



AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION of
**Nuclear Medicine
Specialists (AANMS)**

Submission to the Australian Government consultation on critical technologies

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Australian Government consultation on critical technologies. This is a joint submission from the Australasian Association of Nuclear Medicine Specialists (AANMS) and the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine (ANZSNM).

The AANMS and ANZSNM are the peak bodies representing the clinical practice of nuclear medicine in Australia and New Zealand. The organisations work to advance nuclear medicine in practice, research and education.

The AANMS and ANZSNM made a joint submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport Inquiry into the approval processes for new drugs and novel medical technologies in Australia (the Parliamentary inquiry) and gave evidence to a hearing of the inquiry on 11 March 2021. This inquiry addresses many of the same issues being examined in the critical technologies consultation.

The stated purpose of the critical technologies consultation is to identify key critical technology developments, assess risks to and opportunities in Australia's national interest, and examine the approach of academia, industry and government to critical technologies. We would refer the Australian Government, through the Critical Technologies Policy Coordination Office, to the AANMS and ANZSNM submission to the Standing Committee inquiry. Below is a summary of the key points and recommendations in the submission and the full submission is attached separately for consideration.

Developing a new industry in novel radiopharmaceuticals and theranostics

Australia has an opportunity to develop a new industry of national significance and has the foundations for a very strong competitive advantage compared to other countries in the development of novel radiopharmaceuticals and theranostics. With relatively limited but targeted investment and with national coordination, Australia could become a world leader in the introduction of radiopharmaceuticals and theranostics. This could become a significant national industry generating economic returns, employment and expertise. It would also give Australian patients early access to the latest treatments in trials and novel therapies. Such an industry would involve radiopharmaceutical discovery, development, clinical trials and ultimately clinical drug manufacture or IP licensing.

AANMS and ANZSNM recommended in the submission to the Parliamentary inquiry that the Australian Government:

1. Target the radiopharmaceutical industry for special assistance to develop a nationally significant industry.
2. Ensure national unification of strategic intent and coordination of investment in the existing, largely government funded, assets such as CSIRO, ANSTO and NIF towards the development of a national scale radiopharmaceutical industry.
3. Prioritise research funding from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), NHMRC and other funding and research support agencies towards radiopharmaceutical drug discovery and clinical translation.

4. Provide industry support and funding to ensure that intellectual property, drug discovery and manufacture are retained in Australia.

AANMS and ANZSNM also made recommendations to the Parliamentary inquiry regarding radiopharmaceuticals being considered as a separate class of “drug” for the purposes of assessment for registration on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). Further information on this is available in the full submission provided.

The case for an Australian medical cyclotron

ANZSNM have developed a report to build the case for an Australian medical cyclotron for domestic radionuclide supply. The report highlights the problems with Australia’s reliance on the importation of short-lived radionuclides and the impact this has on the practice of nuclear medicine. The lack of a sustainable supply of radiopharmaceuticals impacts patients, resulting in suboptimal patient management and increased health care costs. The report is attached separately to this submission for consideration.

A national facility to supply radionuclides would create a sustainable domestic supply and open up export markets and generate income for the Australian economy.

ANZSNM and AANMS have recommended that the Australian Government develop a business case and national strategy for the domestic supply cyclotron-produced gamma emitting radionuclides used in nuclear medicine.

Once again, we would like to thank the Australian Government for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry on critical technologies. The AANMS and ANZSNM would be happy to meet with the Critical Technologies Policy Coordination Office to discuss and expand on the issues and reports referred to in this submission.

Yours sincerely



Geoff Schembri
President AANMS



Daniel Badger
President ANZSNM

9 April 2021