulatory activities, applicable naval nuclear power safety trends, emerging risks, and achievements, thereby ensuring that government priorities and public interests are consistently reflected in our operations.

10. Conclusion

ANNPSR reaffirms its unwavering commitment to nuclear safety, regulatory improvement, transparency and proactive engagement. Through strategic alignment, robust governance, and continuous improvement, we will deliver on your expectations and support Australia's national defence objectives. We are committed to ensuring that Australia's naval nuclear power capability is regulated to high standards of safety, integrity, and public accountability.