



**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

MS25-001178

Dr Geoffrey Shaw  
Director-General  
Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office  
RG Casey Building  
BARTON ACT 0221

04 FEB 2026

Dear Dr Shaw

Thank you for your Statement of Intent dated 26 March 2025 in relation to the operations of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO).

The attached Statement of Expectations outlines how I expect ASNO to contribute to the Government's productivity objective through balancing of risk mitigation with efficiency, growth and dynamism and considering the impact on productivity of its regulatory activities. This includes adjusting regulatory posture where appropriate and proactively reducing unnecessary regulatory burden. Ministerial Statements of Expectations provide regulators with greater clarity about government policies and objectives relevant to the regulator in line with the relevant statutory obligations. This Statement of Expectations also sets out the priorities I expect ASNO to observe in conducting its operations.

I would appreciate your response to this letter in the form of a Statement of Intent outlining how ASNO proposes to meet the expectations set out in this Statement of Expectations, as you take forward ASNO's important work in performing its regulatory functions. In addition, to ensure transparency and accountability, I ask you make this Statement and your Statement of Intent available on ASNO's website.

Thank you for your timely assistance with this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PENNY WONG'.

PENNY WONG

Encl. Ministerial Statement of Expectations

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Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

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### Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office Ministerial Statement of Expectations

#### **Issued by Senator the Hon Penny Wong in January 2026**

As the responsible Minister, this statement outlines my expectations of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO) for organisational performance as the domestic regulator and national authority for Australia's non-proliferation treaties.

#### **Overview**

The Australia Government is committed to its regulatory reform agenda which prioritises strong governance and effective delivery of regulatory responsibilities. Further, it has set a whole-of-government objective for Commonwealth regulators to better balance risk mitigation with efficiency, growth and dynamism.

I expect that ASNO actively implement this reform agenda, particularly when engaging with small business and other entities with limited regulated activities. I note that ASNO's regulatory functions enable Australia to meet treaty obligations, and require an appropriate balance with a risk-based approach to regulatory requirements.

I recognise and respect the role of Director General ASNO as an independent statutory office holder with specific powers and functions, including fulfilling the role of the national authority for Australia's non-proliferation treaties.

I note the role of Director General ASNO incorporates the statutory responsibilities of:

- Director of Safeguards, under the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Act 1987* (Safeguards Act)
- Director of the Chemical Weapons Convention Office, under the *Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 1994* (CWP Act), and
- Director of the Australian Comprehensive Test Ban Office, under the *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Act 1998*.

The effective operation of these Acts enables Australia to meet international non-proliferation treaty obligations, including:

- the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
- Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM)
- the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
- the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)
- the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)
- multiple prescribed international agreements under the Safeguards Act, including those that form part of Australia's network of treaty-level bilateral nuclear safeguards agreements
- the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

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In addition to these, ASNO has regulatory and administrative responsibility for:

- Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 (with respect to regulation 5J)
- *Civil Nuclear Transfers to India Act 2016*
- *Nuclear Safeguards (Producers of Uranium Ore Concentrates) Charge Act 1993*
- *South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty Act 1986.*

### ASNO's role

Australia has a proud legacy and commitment to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Our credentials on non-proliferation are grounded in decades-long leadership in establishing and strengthening international treaties, export control regimes and practical initiatives to advance non-proliferation and disarmament.

ASNO works to enhance Australian and international security through activities that strengthen the effectiveness of regimes against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

To meet Australian Government priorities, including for naval nuclear propulsion, I expect ASNO to continue advancing work under its three core pillars:

1. Upholding Australia's international non-proliferation commitments through robust domestic regulation.

Under this pillar, it is important ASNO independently regulates its permit holders to ensure Australia's treaty obligations are met. This should be done with proportional regulatory measures that support regulated entities to operate and innovate efficiently while meeting compliance requirements. These obligations are given effect in Australian law under legislation that ASNO administers and provides the basis for ASNO's domestic regulatory functions.

2. Supporting regional non-proliferation implementation.

Strengthening Australia's security by looking beyond our borders is a responsibility that ASNO should continue under this pillar. This includes knowledge sharing and practical support to our regional partners to enhance non-proliferation treaty implementation.

3. Shaping and strengthening the global non-proliferation and disarmament verification mechanisms.

Given the complex and challenging strategic environment, it is also important ASNO continues to shape and strengthen the global non-proliferation and disarmament verification landscape under this pillar. As part of this, ASNO should continue building the next generation of safeguards experts in Australia and continue coordinating research and development of safeguards techniques and technologies.

ASNO plays an essential role in ensuring the Government is well-placed to respond promptly to any challenges and opportunities arising from the administration of its regulatory functions. Accordingly, I expect Director General ASNO to provide accurate and timely advice on significant issues relating to these regulatory functions. I also expect ASNO to

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work closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the department) in contributing to relevant policy advice.

### **The Government's policies and objectives**

#### ***Regulatory reform agenda and commitment to prioritising productivity***

The Government is looking at ways to boost productivity through reducing unnecessary or duplicative regulatory costs and working with international partners to identify opportunities to improve the quality of regulation. The Government is also focusing on improving regulator performance, capability and culture through regulatory stewardship.

