

International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, Decommissioning, Environmental Protection and Remediation: Ensuring Safety and Enabling Sustainability



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Optimisation Considerations for Siting a Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility –Advice on Public Health

In 2018, ARPANSA published the Code for Disposal Facilities for Solid Radioactive Waste (ARPANSA 2018). The Disposal Code is based on the requirements relating to disposal of radioactive waste described in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Safety Standard, Disposal of Radioactive Waste (SSR-5). The Disposal Code introduces and applies for the first time the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This is a significant shift away from the traditional definitions of health relied upon by the radiation protection community both in Australia and internationally.

In 2022, an advisory note supporting the Disposal Code was published that provided an explanation of how the level of health protection should be optimised under prevailing circumstances, having regard to economic and societal factors. It is recognised that there are potential impacts on society that are not directly related to radiation exposure that need to be identified and considered in the optimisation process. This paper will explore how the health and well-being of an involved community throughout all stages of a proposed Disposal Facility informs the processes of optimisation and decision making.

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