

OFFICIAL

WHS Committee - Minutes

Meeting 5 – Wednesday, 13 December 2023, GovTeams

Meeting opened: 3.05pm

Meeting closed: 4.01pm

Attendees

Meeting chair: Scott Mischke, Chief People Officer –PWSS.

Attendees	Office
Lisa Banyard*	Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Leanne Coleman*	Hon Kristy McBain
Tamsin Anspach	Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Kate Sutherland*	Ms Lisa Chesters MP
Simon Kelly*	Mr Llew O’Brien MP
Susan Kappel*	Mr Alex Antic MP
HSR	Dr Helen Haines MP
Bonnie Pederson	Office of the Special Minister of State
Emma Groube	CPSU
Jess Stone	CPSU
Debbie Arnold	PWSS, Resources Review
Sandra Fisher	PWSS, Director – WHS
Mila Logan	PWSS, Assistant Director – WHS (Secretariat)
Therese Wilson	PWSS (Secretariat)

* Health and Safety Representative

Apologies

- Emily Tyrrell* – Office of Senator the Hon Tim Ayres
- Emma Garbutt* – Office of Mr Adam Bandt MP
- Cathy Heidrich* – Office of David Littleproud MP
- Chantal D’Argaville* - Office of Hon Peter Dutton MP
- Hafiz Jan* – Office of Ms Cassandra Fernando MP
- Mary Von-Marburg* – Office of Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
- Joshua Polak – USU
- Hannah Smith – CPSU

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Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and thanked everyone for their attendance.
- Apologies were noted.
 - Chris Williams and Jess Feely have ceased employment and as such are no longer members of the committee.
- The Chair noted the PWSS would look to hold meetings more frequently to progress key agenda priorities. (*Refer action item 4.7, Meeting 4*)
- The Chair encouraged members to engage in ongoing discussion and consultation via other communication channels in between the meeting schedule to ensure timely attention to issues.
- Members were asked to include a brief explanatory statement to accompany new agenda item submissions to maximise time for robust discussion.

Agenda Item 2 – WHS quarterly report & Action Items update

Sandra Fisher (Director, PWSS WHS) provided an update on the following items, including actions arising from Meeting 4:

WHS quarterly report – Q3: 1 July to 31 October 2023

- The report format has been updated to reflect the work of the PWSS, and updates have made to the Terms of Reference (ToRs) and WHS roles and responsibilities.
- Mila Logan (Assistant Director, WHS) confirmed statistics provided in the WHS Quarterly report were drawn from Marsh monthly and quarterly reporting data, incidents reported through Skytrust.
- Tasmin Anspach noted the format of the new report is improved and more comprehensive.
- Jess Stone (CPSU) noted inconsistencies in the draft ToRs against the WHS Act 2011.
- Sandra Fisher advised the draft ToRs would be further reviewed and invited feedback from the CPSU on the draft ToRs.

Draft alcohol policy and principles

- The draft document is with PWSS for further development.

Benestar EAP & PWSS resources

- The PWSS is conducting a physical mail-out of updated EAP resources to offices, rebranded to TELUS Health (formerly Benestar).
- Updated PWSS resources are now available on the [PWSS website](#):
 - [Anonymous & Bystander Reporting factsheet](#)
 - [Managing stress and anxiety factsheet](#)
 - [Performance management factsheet](#)
 - [Racial discrimination factsheet](#)
 - [Releasing personal information in parliamentary workplaces factsheet](#)

- Records Factsheet
- Review of Decisions factsheet
- Wellbeing strategies factsheet
- Working with people who are escalated factsheet
- Workplace bullying factsheet
- **ACTION ITEM 1:** CPSU to finalise review of the draft ToRs, provide feedback out-of-session to PWSS WHS.

Agenda Item 3 – Other business

3.1 Resources Review (*Debbie Arnold*)

- The Chair introduced Debbie Arnold as Head of the Resourcing Review of Parliamentarian Offices, as recommended by the MOP(S) Act review.
- Debbie Arnold advised the review team had been engaging with key stakeholders on the draft Terms of Reference which will close on 15/12/2023. A consultation process will then commence.