I expect ASNO to contribute to the regulatory reform agenda by:

- embedding the Department of Finance's Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework into ASNO's work, focusing on the 6 principles for regulation in implementing, managing and evaluating ASNO's regulatory activities
- seeking opportunities to reduce duplication and streamline processes to improve efficiency
- acting in accordance with regulator best practice in its decision-making, policies, processes and communication practices to maximise transparency and minimise compliance costs, and
- aligning with the corporate strategy and policy of the department as they relate to corporate plans and annual reporting required under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

#### ***Principles of regulator best practice***

I expect that ASNO continues to ensure Australia's treaty obligations are implemented through an independent, credible and robust domestic non-proliferation regulatory system, maintaining the highest standards, and reflecting the importance to Australia's national security. I expect ASNO to draw on the principles of regulator best practice to develop tailored performance monitoring, reporting processes and performance measures.

I expect ASNO to display and progress the following:

##### **1. Continuous improvement and building trust**

- Streamline engagement with regulated entities through updating ASNO's digital regulatory systems, with the aim to reduce the amount of disruption to business operations and capture appropriate regulatory data.
- Redevelop ASNO's website to simplify information about ASNO's permits so that current and potential permit holders can more easily identify permit requirements and application procedures.
- Continue to build and maintain ASNO's technical expertise to ensure a sustainable non-proliferation and regulatory governance capacity that can meet ASNO's expanded responsibilities and retain public trust.
- Continue to engage with Australia's negotiations with the IAEA to develop the first-of-a-kind safeguards arrangements for Australia's naval nuclear propulsion program under Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol,

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consistent with the Government's commitment to set the highest non-proliferation standards.

- Strengthen Australia's sovereign safeguards capabilities through the Verify program to support effective and efficient adherence to Australia's treaty obligations to the IAEA.
- Under the Verify program, coordinate, and facilitate the Australian Safeguards Support Program (ASSP) with the IAEA, to shape and strengthen the global nuclear safeguards and security regimes to improve verification in Australia, the region and across the globe.
- Facilitate bilateral and multilateral activities with our regional partners to enhance non-proliferation treaty implementation, including through ASNO's leadership role in the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN).

### *2. Risk-based and data-driven*

- Based on regulatory data, develop, refine and implement ASNO permits under the Safeguards Act. This is to ensure nuclear safeguards and security measures are proportionate to the non-proliferation risks of the nuclear material, associated items, and facilities under regulatory control.
- Work to ensure Australia continues to receive a 'broader conclusion' safeguards assessment from the IAEA based on Australia's commitment to the highest international nuclear safeguards standards.
- Ensure Australia maintains effective nuclear security arrangements domestically and for the transport of Australian uranium overseas.
- Account for obligated nuclear material within Australia and globally for all prescribed international agreements under the Safeguards Act while ensuring that associated implementing arrangements remain fit-for-purpose.
- Based on regulatory data, ensure ASNO permits and other regulatory activities under the CWP Act continue to meet Australia's CWC commitments to the highest standard.
- Ensure that Australia's CTBT International Monitoring System stations and National Data Centre function effectively; that Australia continues to provide technical expertise to improve the whole CTBT verification regime; and support civil access to CTBT data in our region.

*3. Collaboration and engagement*

- Engage with international regulatory bodies and the global regulatory environment relevant to ASNO's roles, functions and environment.
- Support practical efforts that shape and strengthen global non-proliferation and disarmament verification mechanisms including through the ASSP and Verify program.
- Support practical efforts to build non-proliferation related capacity in our region, including through engagement with APSN, IAEA, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.
- Collaborate with other Australian Government regulatory agencies, such as through the Regulatory Science Network, to increase interagency cooperation and improve the performance of Australian government regulatory agencies by strengthening evidence-based decision making.
- Remain transparent regarding ASNO's cost recovery activity by maintaining an up-to-date Cost Recovery Implementation Statement on your website. In 2025, the department provided input into the Department of Finance's 5-yearly portfolio charging review. This included a review of the Uranium Producers Charge that you administer. I expect you to consider all options for the future of this charge.

*Innovation and regulatory change*

I expect ASNO to ensure regulatory approaches keep pace with changes in technology, industry practices, international regulation, and community expectations and to regularly review and, where necessary, adjust policies and operational procedures in response to those changes.

**Relationship with Minister and portfolio**

Director General ASNO is accountable to me as the responsible portfolio Minister. I expect ASNO and its Director General to continue to prepare an Annual Report outlining the activities and performance of ASNO, as required by legislation.

ASNO is also required to support the Secretary of the department to meet its obligations under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, including annual performance reporting.

ASNO's regulatory functions are a critical enabler to uphold Australia's international non-proliferation treaty obligations and protect and advance Australia's national and foreign policy interests. As the responsible Minister, I will provide an enabling environment for ASNO to consistently implement best practice by ensuring ASNO is well-informed of the Government's policy direction and will liaise with my ministerial colleagues when appropriate to support ASNO's work.