



MINUTES - Work Health and Safety Committee

Friday 20 August 2021
GovTeams

Meeting opened: 10:30am
Meeting closed: 12:00pm
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
Brydan 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
Leonie Lloyd Smith Office of Rowan Ramsey MP	Liberal Party of Australia
David Mejia-Canales Office of Senator Lidia Thorpe	Australian Greens
Simon Kelly Office of Lew O'Brien MP	National Party
Helen Lewis Office of the Hon Stuart Robert	Liberal Party of Australia
Steven Mammarella Minister for Finance	Management Representation
Eleanor Kennedy	Community and Public Sector Union
Adity Roy-Chowdhury	Marsh
Stephanie Foster	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Guest)

David De Silva (Finance)	Management Representation
Dana Sutton (Finance)	Management Representation
Cassie Haynes (Finance)	Management Representation
David Sandbach (Finance)	Committee Secretariat
Cathy Stokes (Finance)	Observer - Management Representation
Jill Flinders (Finance)	Observer - Management Representation

Apologies: Apologies were received from Kelli Orrell, Office of Senator Dean Smith and Rosemary Little, Office of the Hon Peter Dutton MP

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Sutton welcomed the members of the committee and thanked everyone for their attendance. Ms Sutton introduced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Stephanie Foster, Deputy Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; First Assistant Secretary, David De Silva, Assistant Secretary, Cassie Haynes and Director, Cathy Stokes from Finance who were also attending the meeting. Apologies were noted.
Agenda Item 2 – Updates to WHSC Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Sutton congratulated and welcomed Nikki Arnold and Claire Berry who were elected as Deputy HSRs for the Liberal Party Ms Sutton noted there was a vacant Deputy HSR position for the Greens.
Agenda Item 3 – Actions arising from the previous meeting* (*note this item was considered after items 4 and 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action items of the previous meeting held 4 June were considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 1 - Ms Sutton noted that the risk assessment would be discussed at the next WHS Committee meeting given the two presentations for this meeting. As such, this item would be held open for the next meeting.



- Action 2 - Ms Sutton explained that a register is used to track psychological incidents. This included incidents arising from witnessing traumatic and violent events, repetitive verbal and other forms of harassment and was included in the quarterly reporting.
- Action 3 - Ms Sutton noted this item was closed and had been actioned promptly by Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS).

Agenda Item 4 – Foster Report update

- Ms Sutton introduced Stephanie Foster, Deputy Secretary for APS Reform, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet who was attending the meeting to provide an update on the *Review of the Parliamentary Workplace: Responding to Serious Incidents* (Foster Report) which was finalised following consultation, on 26 July 2021.
- The independent complaints mechanism would be operational no later than 6 September 2021.
- Ms Foster outlined the key differences between the consultation copy of the report and final report were:
 1. *Access for former staff*
Consultation copy of the report limited access to the new complaints framework would be for current employees only. This was to ensure the system was operating effectively before it addressed historical complaints. Following feedback, the report had expanded to include former employees to encourage staff to come forward if they have complaints.
 2. *Encouraging Parliamentarians to do training*
Ms Foster noted that the executive could not mandate legislature to do the training. Education program would be face to face or video conferencing due to the lockdown.
 3. *Afterhours access controls*
Ms Foster noted that in the consultation report proposed to notify individual office managers and Parliamentarians about after-hours access. A number of Parliamentarians indicated that they wanted a Parliamentary process to address this during the consultation process. Ms Foster explained that she had recommended additional powers be conferred on the Parliamentary Services Commissioner.
 4. *Parliamentary Workplace Support Services (PWSS)*
Ms Foster outlined that the new PWSS would have multiple points of entry, a dedicated website, provide services on site from 8am-8pm on sitting days and 8-6 on non-sittings. A duty officer would be on call 24/7. Ms Foster outlined that robust processes had been put in place to ensure privacy and confidentiality of information.

