

MINUTES – EMPLOYEE CONSULTATIVE GROUP (ECG) MEETING

Friday, 25 October 2019
Parliament House, Room 1S6

Meeting opened: 12:30 pm
Meeting closed: 2:10 pm

Meeting chair: Mr Nairn – Department of Finance (Finance)

Attendee	Office
Ms Rosemary Little	The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Mr Charles Headlam (phone)	Bridget Archer MP
Ms Loretta Sist	Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Mr Nathan Winn	Mr Bert van Manen MP
Ms Cathy Heidrich	The Hon Mark Coulton 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 (phone)	Senator Rex Patrick
Mr Colin Lees (phone)	Senator Richard Di Natale
Ms Eleanor Kennedy	Community and Public Sector Union
Mr Poni Ravula	Australian Services Union (ASU)
Mr Steven Mammarella	Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance
Ms Dana Sutton	Finance
Mr Tony Nairn	Finance
Ms Sharon Forester	Finance
Ms Heather Millard (item 2)	Finance
Ms Kristina Hopkins (item 3)	Finance
Ms Petrushka Mazur (item 3)	Finance
Ms Holly Noble (item 3)	Finance
Mr Andrew House (item 3)	Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
Mr Michael Jones (observer)	ASU
Mr Bryce Wilson (observer)	Mr David Smith MP

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- Mr Nairn opened the meeting and noted apologies from Josh Manuatu. ECG members introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 2 – MaPS website redevelopment

- Ms Millard spoke to the group about the re-development of the MaPS website. Ms Millard advised research would be conducted over the next 4 to 5 weeks and she would be seeking participants for focus groups, surveys, interviews and testing.
- ECG representatives noted issues with the website including the ease of finding information, including search functionality and being able to easily print information. Ms Millard noted that these matters would be included in the review.

Agenda Item 3 – Parliamentary Expenses Management System (PEMS)

- Ms Mazur provided a status update to matters raised at the last ECG and addressed a number of follow-up questions, including:
 - PEMS passwords expire and must be reset after 90 days. PEMS accounts are deactivated if they are unused for 90 days.
 - Staff whose employment has ceased cannot access Online HR or PEMS, and will need to contact the MaPS Helpdesk for payslips and employment details.
 - Ms Byrnes asked about the option for employees to elect to have their payslip emailed from PEMS. Ms Mazur stated that is not currently in scope in the PEMS project and agreed to look into whether it may be implemented.
 - Ms Byrnes also asked whether employees could be reimbursed for costs associated with the use of smart phones for the apps required in their work. Ms Mazur will provide information on what expenses may be covered.
 - There was some discussion about the use of PEMS and workflows within offices. Ms Mazur noted that the PEMS team could provide individual training to offices.

Agenda Item 4 – Business from the previous meeting

- Mr Nairn noted that each of the action items from the previous meeting had been addressed and/or were agenda items for consideration at this meeting. He noted that the Minister had replied to the ECG letter regarding bargaining for new Enterprise Agreement.

Agenda Item 5 – ECG Terms of Reference

- Mr Nairn noted a suggestion provided to the Secretariat from Ms Kennedy that item 2 expressly provide for the Department to report back to the ECG at each meeting. This amendment was accepted.
- The Terms of Reference was adopted without further amendment and will be provided to ECG representatives and published on the MaPS website.

Agenda Item 6 – Enterprise Agreement arrangements

- Mr Nairn noted that the Minister had commenced the bargaining process through a circular emailed to employees on 24 October 2019 advising of the arrangements for bargaining. Mr Nairn noted that the Notice of Employee Representational Rights was issued and emailed to employees this morning.

- Mr Nairn advised that the unions would shortly be formally notified of the commencement of bargaining. He noted that the unions had previously had bargaining teams consisting of union officials and MOP(S) Act employees and that the unions may again use this approach.
- There was extensive discussion about the Government's Workplace Bargaining Policy and how it applies to bargaining for MOP(S) Act employees. Mr Nairn relevantly noted:
 - the Bargaining Policy limits remuneration increases to an average of two per cent per annum, including salary and allowances such as PSA and ESA. There was general discussion about funding for salary increase and how this interacted with the Bargaining Policy; and
 - funding is a matter for the Government to consider, taking into account the nature of MOP(S) Act employment.
- Ms Byrnes asked about the process for an employee to have a salary above the range for their classification. Mr Nairn noted that the Enterprise Agreement provides for the salaries of employees including senior staff and that requests can be made to the Minister or Prime Minister to consider a salary that is outside of those provisions. Any proposed changes to the Enterprise Agreement would be a matter for the negotiation of the new agreement. Ms Byrnes proposed to draft a letter from the ECG to the Minister on this matter and will circulate the draft letter to the ECG.
- Ms Byrnes asked about the ballot for the new agreement and how it would be conducted. Mr Nairn replied that no arrangements had been made for the ballot at this point.

Agenda Item 7 – Other business

- Nil.

Agenda Item 8 – Next meeting date

- The WHS Committee members that are also ECG members proposed that the ECG meeting be directly after the next WHS Committee meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 14 February 2020.

Action Items

Ms Mazur to investigate option for employees to elect to have their payslip emailed from PEMS.
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Ms Mazur to provide information on expenses able to be claimed for phone usage related to PEMS.

ECG Terms of Reference to be published on the MaPS website and provided to ECG representatives.
