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Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

## Media Release

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# Understanding radiation: ANSTO Community Discussion

Radiation is all around us and has many beneficial uses, particularly in health-care. Find out more about these benefits by coming to ANSTO's Community Discussion at the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre on 19 May 2009 at 6pm.

The event will include a presentation by ANSTO's new CEO, Dr Adi Paterson, who will talk about the organisation's role in supplying more than 80 per cent of Australia's nuclear medicines.

Radiation safety specialist, Celia Hacker, will start the discussion by explaining – in layman's terms - what ionising radiation is, and how it has many practical uses.

"Many people fear radiation, but it surrounds us every day. It comes from many sources including the sun, the rocks, the soil beneath our feet, the air we breathe, the food and drink we ingest and even our own bodies," she said.

By living indoors, humans may be exposed to a higher concentration of a radioactive gas called radon, which arises naturally from the radioactive decay of uranium and thorium, present in rocks, soil, bricks, mortar, tiles and concrete.

While radiation can be dangerous, it can also be harnessed for positive uses in areas as diverse as materials engineering, health, climate change and mining.

Celia's talk aims to de-mystify the topic by presenting the facts and demonstrating how ionising radiation is detected and measured, and explaining the safety measures employed by ANSTO to protect staff, the community and the environment.

Dr Paterson will then give a presentation on nuclear medicines; how they are produced and used to detect diseases like cancer.

The Community Discussion will conclude with an opportunity to ask Celia and other senior ANSTO staff questions on any topic of interest.

ANSTO welcomes the opportunity to discuss public questions or concerns. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the Community Discussion. Refreshments will be provided. For catering purposes, please RSVP by 5pm on Friday 15 May 2009 to [communications@ansto.gov.au](mailto:communications@ansto.gov.au) or call 02 9717 3770.

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**For more information and to arrange an interview with ANSTO staff please contact:  
ANSTO Media Relations Manager, Sharon Kelly (02) 9717 9575 or 0400 394 085**

ANSTO is the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, the country's national nuclear research and development organisation and the centre of Australian nuclear expertise – over 80 per cent of all radioisotopes used in Australian nuclear medicine are made in ANSTO's reactor.