

MINUTES – Work Health and Safety Committee Meeting

Friday, 4th June 2021

GovTeams

Meeting Opened: 11.05 am
Meeting Closed: 12.44 pm
Meeting Facilitator: Dana Sutton - Ministerial and Parliamentary Services
Department of Finance (Finance)

Present:

Name	Representative
Kate Sutherland Office of Ms Lisa Chesters MP	Australian Labor Party
Bryden Toner Office of Dr Mike Freeland MP	Australian Labor Party
Gai Coghlan Office of Mr Chris Hayes MP	Australian Labor Party
Stella Weston-Smith Office of Mr Andrew Wilkie MP	Independents
Jorden Gunton (Deputy) Office of Senator Wendy Askew	Liberal Party of Australia
David Mejia-Canales Office of Senator Lidia Thorpe	Australian Greens
Steven Mammarella Minister for Finance	Management Representation
Eleanor Kennedy	Community and Public Sector Union
Adity Roy-Chowdhury	Jardine Lloyd Thompson (JLT)
David De Silva (Finance)	Management Representation
Dana Sutton (Finance)	Management Representation
Sharon Forester (Finance)	Management Representation
Eve Camilleri (Finance)	Management Representation
Ellen Laenen (Finance)	Committee Secretariat
Georgia Weichert (Finance)	Observer - Management Representation
Jill Flinders (Finance)	Observer - Management Representation

Apologies: Apologies were received from Kelli Orrell, office of Senator Dean Smith; Helen Lewis, office of the Hon Stuart Robert MP; and Kate Boyd, office of the Hon Ed Husic MP.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

- Ms Sutton welcomed the members of the committee and thanked everyone for their attendance.
- David De Silva, First Assistant Secretary, MaPS and Georgia Weichert, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Taskforce were introduced as available to answer any questions in relation to taskforce matters, including the Foster Review and Independent AHRC (Jenkins) Review.
- Apologies were noted from Kelli Orrell, Helen Lewis, and Kate Boyd.

Agenda Item 2 – WHSC Membership

- Ms Sutton advised that Jordan Gunton was elected as a Deputy HSR for the Liberal Party in March, and noted that there is still a vacant position as a HSR for the Liberal Party.
- Mr Mejia-Canales advised that there is also a vacancy for the Deputy HSR position for the Australian Greens as Georgia Webster has ceased employment. Ms Sutton indicated that MaPS would be in touch with Mr Mejia-Canales to assist with the process of electing a replacement representative.

Agenda Item 3 – Actions arising from the previous meeting

- Action items of the previous meeting held 26 February were considered:
 - Action 1: MaPS to issue communication regarding services such as trauma assistance available through EAP.
Ms Forester advised that information is included in the monthly EAP reminders sent to all staff.
 - Action 2: CPSU to consider providing Finance with a copy of the recent survey.
Ms Kennedy advised she will confirm when the survey was sent.

Agenda Item 4 – WHS Report

- The committee discussed the quarterly WHS report for the period 1 January to 31 March 2021.
- Ms Forester noted that JLT has rebranded to Marsh, and introduced Ms Roy-Chowdhury as the new representative from Marsh, who highlighted the key statistics for the quarterly report and welcomed queries related to the data provided.
- Ms Kennedy raised the benefits of the committee undertaking a group risk assessment in regards to managing psychological risks in the workplace. It was agreed to include a strategic planning discussion on the agenda at the next committee meeting.
Action item 1: Include a group strategic planning/risk assessment discussion at the next WHS Committee meeting.
- Discussion was held around recording psychological incidents. Ms Forester outlined the ways psychological injuries are reported, and Ms Sutton provided examples of mechanisms of psychological injuries. Ms Forester agreed to provide information on what categories were included under psychological incidents
Action item 2: Finance to provide details of what is included under psychological incidents.

Agenda Item 5 – MOPS WHS Update

- Ms Forester provided an update on various WHS matters.
- Ms Forester commented that COVID-19 still factors highly particularly noting Melbourne is still in lock down and that MaPS is committed to supporting affected staff. Guidance was issued on 3 June 2021 from the Presiding Officers about returning to Canberra, in addition to an all staff email that sent 25 May in response to the issues in Victoria. It was noted that

more information will go out in the Safeguard Newsletter shortly - reminding everyone that COVIDSafe plans need to be regularly updated and that the australia.gov.au website continues to have the latest information and a state by state restriction checker.

- Additional EAP support services are available with onsite EAP Services continuing at APH for sitting periods. Ms Forester also reminded the committee that the New Access Mental Health Coaching Program is also available.
- Ms Forester advised that the 2021 Flu vaccination program is currently underway.
- Ms Forester advised that MaPS has started to receive queries from offices that are being impacted by the mice plague. A link to the NSW Government's advice will be included in the next Safeguard newsletter with tips on managing this issue and reminding staff that the EAP remains available to anyone requiring support.
- Mr Toner and Ms Kennedy queried the uptake of EAP now that the APH hotline (1800 APH SPT) was available. Mr De Silva noted that use of the EAP was higher during peak COVID periods, however now use is relatively stable and consistent with pre-COVID peaks. Mr De Silva also noted that as they have different scopes, it is difficult to determine, particularly as MaPS has no visibility of the nature of calls made to the hotline.

Agenda Item 6 – Discussion/Presentation

- Ms Camilleri presented an overview of the Respect@Work Review, the Foster Review, and the Independent AHRC (Jenkins) Review, noting they will all influence approaches to workplace bullying and harassment.
- The committee was consulted on policy proposals and approaches to reviewing the current Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy, and a proposed stand alone Sexual Harassment Policy. The committee indicated their support for a stand alone Sexual Harassment Policy.
- HSRs and the CPSU provided feedback and discussed policy inclusions and development.
- Mr Gunton provided positive feedback regarding the Mental Health First Aid training available through the Professional Development Program for MOP(S) Act employees. The CPSU noted they strongly encourage mental health training to become mandatory for all staff, however it was noted that training can only be mandatory for certain WHS roles.
- Ms Forester particularly encouraged all Staff Assistance Officers to undertake the training.

Agenda Item 7 – Other Business

- Mr Toner raised concerns about lighting on the path leading out to the Ceremonial Gardens at APH, and queried whether MaPS could raise this with the Presiding Officers. Ms Sutton noted that MaPS would contact DPS.

Action item 3: Follow up concerns around lighting on the path leading out to the Ceremonial Gardens with DPS.

Agenda Item 8 – Next meeting

- The next WHS committee meeting will be advised out of session in accordance with the Terms of Reference and to align with parliamentary calendar, potentially on 27 August or 3 September 2021.

4 June 2021 WHS Committee Action Items

Action 1: Include a group strategic planning/risk assessment discussion at the next WHS Committee meeting.

Action item 2: Provide details of what is included under psychological incidents.

Action item 3: Follow up concerns around lighting on the path leading out to the Ceremonial Gardens with DPS.