



Senator the Hon Don Farrell

Minister for Trade and Tourism
Special Minister of State
Senator for South Australia

Key Points

- *The Employee Consultative Group and Work Health and Safety Committees are being reconstituted following the Federal election.*
- *Employees, other than employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties, should expect to hear from their respective parties on the process for nomination and/or selection of both groups shortly.*
- *Employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties may nominate themselves directly to the Department of Finance.*

MIN 2022/04

All Senators and Members
All MOP(S) Employees

RECONSTITUTION OF THE EMPLOYEE CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Employee Consultative Group (ECG) and Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) for *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) employees are being reconstituted following the Federal election.

The ECG and WHSC will consist of MOP(S) Act employees, union representatives, and representatives from my office and the Department of Finance (Finance). Draft Terms of Reference are attached.

Employee representatives will be drawn from all political parties on a proportional basis to employee numbers.

Employee Consultative Group (ECG)

The ECG will consult on a broad range of workplace issues that relate to MOP(S) Act employees.

The ECG will include 11 employee representatives consisting of:

- Five representatives (and three reserve) for employees of the Australian Labor Party of Senators and Members
- Three representatives (and two reserve) for employees of the Liberal Party Senators and Members
- One representative (and one reserve) for employees of The Nationals Senators and Members
- One representative (and one reserve) for employees of Australian Greens Senators and Members
- One representative (and one reserve) for employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties.

Eligibility of representatives to the ECG

To be eligible to be an employee representative on the ECG, an employee must be:

- ongoing; or
- non-ongoing, working more than one day per week, have been employed for the preceding three months and will be employed for a further three months.

Each political party has been asked to make its own arrangements for the selection of their employee representatives. Employees, other than employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties, should expect to hear from their respective parties on this process shortly.

Employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties – ECG

Finance will provide administrative assistance during the nomination and selection process for the representative of the employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties. Eligible employees from this group are invited to email ecg@finance.gov.au to request an ECG nomination form. Nominations are to be submitted to Finance by 30 September 2022. Finance will then contact relevant employees regarding a ballot, if required.

Work Health and Safety Committee (WHSC)

Division 4 of Part 5 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) requires the Commonwealth to establish a WHSC for MOP(S) Act employees. The purpose of the WHSC is to promote consultation with MOP(S) Act employees on a broad range of WHS issues, including the development of WHS policies and procedures.

Consistent with the WHS Act and the existing WHSC's terms of reference, the number of Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and Deputy HSR (DHSR) for the WHSC is allocated according to political party and independent work groupings on a proportionate basis. The number of HSR and DHSR positions for each work group is:

- Five HSR (and three DHSR) positions for employees of Australian Labor Party Senators and Members
- Three HSR (and two DHSR) positions for employees of Liberal Party of Australia Senators and Members
- One HSR (and one DHSR) position for employees of The Nationals Senators and Members

- One HSR (and one DHSR) position for employees of the Australian Greens Senators and Members
- One HSR (and one DHSR) for employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties

Subject to their consent, the elected HSRs will sit as employee representatives on the WHSC. Sections 60-67 of the WHS Act and regulation 18 of the WHS Regulations set out specific requirements for the valid election of HSRs and DHSRs.

Consistent with previous arrangements, it is proposed that the political parties arrange the election of their HSRs and DHSRs in accordance with the WHS Act and Regulations and certify that the election complied with the legislative requirements. Employees of former Prime Ministers will be represented by employee representatives from the relevant political parties.

Employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties – WHSC

Finance will provide administrative assistance during the nomination and selection process for the representative of the employees of Independent Senators and Members and Minority Parties. Eligible employees from this group are invited to email ecg@finance.gov.au to request a WHSC nomination form. Nominations are to be submitted to Finance by 30 September 2022. Finance will then contact relevant employees regarding a ballot, if required.

Travel costs

Travel costs associated with ECG and WHSC meetings for representatives whose travel is subject to the Electorate Support Budget (ESB), will not be debited from their employing Senator or Member's ESB, providing the representative is not also travelling to Canberra for other purposes.

As there is no budget restriction on the travel of employees who are not subject to the ESB, there is no need for similar arrangements for these members.

More information

I encourage all Senators and Members to support employees who are considering being involved in the ECG and/or WHSC.

Yours sincerely



Don Farrell
Special Minister of State

12 September 2022