

MINUTES – EMPLOYEE CONSULTATIVE GROUP (ECG) MEETING

Friday, 16 November 2020
GovTeams

Meeting opened: 11:05 am
Meeting closed: 12:00 pm

Meeting chair: **Ms Dana Sutton** – Department of Finance (Finance)

Attendee	Office
Ms Rosemary Little	The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Ms Loretta Sist	Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Mr Nathan Winn	Mr Bert van Manen MP
Ms Alison Byrnes	The Hon Sharon Bird MP
Ms Georgia Goldsworthy	The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Mr Thomas Moorhead	Senator the Hon Kim Carr
Ms Kim York	Senator Rex Patrick
Mr Colin Lees	Senator Richard Di Natale
Ms Helen Lewis	The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Ms Eleanor Kennedy	Community and Public Sector Union
Mr Steven Mammarella	Minister for Finance
Ms Dana Sutton	Finance
Mr Keven Whitton	Finance
Mr Luke Kostava	Finance
Ms Joanne Fernandez	Finance
Ms Casey Martone (item 2)	Finance
Mr Gary Jolly (item 3)	Finance

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- Ms Sutton opened the meeting.

Agenda Item 2 – Communications, training and education

- Ms Martone provided an update on training and education. Finance is proposing to develop a MOP(S) Act employee capability framework as a tool to offer more digestible training that is targeted to employee roles. Finance will engage an external provider to support the project. Ms Martone indicated that Finance is seeking feedback to understand how this can help build professional capability of staff. Feedback can be sent to mopstraining@finance.gov.au.

Agenda Item 3 – Payroll

- Mr Jolly provided an overview of payroll matters and invited any questions, noting that prior service would be discussed at item 6.

Agenda Item 4 – Business from the previous meeting

- Mr Kostava and Ms Sutton reviewed action items from the previous meeting held on 7 August.
 - Ms Sutton noted there were no further developments regarding the email of payslips in PEMS.
 - There were an average of 90 leave applications and 1,650 payslip queries per month in 2020 through OnlineHR.
 - Finance has passed on concerns regarding APH Wi-Fi.
 - Ms Byrnes raised that often slow internet speeds in electorate offices which limits the ability of staff to watch Question Time and other media via APH machines. Ms Byrnes also raised that access Zoom through the APH network and therefore have to use and pay for their own personal data and equipment. Ms Sutton agreed to take these issues on notice.

Agenda Item 5 – Leave guideline

- Mr Kostava discussed updates to the *Leave and Public Holidays Guideline* (Leave Guideline) as circulated to members. The updates reflect changes to the statutory Paid Parental Leave scheme that came into effect on 1 July 2020.
- Ms Sutton noted Ms Little had recently asked some further queries about the guideline (Ms Little was not available during this item):
 - Requirements for medical certificates during maternity leave. Finance will consider this further when updating the Leave Guideline for the new EA.
 - Arrangements for when compassionate leave should be granted. This would need to be addressed through Enterprise Agreement bargaining.

Agenda Item 6 – Recognised prior service

- Ms Sutton noted that Finance is developing further information about recognised prior service that may assist employees. Recognised prior service is complex as it involves the interaction of different jurisdictions, schemes and different leave types to determine eligibility. The time it takes to process an application depends on many things, including the length and complexity of an employee's employment history and receiving requisite information from relevant sources.
- Ms Byrnes provided feedback that communication on the status of applications would be helpful to assist employees.

Agenda Item 7 – Other business

- Ms Sutton provided an update on EA bargaining.
 - On 13 November, the Fair Work Commission held a conference with the CPSU and Finance to discuss bargaining. Finance agreed to circulate a bargaining timetable before the next conference.
 - The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) recently released the Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2020 (the Policy).
 - Ms Kennedy asked how the Policy affected the six-month pause in enterprise agreements. Ms Sutton indicated that she would take this on notice.
- Ms Kennedy asked if the bullying and harassment policy will be disseminated through the ECG forum. Ms Sutton stated that the more appropriate forum would be through the WHS Committee, as it relates to health and safety in the workplace.
- Mr Lees asked if there is more specific advice about reimbursement arrangements for employees who work from home and require cooling. Ms Sutton noted that the ATO had provided advice on working from home during COVID-19 as part of individual's tax arrangements, noting the approach would be similar to heating costs.

Agenda Item 8 – Next meeting

- The next meeting date would likely be in February 2021, noting that ECG meetings may be paused whilst enterprise bargaining is underway.

Action Items

2020/1: Finance to further consider the requirements for medical certificates during maternity leave when updating the Leave Guideline for the new EA.
2020/2: Finance to clarify how the <i>Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2020</i> interacts with the prescribed six-month pay increase pause for new enterprise agreements.