

MINUTES – EMPLOYEE CONSULTATIVE GROUP (ECG) MEETING

Friday, 9 February 2018
Parliament House, Room 2S2

Present:

Ms Rosemary Little	The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Mr Josh Manuatu	Senator the Hon Eric Abetz
Mr Jordan Qian	Senator Linda Reynolds
Mr John Harris	The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Ms Helen Lewis	The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Ms Alison Byrnes	The Hon Sharon Bird MP
Mr Thomas Moorhead	Senator the Hon Kim Carr
Ms Maree Goodrick	Senator Kimberley Kitching
Ms Sophie Nicolle*	Senator Richard Di Natale
Mr Tim Hurd	Mr Andrew Wilkie MP
Ms Amy Knox	Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU)
Mr Poni Ravula	Australian Services Union (ASU)
Mr Josh Zwar	Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann
Mr Tony Nairn	Department of Finance (Finance)
Ms Anna Glyntzos	Finance

* via teleconference

Observing: Mr Nathan Winn

Apologies: Ms Loretta Sist

Meeting Opened: 10:00 am
Meeting Chair: Mr Tony Nairn
Meeting Closed: 12.10 pm

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- Mr Nairn opened the meeting, and noted apologies.

Agenda Item 2 – Business arising from the previous meeting

- Ms Goodrick advised that she sent an email this morning regarding training courses for consideration in the PDP. To be discussed during 'other business'.
- Ms Byrnes advised she is awaiting further information before sending a letter to the Presiding Officers regarding car parking and trolley issues, and it should be finalised next week.

Agenda Item 3 – EA Guidelines

- Mr Nairn provided an overview of how the EA Guidelines will be formatted and hosted on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.
- Mr Nairn explained the proposed amendments to the Ongoing, Non-ongoing and Casual Employment and Part-time Work guidelines. All amendments were accepted.
- Mr Nairn explained the proposed amendments to the Salary Setting and Progression guideline. Ms Goodrick will draft a brief background section. Ms Byrnes suggested the first example is confusing and amendments were discussed to ensure the example of promotion is clear. Mr Nairn will provide the amended guideline to the ECG for consultation by email.
- Mr Nairn explained the proposed amendments to the Working from Home guideline. All amendments were accepted. Ms Goodrick will draft a brief background. Ms Byrnes will draft an alternative description of the 'five working days' approval threshold and provide to Mr Nairn for review and consultation with the ECG by email.
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) guideline was discussed. Amendments to the description of confidentiality were discussed and accepted.
- The ECG also discussed possible changes to the description of the qualification of counsellors within the background of the EAP guideline. Mr Nairn will provide amendments to the ECG by email for review.
- Ms Goodrick requested the ECG hold over the Studies Assistance guideline for the next meeting to allow additional time for review.
- Mr Nairn explained proposed amendments to the Electorate Staff Allowance guideline. All amendments were accepted. Ms Goodrick will draft a background and provide to Mr Nairn for review and consultation with the committee by email.
- Mr Nairn proposed an additional amendment to the Relocation Expenses guideline to specify the cost of packing and unpacking services were generally not covered. Mr Nairn will draft and distribute for consultation by email.
- The committee requested that a representative from IPEA attend the meeting when travel guidelines are to be discussed. Mr Nairn advised he will seek to make arrangements with IPEA.

Agenda Item 4 – Other business

- Ms Byrnes provided an online article on sexual harassment policies and MOP(S) Act employees to Mr Nairn and requested a prompt update from Finance on a sexual harassment policy and the matters raised in the article. Mr Nairn advised that consideration of a sexual harassment policy would be done in consultation with the WHS committee. Mr Nairn undertook to discuss this matter with the appropriate area of

Ministerial and Parliamentary Services and provide information to the ECG as soon as possible.

- Ms Goodrick raised concerns she had regarding an email sent by DPS regarding the establishment of a prescription-filling service at Parliament House. The service is available to those working at Parliament House during sitting weeks who are not based in Canberra. Ms Goodrick will contact DPS to query their decision to exclude those staff based in Canberra.
- Ms Nicolle raised the possibility of gym classes to be scheduled during question time. The ECG suggested the first point of contact should be a direct request to the Recreation Centre.
- Ms Nicolle voiced concern regarding a colleague who is unable to have a sit-stand desk due to her being at a reception desk and the effect on the aesthetics of the office. Mr Manuatu advised it is possible to obtain a desktop version of a sit-stand desk. Ms Nicolle will investigate further.
- Ms Goodrick discussed her email making suggestions for alternative delivery methods and courses for the Professional Development Program. Ms Glyntzos advised that the training team is currently looking at the provision of online training courses. She also noted that if any office is experiencing challenging constituents, particularly those who may be threatening self-harm, Finance can arrange training for the office.

Agenda Item 5 – Next meeting

- Friday, 23 March 2018.

Action Items

Ms Byrnes to draft a letter to Presiding Officers on trolley and car parking issues.
Ms Goodrick to draft a background for the Salary Setting and Progression, Working from Home, and Electorate Staff Allowance guidelines.
Mr Nairn to amend example one of the Salary Setting and Progression guideline.
Ms Byrnes to draft an alternative description of the 'five working days' approval threshold for the Working from Home guideline.
Mr Nairn to amend the EAP guideline.
Mr Nairn to amend the Relocation Expenses guideline.
Mr Nairn to provide the above amended guidelines to the ECG for review by email.
Mr Nairn to request a representative from IPEA to attend the ECG meeting when the travel guidelines are discussed.
Mr Nairn to provide information on a sexual harassment policy to the ECG as soon as possible.
Ms Goodrick to contact DPS regarding the exclusion of Canberra-based staff from the prescription-filling service.
Ms Nicolle to contact the Recreation Centre regarding gym classes being held during question time.