ACTION ITEM 2: Committee members agreed to include ‘Resources Review update’ as a standing agenda item

3.2 Psychosocial hazards and psychological injury (*Tamsin Anspach*)

- Tamsin Anspach commented on the availability of resources and support for individuals around boundaries and tolerances for psychosocial incidents and risks as insufficient. The need to find a balance between reporting that is not onerous to staff and reflects the reality of the workplace.
- Sandra Fisher commented that a key of focus of the PWSS is on psychosocial risks; preventative measures to mitigate rather than reactive.
- Jess Stone (CPSU) commented on incident reporting avenues, including from other agencies.
- Kate Sutherland commented on the importance of training, discussion around recognising individual and team coping strategies.
- Lisa Banyard noted varied reporting requirements and definitions of psychosocial hazards and incidents; specifically, understanding around what constitutes a reportable psychological incident/hazard. She noted confusion around reporting requirements and the additional work imposed on staff if every incident or hazard is reported. Lisa also referenced concern for Queensland offices impacted by the current weather events, as well as the protestor activity affecting the office itself.
- Kate Sutherland noted incident notification process from MaPS Victoria is much improved in recent years, including advance notice of activities from MaPS and other key agencies and swift clean-up action.

ACTION ITEM 3: PWSS Case Coordination to reach out to offices affected by recent weather events.

ACTION ITEM 4: Committee members agreed to include ‘Psychosocial risks and hazards’ as a standing agenda item.

3.3 HSR structure (*Tamsin Anspach*)

- Tamsin Anspach commented on the difficulty enacting HSRs duties under the WHS Act; geographically dispersed office locations, differences between the duties of a WH&S Site Officer (WHSO) and HSR; where WHSOs act on behalf of the PCBU and HSRs are employee representatives.
- The Chair and Sandra Fisher invited comments, suggestions for more effective representation across offices.

ACTION ITEM 5: Committee members to review HSR structure and provide suggestions out of session, to be considered as part of the review of the Terms of Reference.

Smoke alarm requirements in offices (*Lisa Banyard*)

- Lisa Banyard raised concerns around fire alarm requirements in the office, noted a fire alarm is not installed in their electorate office.

ACTION ITEM 6: PWSS WHS to liaise with Lisa Banyard, MaPS QLD and clarify smoke alarm requirements against building code requirements and relevant WHS legislation and codes of practice.

Benestar EAP (*Lisa Banyard*)

- Lisa Banyard provided positive feedback on PWSS lanyard cards distributed to offices.

Vaping policy – APH (*Simon Kelly*)

- Simon Kelly noted that pass holders had been observed vaping in APH and that there is no explicit reference to vaping in the current DPS smoking policy.
- Noted updates made to the draft smoking policy were still pending, requested representation from PWSS WHS on the progress of the draft policy by DPS.

ACTION ITEM 7: PWSS WHS follow-up on the status of the updated DPS policy.

CPSU report on the trial of the tally sheets (*Jess Stone*)

- The CPSU (Jess Stone) noted a tally sheet had been created in consultation with some offices to record incidents, specifically those of a psychosocial nature.
 - Data collected by participating offices using the tally sheet indicated:
 - 249 incidents occurred in later part of November
 - 476 incidents – December
- The main themes represented involved phone and in-person interactions with distressed constituents, with graphic details being described to office staff.
- Tamsin Anspach noted the tally sheets had been useful, providing a visual representation of incidents experienced by offices.

Agenda Item 4 – Standing Items (*Chair*)

Family friendly working hours

- This is a standing item but there were no comments raised on this occasion.

WHS Review

- Tamsin Anspach commented on the importance of an interdepartmental WHSC, to enable consultation across agencies to progress action on key WHS issues affecting CPWs.
- Sandra Fisher advised a potential cross-agency arrangement was being considered but the structure is yet to be finalised.
- The Chair noted the PWSS would continue leveraging existing relationships in the interim.
- Jess Stone (CPSU) requested data on number of employees in each office to assist in identifying workforce capacity and employees, including list of WHS Officers. The Chair agreed to consider request offline.
- Bonnie Pederson suggested personal staffing tables tabled at Estimates as an interim alternative.

ACTION ITEM 8: PWSS WHS to consider CPSU request for employee data out-of-session.

Quarterly WHS incident reports

- Refer Agenda 2 update.

Agenda Item 5 – Next meetings and close

- The Committee discussed proposed date for 2023, acknowledging interim meeting dates would also be included should additional time be required to cover all agenda items.
 - Wednesday, 13 March 2024
 - Wednesday, 12 June 2024
 - Wednesday, 4 September 2024
 - Wednesday, 4 December 2024
- **Optional extra meeting dates**
 - Wednesday, 31 January 2024 (optional)
 - Wednesday, 1 May 2024 (optional)
 - Wednesday, 24 July 2024 (optional)
 - Wednesday, 16 October 2024 (optional)
- The Chair thanked members for their attendance and active engagement during the meeting.
- The meeting closed at 4.01pm.