

# EMPLOYEE CONSULTATIVE GROUP (ECG) MEETING 5 – RECORD OF MEETING

Friday 24 November 2023  
GovTEAMS

Meeting opened: 11:02 AEDT  
Meeting closed: 12:08 AEDT

**Meeting Chair: Ms Jillian Flinders – Department of Finance**

Attendee	Office
Amy Knox	Ms Joanne Ryan MP
Liz Bateson	The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP
Nathalie Rosales-Cheng	The Hon Anne Aly MP
Michelle Hutchinson	The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Leonie Lloyd-Smith	Mr Rowan Ramsey MP
Bonnie Pederson	Office of the Special Minister of State
Cory Harding (replacement of Riley Thomas)	Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Emma Garbutt	Mr Adam Bandt MP
Cathy Heidrich	The Hon David Littleproud MP
Emma Groube	CPSU
Connor Wherrett	The Hon Chris Bowen MP
Jess Morris	PWSS
Leanne Martens	PWSS
Alison O'Donnell	PWSS
Jaan-Clare Whitcombe	IPEA
Nicole Pearson	IPEA
Charlotte Tabi	IPEA
Marco Spaccavento	Assistant Secretary, IPEA
Rick Corkhill	Finance, MaPS
Peter Byass	Finance, MaPS
Regan Tanaskovic	Finance, Director HR Policy and Assurance
Ellen Laenen	Finance, A/g Director HR Policy and Assurance
Lachlan Bayliss	HR Policy and Assurance (observer)
Taylah Yaccob	HR Policy and Assurance (Secretariat)

## Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgment of country.
- Members in attendance introduced themselves.
- Apologies were noted:
  - Leonie Lloyd-Smith, Office of Mr Rowan Ramsey MP
  - Representative for Minority Parties and Independents, Office of Dr Helen Haines

## **Agenda Item 2 – PWSS update**

- The Chair welcomed Jess Morris from PWSS to the meeting.
- PWSS shared a presentation that highlighted the core functions of the newly established entity. The presentation provided an overview of the continued HR/WHS advice and support functionality, with a focus on trauma informed principles key information on assistance support available.
- PWSS briefly spoke on local resolutions, independent reviews/investigation processes regarding workplace matters, including terminations initiated by an employer, where an independent review will be appointed to conduct investigations.
- PWSS concluded their agenda item by requesting feedback on the Terms of Reference, which was circulated to ECG and PLT and noted that feedback is due by COB 15 December 2023.

## **Agenda Item 3 – IPEA Travel Allowance processing**

- The Chair welcomed representatives from IPEA to the meeting.
- IPEA advised that:
  - travel claims continue to be processed as usual, within four business days.
  - claims must be authorised and submitted by COB 15 December 2023 due to the Christmas shutdown period and
  - communication to all Parliamentarians and MOP(S) Act employees will be circulated in due course.

## **Agenda Item 4 – PEMS payment processing**

- The Chair welcomed representatives from IPEA and Finance to discuss PEMS.
- IPEA provided an introductory overview to the new PEMS Expenditure Report function including the updated functionalities.
- A committee member raised their concerns on PEMS timing out, access issues for casual employees and the inability to claim travel in advance.

**Action Item 5.1 – Peter Byass from PEMS to contact the member to discuss issues and next steps out of session.**

## **Agenda Item 5 – MaPS update**

- The Chair reiterated Finance and PWSS are working collaboratively to ensure continuity of service delivery, including the readily available access to the appropriate area or

resource for advice and support, with the operation of a “no wrong door” approach, to provide a simultaneous handover.

- A recent report showed that the MaPS Help Desk upholds service standards following the MoG. Average wait call times from October to date are 2:29 minutes, in comparison to 4:51 minutes for September.
- The responsibility of EA bargaining remains with Policy, and MaPS will continue to work collaboratively with PWSS as the EA bargaining progresses.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Action Item update**

- The Chair provided an update of Action items, noting:
  - **Action item 4.1 from meeting 4 – Leave Balances:** Payroll undertakes a complete audit of an employees leave history/records as part of any cessations to ensure final entitlements are paid correctly and are working to improve processes. If there are specific leave issues, staff are urged to contact [mpshelp@finance.gov.au](mailto:mpshelp@finance.gov.au).
  - **Action item 4.4 from meeting 5 – Salary Sacrifice:** Update provided as MaPS is currently looking relevant forms and policies (which will be in consultation with the ECG) – Aiming to operationalise 2024.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Policy update**

- The Chair provided a policy update and advised that:
  - Updates to Guidelines will await the outcome of the 2024-27 Enterprise Agreement considerations.
  - the amended Guideline for Salary Packaging is now available on the MaPS website, however will continue to be managed by SmartSalary.
  - The implementation of the proposal for Salary packaging for superannuation purposes is in progress and will proceed independently of any Enterprise Agreement discussions.
  - Contact details have been updated to refer to PWSS on 02 6215 3333 (option 3) in the Leave for Family and Domestic Violence guideline. PWSS have flagged further enhancements of the guideline and we will consult with ECG.
  - MaPS will continue to update and consult on all proposed changes to the Leave and Public Holidays guideline to clarify information in relation to keeping in touch (KIT) days, to make it certain that all employees on parental leave are able to access KIT days, not just those who are eligible for paid parental leave scheme.

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Enterprise Agreement**

- The Chair provided an update on negotiations for the next Enterprise agreement noting that correspondence was received from CPSU on 17 October 2023 seeking to commence bargaining, no later than 30 October 2023.
- Finance is in the process of engaging with the Minister and the APSC in preparation to commence bargaining.
- The Chair advised that a Ministerial Circular will be sent to all staff on nominations, which will be followed by the issuing of a National Employee Representational Rights (NERR).

#### **Agenda Item 9 – Other Business**

- A member raised concerns that the 2024 Parliamentary Sitting calendar was not “family friendly” and causing distress to employees, particularly as sitting dates were scheduled for the week leading up until the Thursday before Easter Friday and during school holidays.
- Another committee member advised employees had queried whether their employment can be maintained, given that this is not suitable for those with carer responsibilities.

**Action Item 5.2 – Finance to provide feedback on concerns raised , on behalf of the ECG in relation to the 2024 Parliamentary Sitting calendar.**

#### **Agenda Item 10 - Next meeting**

- The Chair concluded the meeting by advising that this was the last ECG meeting before 2024-27 negotiations commence, however we can continue to consult on current workplace matters via email to [ECG@finance.gov.au](mailto:ECG@finance.gov.au).
- The meeting closed at 12:08pm AEDT.