MINUTES

Board	Woomera Prohibited Area (WPA) Advisory Board Meeting	
Date	Thursday, 23 October 2025	
Time	**Start:** 10:00 AEDT	**Finish:** 12:00 AEDT
Venue	Building R1, Russell Offices, Canberra	
	Name	**Appointment**
Members	The Hon Amanda Vanstone AO	Chair
	Ms Andrea Slattery	Deputy Chair
Ex-Officio Members	Mr Matt Opie	Chief Executive Defence SA
	Mr Hugh Jeffrey	Deputy Secretary Strategy, Policy, and Industry (SP&I), Department of Defence
	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
	Ms Marie Illman	Head of Division Minerals and Resources, Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR), representing Mr Robert Jeremenko, Deputy Secretary, Resources and Strategy, DISR
	Mr Benjamin Zammit	Deputy Chief Executive Copper, South Australian Department for Energy and Mining (DEM), representing Mr Paul Martyn PSM, Chief Executive, DEM
Guests	Mr Rob Morrow	Managing Director, Peak Iron Mines
	Mr Kris Oliver	Chief Operating Officer, Peak Iron Mines
	Ms Diona Ashenden	General Manager, Peak Iron Mines
Support Staff	AIRCDRE Angus Porter	Director General Air Combat Capability, Air Force, Department of Defence
	AIRCDRE Grant Fifield CSC	Commander Air Warfare Centre, Air Force, Department of Defence
	Ms Emma Cooney	Assistant Secretary Strategic Engagement and Corporate, SP&I, Department of Defence
	Mr Reg Carruthers	Director Advanced Test and Training Environment, Air Force, Department of Defence
	Ms Elizabeth O'Brien	Director WPA Coordination Office, SP&I, Department of Defence
	Mr Michael Smith	Director Regulatory Risk and Engagement, DEM
	Mr Kurt Jorgensen	Director Ranges and Mission Assurance, Air Force, Department of Defence
	Mr Dion Hallpike	Director Woomera Review Implementation, SP&I, Department of Defence
	GPCAPT Brett Risstrom	Director Security, Air Force, Department of Defence
	Mr Darren Shorter	Deputy Director Advanced Test & Training Environments (DD-ATTE) Air Warfare Centre
	Ms Kasia Morley	Assistant Director WPA Coordination Office, SP&I, Department of Defence
	Ms Junenaree Inthavong	Policy Officer WPA Coordination Office, SP&I, Department of Defence

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
1.0	The Chair opened the meeting, and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which attendees were gathered – the Ngunnawal and Kaurna people. The Chair welcomed Advisory Board members and supporting staff, attending in-person and remotely.		

Security Briefing

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
2.0	***Security and Threat Brief*** The Board received a briefing on WPA security and the threat environment.		

Minutes from the previous meeting (1/2025)

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
3.0	The Chair tabled the minutes from the previous Advisory Board meeting, held on 1 May 2025. The Board endorsed the meeting minutes, and agreed to publish them on the WPA website.	SP&I to publish the May 2025 minutes on the WPA website.	SP&I

Matters for Decision

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
4.1	***Annual Report 2025*** SP&I presented the draft WPA Annual Report for 2024-2025. The Board noted sustained and increased use of the WPA over the July 2024 – June 2025 period. The Board endorsed the Annual Report for publication.	SP&I to publish the Annual Report on the WPA website before the end of December 2025.	SP&I
4.2	***WPA Dashboard Report April 2025 – September 2025*** SP&I presented the WPA Dashboard Report for the April 2025 – September 2025 reporting period. The Board endorsed the publication of the Dashboard Report on the WPA website.	SP&I to publish the April 2025 – September 2025 Dashboard Report on the WPA website.	SP&I

