MINUTES

Board	Woomera Prohibited Area (WPA) Advisory Board Meeting	
Date	Thursday, 1 May 2025	
Time	**Start:** 13:30 ACST	**Finish:** 15:30 ACST
Venue	Department for Energy and Mining, CE Boardroom, Level 4, 11 Waymouth Street, Adelaide	
	Name	**Appointment**
Members	Ms Andrea Slattery	Deputy Chair
Ex-Officio Members	Mr Paul Martyn PSM	Chief Executive South Australian Department for Energy and Mining (DEM)
	Mr Matt Opie	Chief Executive Defence SA
	AVM Stephen Meredith AM DSM	Woomera Prohibited Area Strategic Advisor to Chief of Air Force, representing AIRMSHL Stephen Chappell DSC CSC OAM, Chief of Air Force, Department of Defence
	Dr Sheridan Kearnan	First Assistant Secretary Strategic Policy, Department of Defence representing Mr Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Policy, and Industry (SP&I), Department of Defence
	Mr Peter Chesworth	Head of Division Minerals and Resources, Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR), representing Mr Robert Jeremenko, Deputy Secretary, Resources and Strategy, DISR
Guests	Ms Jodie Lindsay	General Manager Social License and Operational Support, Australian Radioactive Waste Agency
Support Staff	Mr Benjamin Zammit	Executive Director Regulation and Compliance, DEM
	Mr Michael Smith	Director Regulatory Risk and Engagement, DEM
	AIRCDRE Grant Fifield CSC	Commander Air Warfare Centre, Air Force, Department of Defence
	Mr Reg Carruthers	Director Advanced Test and Training Environment, Air Force, Department of Defence
	GPCAPT Brett Risstrom	Director Security, Air Force, Department of Defence
	Ms Elizabeth O'Brien	Director WPA Coordination Office, SP&I, Department of Defence
	Ms Junenaree Inthavong	Policy Officer WPA Coordination Office, SP&I, Department of Defence
	Mr Dion Hallpike	Director Woomera Review Implementation, SP&I, Department of Defence
Apologies	Ms Amanda Vanstone	Chair
	Mr Ian Spencer	Executive Director Defence and Industry, Defence SA

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
	As the Chair was an apology, the Deputy Chair was the acting Chair for the meeting, and will be annotated as Chair in the minutes.		
1.0	The Chair opened the meeting, and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which attendees were gathered - the Kaurna and the Ngunnawal people.		

	The Chair acknowledged that the meeting was taking place during caretaker period, and advised that the matters for consideration by the Board did not meet the threshold of actions to be avoided during caretaker. The Chair welcomed Advisory Board members and supporting staff, attending in-person and remotely.		

Minutes from the previous meeting (2/2024)

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
2.0	The Chair tabled the minutes from the previous Advisory Board meeting, held on 25 November 2024. The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Martyn, Chief Executive DEM, to his first WPA Advisory Board as an Ex-Officio member. The Board endorsed the meeting minutes, and agreed to publish them on the WPA website.	SP&I to publish the November 2024 minutes on the WPA website.	SP&I

Matters for Decision

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
3.1	***WPA Coexistence Framework Health Check*** SP&I presented the 2024 Health Check report, and recommended the Board agree to streamline the Health Check process to reduce duplication with other reporting, including the verbal security briefing at the Canberra Board meeting. The Board endorsed the 2024 Health Check, and agreed to streamline the Health Check process.	SP&I, in consultation with DEM, to streamline the process for the 2025 Health Check. SP&I to organise a verbal security briefing for Board meeting 2/2025.	SP&I / DEM SP&I
3.2	***WPA Dashboard Report October 2024 – March 2025*** SP&I presented the WPA Dashboard Report for the October 2024 – March 2025 reporting period. The Chair noted the recent high-value mineral discoveries captured in the Dashboard. The Board endorsed the publication of the Dashboard Report on the WPA website.	SP&I to publish the October 2024 – March 2025 Dashboard Report on the WPA website.	SP&I

