

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

**Friday, 20 March 2020**

**Teleconference**

Meeting Opened: 11:30am  
Meeting Closed: 12:30 am  
Meeting Facilitator: Dana Sutton - Ministerial and Parliamentary Services  
Department of Finance (Finance)

### **Present:**

Nathan Winn	Liberal Party of Australia
Loretta Sist *	Liberal Party of Australia
Luke Barnes	Liberal Party of Australia
Leonie Lloyd-Smith (observer)	Liberal Party of Australia
Jacob White	Australian Labor Party
Kate Sutherland	Australian Labor Party
Joe Stroud	Australian Labor Party
Stella Weston-Smith	Independent Parliamentarians
Simon Kelly	The Nationals
Helen Lewis	Liberal Party of Australia
Kim York	Independent Parliamentarians
Joe Wheeler	Australian Greens
Georgia Webster	Australian Greens
Rosemary Little	Liberal Party of Australia
Steven Mammarella	Office of the Minister for Finance
Eleanor Kennedy	Community and Public Sector Union
Poni Ravula	Australian Services Union

Ben Crowther	Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT)
Dana Sutton	Finance
Sharon Forester	Finance
Bek Bjarnadottir	Finance

**Apologies:** Loretta Sist – Liberal Party of Australia

### Agenda Item 1 – The Finance response to COVID-19

- Ms Sutton advised the MaPS website had been updated to include a page dedicated to COVID-19 that consists of comprehensive information in line with Department of Health messaging.
- The webpage includes links to view all staff messages that have been delivered, covering topics like working from home arrangements, leave, and access to support services like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Ms Sutton advised there has been a COVID-19 response team created within MaPS, consisting of six people. All COVID-19 related contact with the Department will be monitored to identify trends in queries and develop answers to them in a Q & A format on the webpage.
- Ms Sutton thanked Ms Kennedy for providing the Services Australia information sheet on their response to COVID-19 and advised MaPS would be updating the webpage with information about worker's compensation and working from home including assisting people to do ergonomic assessments at home. She advised MaPS is working towards delivering a webinar style information session regarding working safely from home and ergonomics.

### Item 2 – Feedback on frequently asked questions

- Ms Sutton opened the floor to committee members to discuss any questions/issues being raised by staff that might be addressed in FAQs.
- Topics raised included:
  - when a person needs to isolate themselves if they have been in contact with someone who is waiting for test results. Ms Sutton advised they should place a call to the helpdesk and they would be transferred to the COVID-19 response team, however MaPS could not issue a direction to isolate and they should follow Department of Health advice.
  - adverse action should a staff member choose to self-isolate without the permission of their employer. Ms Sutton advised there were very clear details regarding leave associated with COVID-19 on the MaPS webpage and advised people to review the table and if there were any situations not covered to send them to MOPSWHS.
  - Ms Little suggested it would be beneficial to provide some information about mental health and anxiety with specific regard to the current situation.
- **Action: MaPS to provide communications on mental health and anxiety.**

## Item 3 – Other Business

### Working from home

- Ms Sutton stated MaPS is aware not every MOP(S) Act employee has access to working from home arrangements. DPS has advised each office should have at least two remote access tokens and workplaces could look at splitting the office into two teams and rotating between working from home and the office.
- Ms Sutherland advised she's had feedback from some offices where instead of allowing people to work from home, offices are making changes to operations including improved hygiene practices, placing barriers at their front windows etc.
- Ms Forester advised there were a range of posters that would be forth-coming for electorate offices including warning signs of COVID-19 that encouraged constituents to call or email the office instead of attending in person.

**Action: MaPS to provide posters for electorate offices**

### Risk Management for Offices

- Ms Kennedy asked if there was a template for individual site risk management plans in recognition of certain offices having particular risks and not knowing how to develop a plan. Ms Sutton offered that a template may be provided to offices.

**Action: MaPS to provide template for individual site risk assessments.**

### Occupational Violence

- Ms Kennedy advised that there had been an increase to the number of customer aggression incidents reported to the CPSU. Ms Sutton advised we had not seen any reports made regarding customer aggression. Ms Kennedy advised she believed this was still due to the fact that MOP(S) Act staff are not aware of how to report incidents.
- Ms Bjarnadottir advised a segment regarding customer aggression and the reporting of incidents was due to be included in the next WHS newsletter, which was being redrafted in the wake of the changing situation of COVID-19. She advised the segment on customer aggression would remain in the newsletter. We will address this issue further in future.

**Action: MaPS to include segment regarding customer aggression and reporting of incidents in the WHS newsletter.**

### Out of pocket expenses for working from home

- Ms Kennedy asked if there was a process for people to claim for out-of-pocket expenses related to working from home. Ms Forester advised there are provisions for discretionary payments in the Enterprise Agreement and there will be further information coming from DPS regarding the purchase of sim-cards. Information will be provided in the FAQs regarding what needs to be included for reimbursement.

**Action: MaPS to include an FAQ regarding out-of-pocket expenses for working from home.**

### Infection control and communicable diseases policy

- Ms Kennedy asked if a Communicable Diseases Policy had been published yet. Ms Forester advised it was currently in draft form.

**Action: MaPS to provide Infection control and Communicable Disease Policy for consultation.**

### Delays on personal hygiene products

- Ms Weston-Smith advised that COS has a wait of five to ten days for delivery of hand sanitiser, and asked if there was anything MaPS could do to reduce the waiting period.
- Ms Forester advised that offices having issues ordering items off COS are able to purchase items elsewhere and claim reimbursement under the PBR framework.
- Ms York advised she had a specific issue with an order placed on COS, and a message she received from them regarding the order being cancelled. Ms Bjarnadottir asked Ms York to forward details of the issue and to place another order.
- Ms York to provide MaPS with details of COS order being cancelled.
- Ms Forester advised that MaPS state offices have been provided with a small number of bottles of hand sanitiser that offices can request these to be sent out as required.

Action item: MaPS to investigate COS order cancellation

#### Carers leave

- Ms Webster asked if there was advice about leave for staff affected by caring issues, for example if they have been directed to work from home and they have children at home.
- Ms Sutton advised these scenarios would be responded to as they arise. The current advice regarding leave is available on the COVID-19 webpage, in line with the whole-of-government approach.

#### Action Items

1. MaPS to provide communications on mental health and anxiety.
2. MaPS to provide COVID-19 alert posters for electorate offices.
3. MaPS to provide template for individual site risk assessments.
4. MaPS to include segment regarding customer aggression and reporting of incidents in the WHS newsletter.
5. MaPS to include an FAQ regarding out-of-pocket expenses for working from home.
6. MaPS to provide Infection Control and Communicable Disease Policy draft for consultation
7. MaPS to investigate COS order cancellation