Matters for Noting

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
5.1 5.2	***Woomera Review and Remaking the WPA Rule Updates*** SP&I noted that, as presented to the Board in November 2024, informed by extensive stakeholder consultation, the Independent Lead of the Review had found that the Rule and coexistence were working well overall. However, she noted that growing Defence use over coming years would likely place more pressure on the coexistence framework. SP&I provided an update on work to remake the WPA Rule, before the current Rule sunsets on 1 October 2026. Informed by the findings of the Woomera Review, changes to the Rule will support Defence requirements for increased Defence use, and will minimise the impact on non-Defence users. SP&I undertook to provide an intersessional update to the Board on work to remake the WPA Rule, including consultation of SA Government and non-Defence users. The Board noted SP&I's updates, and welcomed the undertaking to provide an intersessional update.	SP&I to provide Board with intersessional update on work to remake the WPA Rule.	SP&I
5.3	***WPA Exclusion Periods and Range Update*** Air Force provided an update on Defence activities in the WPA for the 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025 period, and on upcoming exclusion periods. Air Force reported on new initiatives introduced to enhance Defence use of the WPA, while reducing the impact of testing on non-Defence users. Air Force noted the creation of a new Directorate responsible for governance and capability development of all Air Force test and training ranges, including Woomera. In response to a question from the Chair, Air Force explained that the new Directorate would create efficiencies for scheduling testing across all Air Weapons Ranges. The Board noted Air Force's updates, and observed that the forecast highlighted how busy the Range would be in 2026.		

	First Nations Engagement in the WPA Update SP&I provided an update on First Nations engagement, including the draft First Nations Engagement Framework (FNEF), individual group versions of the Heritage Management Plan (HMP), and the Regional Compliance Officer Program. DISR provided an update to initiatives contained within the current FNEF. The Chair expressed appreciation of Defence efforts to enhance engagement with First Nations groups. In response to a question from the Chair, SP&I and DEM confirmed that the Commonwealth and SA Government coordinated on engagement with WPA First Nations groups. The Board endorsed the FNEF, and associated engagement paragraphs to be published on the WPA website. The FNEF will be reviewed in 2027.		
5.4		SP&I to publish engagement paragraphs on the WPA website.	
	Resources Industry in the WPA DEM provided an update on resource industry and SA Government activities undertaken in the WPA, including finalisation of two key studies. DEM also provided an update on significant recent mineral discoveries. In response to questions from the Board, DEM outlined recent changes to investor trends for the exploration sector, citing the supply chain security as a driving factor. The Board noted DEM's updates.		
5.5			
	Defence Industry Activities in the WPA Defence SA provided a verbal update on Defence Industry activities in South Australia, including recent and increasing activities of Southern Launch at the Koonibba range, which shares a border with the WPA. Air Force noted potential for future Southern Launch activities to conflict with Air Force testing windows, if entry into the WPA or restricted airspace was required, and stated that Defence would continue to work closely with the company to mitigate this. Defence SA offered to facilitate a presentation by Southern Launch at the next Board meeting, which the Board welcomed. The Board noted the update.		
5.6		Defence SA to invite Southern Launch to present at Board meeting 1/2026.	Defence SA

	Mining sector brief: by invitation Peak Iron Mines briefed the Board on the company's existing and planned mining projects within the WPA. Peak Iron Mines emphasised their commitment to close cooperation with Defence and DEM to meet all of their legislative obligations.		
5.7	In response to questions from the Board on the impact of exclusion periods on their business, Peak Iron Mines confirmed that they are already building contingency and off-site processing into their business model to support exclusion periods and with advanced planning and continued close cooperation with Defence, this would be manageable. The Board thanked Peak Iron Mines for their presentation.		

Other business

Item	Discussion	Action Item	Owner
6.1	***WPA Advisory Board Forward Work Program*** The Board agreed to the proposed Forward Work Program for 2026.	Board members to advise the Secretariat of any additional agenda items.	SP&I
6.2	***Digital Platform Update*** SP&I provided a verbal update on progress to deliver a WPA digital platform. A preferred option has been chosen, funding has been approved, and work has commenced to deliver the platform. Initial consultation of non-Defence users will be undertaken in November. The Chair expressed appreciation that work has commenced to deliver the digital platform.		
	Meeting concluded at 12:15 pm AEDT		