Matters for Noting

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
4.1	***WPA Exclusion Periods and Range Update*** Air Force provided an update on Defence activities in the WPA for the 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025 period, and on upcoming exclusion periods. Air Force reported on new initiatives introduced to enhance Defence use of the WPA and reduce the impact of testing on other WPA users. Air Force also sought Board feedback on the amended format of its briefing. The Board noted Air Force's updates, and observed that the forecast highlighted how busy the Range would be in 2026. The Board welcomed the amended format of Air Force's briefing, noting it provided greater transparency on Defence activities in the WPA.	Air Force to provide a verbal briefing on the new initiatives at Board meeting 2/2025.	Air Force

4.2	***Woomera Review Update*** SP&I provided an update on next steps following the Skinner Review, with a view to conduct formal consultation with other WPA stakeholders in Q3 2025. The Chair sought confirmation that there were sufficient resources to support implementation of Government's response to the Review, particularly remaking the *WPA Rule 2014*. SP&I confirmed it had allocated appropriate resources. The Board noted its appreciation for the professional conduct of the Review. The Board noted SP&I would commence formal consultation in Q3 2025.	The Woomera Review Update will remain a formal agenda item at each Board meeting until the Rule has been remade.	SP&I
4.3	***First Nations Engagement in the WPA Update*** SP&I provided an update on First Nations engagement, including the draft First Nations Engagement Strategy (FNES), individual group versions of the Heritage Management Plan (HMP), and the Regional Compliance Officer Program. The Chair noted that the FNES would be a living document, subject to regular review and update. The Board noted the updates on the First Nations engagement, and requested SP&I provide a progress update on consultation and development of the FNES, and the individual HMPs at the next meeting.	SP&I to provide update on consultation and development of the FNES, and the individual HMPs at Board meeting 2/2025. In future, SP&I to include an update on Chair and Deputy Chair First Nations engagement under this agenda item.	SP&I SP&I
4.4	***Resources Industry in the WPA*** DEM provided a progress update on Recommendation 5 of the 2018 Review, and updated the Board on resources industry and South Australian Government activities undertaken in the WPA. DISR noted the Commonwealth government's commitment to establish a Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve. DEM noted it was keen to work with Defence to ensure those accessing the area were fit and proper to do so. The Board noted the updates.	SP&I and DEM to discuss criteria for a 'fit and proper' assessment of those seeking to access the WPA.	SP&I / DEM
4.5	***Defence Industry Activities in the WPA*** Defence SA provided a verbal update on Defence Industry activities in South Australia, including recent activities of Southern Launch. Air Force noted that there was a limited role for Defence with Southern Launch recovery activity at Koonibba, where the landing template included the WPA, and stated that any retrievals within the WPA require Defence access approval. The Board noted the update.	Air Force to provide a verbal briefing on Defence considerations regarding commercial space activities at Board meeting 2/2025.	Air Force

Other business

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
5.1	***Radioactive Waste Update*** The Australian Radioactive Waste Agency provided an update on its work to identify disposal pathways for all Commonwealth waste, noting media reporting on this topic had been incorrect and that government was not currently considering specific sites. The Board noted the update.		
5.2	***Digital Platform Update*** SP&I provided a verbal update on progress to deliver a WPA digital platform. Viable options for delivery had been identified and the project was pending funding approval. The Chair requested an update on security considerations at the next meeting. The Board noted the update.	SP&I to provide a verbal progress update and an overview of security considerations at Board meeting 2/2025.	SP&I
5.3	***Permits Refusal Update*** SP&I provided a verbal update of the permit refusal. The Board noted the update.		
	Board trip to the WPA The Chair suggested it would be timely for the Board to visit the WPA.	Air Force to explore options for a Board visit to the WPA, and provide either an out of session update, or a verbal update at Board meeting 2/2025.	Air Force / SP&I
	Curtin University Research Permit The Chair requested Air Force provide an update at the next meeting on the activities of Curtin University in the WPA.	Air Force to provide a verbal update at Board meeting 2/2025.	Air Force

Next meeting – [October 2025] in [Canberra]

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
7.0	The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 23 October 2025 in Canberra. The meeting was brought to an end.		

Meeting concluded at 15:15 pm ACST