Ms Foster invited questions:



- Ms Kennedy asked about evaluation processes to ensure that this service was working as intended?
 - Ms Foster noted that a similar approach to the 1800 line would be taken: Short surveys at the end of each call had helped improve the quality of the service provided. Staff would also have an opportunity to provide feedback and a more comprehensive assessment would be done in a few months. The Parliamentary Service Commissioner will also have a role in ensuring that the process is functioning and the team was working to provide the information that the Commissioner required.
- Mr Toner asked about what the team's presence would be at Parliament House? What outreach did the team plan to do? For instance would there be 'pop up' clinics at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices?
 - Ms Foster noted that there would be an effort to reach out to all Parliamentarians and MOP(S) employees about the PWSS. She confirmed an appropriate location had been found for the PWSS at APH.

Agenda Item 5 – Policy Discussion

Ms Haynes gave a presentation to the Committee about the draft Sexual Harassment Policy and the Safe and Respectful Workplace Policy. A copy of this presentation has been provided to the Committee. MS Haynes invited questions:

- Ms Kennedy asked about the consultation process and given the importance of the Policies if broader consultation was proposed.
- Mr Mejia-Canales indicated that it was important to allow time to respond and asked if further time could be provided to WHSC members.

Action item 1 – Ms Haynes requested all HSRs to coordinate discussions with their respective workgroups and provide their comments on the two policies to the MOPSWHS mailbox.

NOTE: Email sent 27 August 2021 confirming extension of timeframe for feedback until Monday 6 September 2021 and encouraging elected HSRs to consult and seek the views of colleagues from the respective workgroups.

Agenda Item 6 – WHS Report Overview

- Ms Chowdhury discussed the quarterly WHS report for the period of 1 April to 30 June (2nd Quarter) She noted key statistics in the report:
- There were 14 incidents and 6 resulted in injuries. There were 49 hazards reported and 24 on site WHS assessments.
- The registration of hazards has been observed, noting many offices were currently in lock down and noted that only a small number were identified as high risk.
- Marsh is in the process of setting up QR codes to make registering hazards easier for MOP(S) employees.



- Online modules provided on the Skytrust platform have now been transferred to Finance and can now be accessed on the MAPS website.
- Ms Sutton noted that as staff had moved to working from home due to the lockdown – encouraged staff to make use of the online ergonomic assessments to ensure staff were supported to safely work from home.
- Ms Sutton also noted that Finance would work with the new PWSS team to ensure all notifiable incidents were reported to Comcare.

Agenda Item 7 – MOP(S) WHS update

Key WHS changes included:

- WHS training modules had been transferred to the MaPS website to hold all training in one place - modules the same as the ones on the Skytrust website.
- Committee members requested to encourage colleagues to access the training, noting that work is being done to update the training. More training on sexual harassment will, in accordance with Foster review recommendations, be rolled out in the near future including bystander training.
- New online nomination form for WHS roles on PEMS – encourage any vacant roles to be filled.

Agenda Item 8 – Other Business

Mr Mejia-Canales asked if MOP(S) employees could take ‘vaccination’ leave to get the COVID19 vaccination as well as time to recover from any side effects of the vaccination.

Ms Sutton explained that MOP(S) employees can already take paid leave to attend vaccination appointments. Ms Kennedy indicated that the CPSU would write seeking clarity about MOP(S) employees taking ‘vaccination’ leave and indicated that it would be helpful if we could send communications confirming that paid leave was available.

Agenda Item 9 – Next meeting

Ms Sutton noted that meetings would proceed on a quarterly basis. She also noted that a number of Committee members also sit on the Employee Consultative Group Committee, which was scheduled 27 August 2021. It was intended to realign WHS and ECG meetings.

20 August 2021 WHS Committee action items

Action item 1: All HSRs to coordinate discussions with their respective workgroups and provide their comments on the two policies to the MOPSWHS inbox.