

MINUTES – EMPLOYEE CONSULTATIVE GROUP (ECG) MEETING

Friday, 25 February 2022
GovTEAMS

Meeting opened: 11:30
Meeting closed: 11:50

Meeting chair: Ms Jill Flinders/Mr Tim Abrahams – Department of Finance (Finance)

Attendee	Office
Colin Lees	Senator Richard Di Natale
Kim York	Senator Rex Patrick
Kate Sutherland	Lisa Chesters MP
Georgia Goldsworthy	The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Jordan Piggott	CPSU
Poni Ravula	USU
Michelle Hutchinson	Office of the Special Minister of State
Tim Abrahams	Finance
Jill Flinders	Finance
David Sandbach	Finance
Cathy Stokes	Finance (observer)
Jess Morris	Finance (observer)
Brad Walters	Finance (observer)

Apologies - Thomas Moorhead (Office of the Senator the Hon Kim Carr)

Retired – Alison Byrnes (Office of the Hon Sharon Bird MP)

Agenda item 1 - Welcome and apologies

- Ms Flinders opened the meeting.
- Members of the ECG and Finance introduced themselves and apologies were noted.
- Ms Flinders advised that Alison Byrnes from the Hon Sharon Bird MP's office had resigned from the ECG and acknowledged her work on this committee.

Agenda item 2 – action items from previous meeting

- Ms Flinders noted that the last meeting was a joint ECG/WHS meeting on 16 December 2021 where Commissioner Kate Jenkins presented to the Committee on the findings of the Independent Review into the Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces.
- There were no action items for this meeting.
- Ms Flinders noted the following past action items from the previous meeting on 26 November 2021:
 - PWSS presentation slides were sent out to Committee members. Ms Flinders also asked Committee members to advise if they have not received this email.
 - Noted that the CPSU is yet to write about proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the ECG. Mr Piggott noted that CPSU was drafting this letter and would send to Finance soon.
 - Finance had invited the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) to attend the joint ECG/WHS meeting. DPS were not able to attend this meeting.
 - The CPSU's request for the WHS organisational chart of the responsibilities of different agencies/departments will be provided after the Jenkins' Report recommendations are implemented.
 - The eight remaining Enterprise Agreement Guidelines were sent to members for final consultation prior to approval and publishing. It was noted that further discussion of this would occur as part of the next agenda item.
Finance had arranged for Commissioner Jenkins to attend a joint ECG/ WHS Committee meeting, which was held on 16 December 2021.

Agenda item 3 – Guidelines

- Ms Flinders noted that the eight remaining Guidelines had received minimal feedback which was taken to be a broad endorsement. Since the consultation period ended:
 - the Guidelines have been provided to the Communications team to ensure that they are visually consistent with the finalised Guidelines on the MaPS website; and
 - sent for final approval.
- Once approved the Guidelines will be published on the MaPS website.

Agenda item 4 – MaPS election preparation update

- Ms Flinders noted that materials have been published on the MaPS website to assist with questions MOP(S) employees or their Parliamentarians may have about the upcoming election. These materials include:
 - The election helper tool to assist MOP(S) employees to self-identify termination triggers based on the outcome of the election;
 - Election frequently asked questions ('FAQs' which will be regularly updated leading up to the election;

- A checklist is available for Parliamentarians to assist those who are resigning, or not re-contesting the election.
- When the election is called, it is proposed that an email will be sent to the Office Managers for all Parliamentarians, tailored to their specific situation
 - This email will provide general advice about the election, campaigning and potential election termination triggers.
- During the election period:
 - The Help Desk will continue to provide advice and support to all MOP(S) employees in relation to questions that they may have;
 - The FAQs will be updated to reflect any trends in questions received, to ensure that information is readily available for all MOP(S) employees;
 - MaPS will have some additional staff on the Help Desk and in the Pay & Conditions team to assist with the anticipated increase in workload.
- At the end of the election, it is proposed that emails will be sent out to relevant MOP(S) employees regarding deferral periods.
- Mr Piggott asked if there would be any additional information about work health and safety measures during the election campaign?
 - Ms Flinders advised that there is information on the MaPS website about WHS measures to consider during the election. Finance also undertook to ensure that information on WHS is included in the communications that are sent out at the beginning of the election.

Agenda item 5 – Other business

- Ms Goldsworthy asked how MOP(S) employees would be engaged in consultation regarding the review of the MOP(S) Act?
 - Mr Abrahams noted that Minister Birmingham and Minister Morton are planning to attend the WHS Committee meeting later today.
 - Mr Abrahams agreed to confirm the on the consultation process and advise out of session.
- Mr Piggott asked if employees would be consulted on changes to the Code of Conduct that is being investigated by the Joint Select Committee?
 - Mr Abrahams agreed to confirm the consultation process and MaPS will advise out of session.
- Mr Lees noted that one of the Jenkins Review recommended that the Public Interest Disclosure Act whistleblower protections be extended to MOP(S) employees and asked for a status update.
 - Mr Abrahams noted that this is on the reform agenda and agreed to provide an update out of session

Agenda item 6 – Next meeting

- Mr Abrahams thanked Committee members for their contributions to the ECG.
- Mr Abrahams noted the current Terms of Reference for the ECG required members to continue in their roles during the election period. He added that it was unlikely that Finance would hold a meeting during the election period, noting that the next quarterly meeting would otherwise be May 2022.
- Mr Abrahams noted that there may be consultation with the Committee out of session during the election period.
- Mr Abrahams concluded that there will be a call for the new ECG Committee members following

the election. We will also review the Terms of the Reference post-election.

Action items
Action item 1 EA Guidelines published on the MaPS website following SMOS approval.
Action item 2 Finance will confirm what the consultation process is for the MOP(S) Act review and provide advice out of session.
Action item 3 Finance will confirm what the consultation process is for the Code of Conduct is and provide advice out of session.
Action item 4 Finance will provide an update out of session regarding the status of the proposed recommendation to reform the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 to provide whistle-blower protections for MOP(S) employees.
Action item 5 Finance may consult with the Committee out of session during the election period, but no meetings will be called.
Action item 6 Finance will call for new ECG Committee members following the election and propose to review the Terms of Reference post the election.