

## **MINUTES – Work Health and Safety Committee Meeting**

**Friday, 14 February 2020**

**Parliament House, Room 1S6**

Meeting Opened: 9.30 am  
Meeting Closed: 10.30 am  
Meeting Facilitator: Bek Bjarnadottir - Ministerial and Parliamentary Services  
Department of Finance (Finance)

### **Present:**

Nathan Winn	Office of Mr Bert van Manen MP Liberal Party of Australia
Loretta Sist *	Office of Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham MP Liberal Party of Australia
Luke Barnes	Office of Mr Dave Sharma MP Liberal Party of Australia
Leonie Lloyd-Smith (observer)	Office of Mr Rowan Ramsey MP Liberal Party of Australia
Jacob White	Office of Ms Alicia Payne MP Australian Labor Party
Kate Sutherland	Office of Ms Lisa Chesters MP Australian Labor Party
Joe Stroud *	Office of the Hon Bill Shorten MP Australian Labor Party
Stella Weston-Smith	Office of Mr Andrew Wilkie MP Independents
Steven Mammarella	Office of the Minister for Finance
Eleanor Kennedy *	Community and Public Sector Union
Poni Ravula	Australian Services Union
Suzanne Hopkins *	Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT)
Dana Sutton	Finance
Nikki Baccon	Finance
Bek Bjarnadottir	Finance

\* via teleconference

**Apologies:** Simon Kelly - Office of Senator Llew O'Brien - The Nationals  
Rosemary Little - Office of the Hon Peter Dutton MP - Liberal Party of Australia  
Helen Lewis - Office of the Hon Stuart Robert MP - Liberal Party of Australia

### Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- Ms Bjarnadottir welcomed the members of the committee and thanked them for their attendance. She noted an apology from Helen Lewis. Apologies from Rosemary Little and Simon Kelly were provided by representatives.

### Agenda Item 2 – Actions arising from previous meeting

- MaPS to review question 10.3 of the Workplace Inspection Checklist.
  - Having reviewed the checklist Finance determined to retain question 10.3 of the checklist as it potentially provided information regarding bullying and harassment training. MaPS advised that WHS Site Officers concerned about allocating risk ratings to a hazard should contact JLT for advice.
- MaPS to review reporting capabilities with particular regard to demographics and hazards.
  - Ms Bjarnadottir advised any members of the committee who had specific requests with regard to the data reported in the WHS report, could email their requests to [mopswhs@finance.gov.au](mailto:mopswhs@finance.gov.au) for further consideration.
- MaPS to provide copies of the last five annual reports to the committee members.
  - Ms Bjarnadottir reported difficulty in collating the last five annual reports. She suggested it might be more useful if some comparative data was provided along with each quarterly WHS report, which was agreed by the committee.
  - **Action: MaPS to work with JLT to provide comparative data in the next quarterly WHS report.**
- MaPS to provide a SAO contacts document.
  - Document provided via email on 27 February 2020.

### Agenda Item 3 – WHS Report

- The committee was provided with the quarterly WHS report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2019, Ms Bjarnadottir welcomed any queries related to the data provided.
- Mr White requested the data regarding incidents and hazards for electorate offices in ACT and offices within Parliament House are separated in future reports. Ms Sutton advised MaPS would look at the data and determine if doing so would make certain incidents identifiable given the small sample size.
  - **Action: MaPS to determine if ACT data can be divided by electorate offices and parliament house offices.**
- Mr Winn queried the high number of incidents that occurred in QLD over the quarter and asked if they could be broken down further. Ms Hopkins advised there wasn't a notable trend in the incidents that occurred in QLD – Ms Sutton highlighted that although the majority of incidents during the quarter occurred in QLD, the total number of incidents in that state was only six.
- Mr Barnes asked what the difference was between 'Injury' and 'Injury Other'. Ms Hopkins advised 'Injury Other' would relate to a superficial or minor injury, such as a small cut requiring a bandaid.

#### Agenda Item 4 – Staff Assistance Officer Resources

- In addition to the SAO contacts document, Ms Bjarnadottir offered to send links to training available through MaPS, such as Mental Health First Aid, to better support the SAOs in their roles. She also invited SAOs to contact [mopswhs@finannce.gov.au](mailto:mopswhs@finannce.gov.au) with details of any training they feel would support their role as SAO and MaPS would endeavor to make it available to all SAOs. Ms Kennedy asked if she could also be provided with information regarding the training to work with the department regarding advertising of the programs.
  - **Action: MaPS to provide SAOs and Ms Kennedy details regarding training available through MaPS.**

#### Agenda Item 5 – Rehabilitation Management System

- Ms Baccon advised that there have been four MOP(S) employees receive support under the MaPS early intervention program, accessing payments for services such as GP appointments and physiotherapy. The aim of this program being to assist people to seek support as soon as possible following an injury to minimise the impacts of the injury and deliver improved wellbeing outcomes.

