Army Headquarters

Office of the Chief of Army

Minute

OCA/OUT/2015/R22858419

DFOI

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST: 403/14/15 – SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENT FROM ARMY TO BE PUBLISHED ON THE DEFENCE DISCLOSURE LOG

Reference:

A. JHC/OUT/2015/R22759032

1. On 9 Jul 15, Joint Health Command provided you with a decision in relation to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) for the following item:

> **[Item 1]** *a copy of a brief signed by Director General of Garrison Health Operations BRIG Georgina Whelan on or around 7 May 2015 relating to the closure of the 2 GHB Radiation Safety Incident of 2013. This brief is in PDF format and is located within the Radiology and Radiation Safety folder of Objective, under the Directorate of Defence Force Dentistry/Directorate of Specialist Clinical Advice within the Garrison Health Operations Section of Joint Health Command.*

Additional Information

2. The following information should be read in conjunction with reference A.

3. In Jun 13, a Dynarad portable x-ray set assigned to the 2nd General Health Battalion (2 GHB) sustained minor external damage in transit. Testing of the x-ray set by Army personnel indicated that there was no detectable radiation leak.

4. In Sep 13, the Commanding Officer of 2 GHB became aware of the damage to the x-ray set, and notified the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulations Agency (AHPRA).Both independent regulatory bodies conducted enquiries into the damage to the x-ray set, and the manner in which the Australian Army managed the incident.

5. ARPANSA found that the damage was not a major incident or accident; that there was no risk to public safety and it was satisfied with Army's response to the incident. AHPRA's enquiries concluded that Army personnel had acted in accordance with professional standards.

6. Separately, Army conducted its own Routine Inquiry into the matter which was reviewed by Joint Health Command. The inquiry found that while the x-ray set was in service from 2009 to 2013, it was a low usage machine, with less than 30 personnel operating the x-ray set during this period. The Inquiry classified the health risks to Army members resulting from working with the x-ray set, either as an operator or patient, as extremely low.

7. As a result of the Inquiry a number of recommendations were made, including a review of work processes and procedures. The Army has addressed all of the recommendations made by the Inquiry to meet its duty of care to both members and patients, and to reduce the risk of future incidents as far as reasonably practicable.

8. My point of contact for this matter is CAPT Sanchia Chadwick who can be contacted on [redacted] if required.

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R1-4-B028
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20 Jul 15