#### Agenda Item 6 – Policy Updates

- Ms Bjarnadottir advised that MaPS is currently reviewing all existing WHS policies and drafting new WHS policies for inclusion in the MOP(S) Act employment framework. MaPS and will consult with the committee out of session on the policies over the coming months.

#### Agenda Item 7 – WHSC Membership

- Ms Bjarnadottir noted that there are a currently two vacancies on the WHS committee, one HSR position for staff of Liberal Parliamentarians and one Deputy HSR position for staff employed by Greens Parliamentarians.
- Mr Winn advised that a process had been undertaken and Mr Barnes will be occupying the vacant HSR position and Ms Lloyd-Smith will be occupying the resulting vacant Deputy HSR position. Ms Bjarnadottir requested email advice regarding these appointments.
  - **Action: Mr Winn to provide written advice regarding the appointments of Mr Barnes and Ms Lloyd-Smith.**
  - **Action: MaPS to contact the Greens HSR regarding the vacant Deputy HSR position.**

#### Agenda Item 8 – Reporting Around Violent Phone Calls and Death Threats Received by MOP(S) Act Staff

- Ms Kennedy raised concerns about the lack of awareness around the need to report incidents related to violent phone calls and death threats received by MOP(S) Act staff. She advised the CPSU has been receiving reports of customer aggression and it is apparent to the CPSU that people misunderstand the available reporting mechanisms. People often report the incident/s to the relevant authorities however neglect to report back to Finance. Ms Bjarnadottir suggested that educational content regarding reporting incidents and hazards could be added to the next WHS newsletter that is due to be delivered to all staff in March.

- **Action: MaPS to include information relating to reporting of occupational violence and aggression in the next WHS newsletter.**

### Agenda Item 9 – Other Business

- Mr Ravula asked if there have been any reports of smoke or poor air quality in electorate offices. Ms Baccon advised there had been a small number of reports relating to air quality issues and of the offices that subsequently underwent air quality testing, safe air quality results were returned in each case.
- Ms Kennedy asked if there was an education campaign planned about where staff should go for advice about air quality, as during the first two weeks in January they received a lot of queries. Ms Sutton advised there have been a number of all staff emails that have been sent/published in the last couple of weeks providing advice and links to further information regarding bushfires, air quality and the novel coronavirus.
- Mr Winn asked if there was general advice available about the safety implications of working from an office with no power, given the numerous reports of powerless offices following recent wet weather events in Queensland and New South Wales. Ms Sutton advised there are a number of risk factors Finance would relevantly consider in responding to a report from an office that has lost power and that advice on WHS and security in this situation can be sought from the MaPS HR Policy and Support Team.
- Ms Weston-Smith asked about first aid kits at Parliament House, indicating that there is confusion among staff about where to access one. Ms Bjarnadottir advised that each office has the ability to order a first aid kit through COS. In addition the nurse's station at Parliament House can provide first aid as can all of the security personnel.
- Mr Stroud raised an issue around the repairs to the lifts in Parliament House, advising there have been lengthy delays and staff are reporting difficulty in navigating the building. Ms Sutton advised that while MaPS does not have control of the services at Parliament House, we could raise this issue with DPS and report back on the findings.
  - **Action: MaPS to contact DPS to inform and seek comment regarding the lift repairs.**
- Mr Stroud raised a question about access to trolleys for the purpose of transporting heavy items around Parliament House. Ms Bjarnadottir acknowledged this is an ongoing issue and it had been raised by another MOP(S) Act employee as a WHS issue. Ms Bjarnadottir advised that a trolley has been added to the list of items office are able to order without a debit to a Parliamentarian's budget, but we were working through how to deliver those items to Parliament House.
  - **MaPS to advise when trolleys are able to be delivered to Parliament House.**

### Action Items

1. MaPS to work with JLT to provide comparative data in the next quarterly WHS report.
2. MaPS to determine if ACT data can be divided by electorate offices and parliament house offices.
3. MaPS to provide SAOs and Ms Kennedy details regarding training available through MaPS.
4. Mr Winn to provide written advice regarding the appointments of Mr Barnes and Ms Lloyd-Smith.
5. MaPS to contact the Greens HSR regarding the vacant Deputy HSR position.

6. MaPS to include information related to reporting of occupational violence in the next WHS newsletter.

7. MaPS to contact DPS for comment regarding the lift repairs.

8. MaPS to advise when trolleys are able to be delivered to Parliament House.