

OFFICIAL

WHS Committee - Minutes

Meeting 6 – Wednesday, 13 March 2024, GovTeams

Meeting opened: 3.02 pm (AEDT)

Meeting closed: 3.57pm pm (AEDT)

Attendees

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

Attendees	Office
Lisa Banyard*	Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Leanne Coleman*	Hon Kristy McBain MP
Tamsin Anspach*	Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Kate Sutherland*	Ms Lisa Chesters MP
Hafiz Jan*	Ms Cassandra Fernando MP
Mary Von-Marburg*	Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Simon Kelly*	Mr Llew O'Brien MP
HSR	Dr Helen Haines MP
Bonnie Pederson	Office of the Special Minister of State
Emma Groube	CPSU
Jess Stone	CPSU
Sandra Fisher	PWSS, Director – WHS
Mila Logan	PWSS, Assistant Director – WHS
Melissa Corlis	PWSS, WHS Secretariat
Kurt Tumbagahan	PWSS, WHS Secretariat

* Health and Safety Representative

Apologies

- Susan Kappel* Mr Alex Antic
- Emily Tyrrell* – Office of Senator the Hon Tim Ayres
- Emma Garbutt* – Office of Mr Adam Bandt MP
- Cathy Heidrich* – Office of the Hon David Littleproud MP
- Chantal D'Argaville* - Office of Hon Peter Dutton MP
- Joshua Polak – USU
- Hannah Smith – CPSU
- Debbie Arnold – PWSS, Resources Review

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Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

- The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and thanked members for their attendance.
- Apologies were noted from Susan Kappel and Debbie Arnold.
- Members were thanked for their engagement and consultation efforts to date.
- The Chair noted PWSS recruitment processes are in the final stages and whilst in the transition phase of the agency's establishment a continuous improvement yet staged approach to progressing work priorities is being taken.

Agenda Item 2 – WHS quarterly report & Action Items update

Sandra Fisher provided an update on the following items, including actions arising from Meeting 5:

2.1 Terms of Reference

- Feedback on the draft Terms of Reference has been incorporated and an updated draft distributed to members with the agenda papers for Meeting 6.
- Review of the HSR structure is ongoing. Further work will be undertaken to clarify the role of a HSR in the operating environment.

2.2 2024 Flu Vaccination Program

- The annual MOP(S) Act flu vaccination program will commence in April.
- The program has been expanded to include a flu voucher option. MOP(S) Act staff will be able to request a voucher via an online booking system for use at over 2,000 participating pharmacies nationally. Vouchers will be available until 31 July 2024.
- Staff can also access the APH onsite vaccination program (coordinated by Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS)) via a reimbursement arrangement through PEMS.

2.3 WHS Services Contract

- The WHS Services contract is currently under negotiation. Under revised arrangements, the service provider will be required to conduct annual WHS hazard inspections of all office locations.
- The WHS team will also be reviewing the frequency of the Workplace Inspection Program (WIC) and will consult WHS Site Officers before June about a proposed change from quarterly to annual workplace inspections. The shift to annual inspections will enable WHS Site Officers to focus on proactive WHS management strategies and engagement and training opportunities.
- Tamsin Anspach questioned whether the proposed WHS contract arrangements would diminish the legislative rights of HSRs to conduct workplace hazard inspections. Sandra Fisher advised the inspections are a preventative strategy and would not impede HSRs from enacting their rights under the WHS Act.

2.4 Wellbeing calendar

- Committee members provided feedback on the draft PWSS wellbeing calendar.
- The WHS team will consider utilising an alternative design program for future publications.

2.4 Psychosocial Hazard Guide

- The updated psychosocial hazard guide has been distributed to members along with the WHSC meeting papers.
- Tamsin Anspach noted contact details for PWSS were missing from the psychosocial hazard guide. Sandra Fisher advised an earlier version of the guide had incorrectly been distributed.

2.5 WHS Review

- Work continues in relation to recommendation 28 – alcohol policies arising from the Set the Standard report.
- Reviews will soon commence on WHS policies: early intervention, reasonable adjustment, guidance for Parliamentarians and MOPS employees on the workers' compensation process.
- Tamsin Anspach queried consultation arrangements relating to Recommendation 26 (Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service). Sandra Fisher advised the WHS team would seek an out-of-session update from the responsible agency, DPS.

2.6 Forward Work Plan

- The WHS forward work plan has been distributed with Meeting 6 papers. There will be increased capacity to progress forward work priorities with additional staff commencing.
- Tamsin Anspach asked whether WHS Risk Register would be looking at electorate offices as a whole. Sandra Fisher advised the purpose of the WHS Risk Register will be to provide suggestions for implementing control measures on baseline risks common to all offices. The finalised risk register for each office will look different. Work on the risk register will start this year and continue to evolve as a working document.
- Lisa Banyard commented on varying approaches to actioning security related risks with reference to the different channels for reporting incidents. The Chair noted the one-size-fits-all approach may not be the best option, and that the baseline risk register serves as a structured framework for managing WHS risk.
- In relation to psychosocial hazards, a member asked whether other support options besides case coordination are available. Sandra Fisher advised this would be captured in emergency response plans, managed by Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (MaPS).

2.7 Action Item Updates

- Outstanding items to be progressed by WHS Secretariat:
 - Staffing data request has been referred to Finance.
 - The draft smoking policy has been updated by DPS to include reference to vaping and is currently waiting approval.
 - The draft alcohol policy has been transferred to PWSS. The draft policy will be consulted with stakeholders this financial year.

2.8 Statistics

- The WHS services provider will move from monthly to quarterly incident reporting. Incident statistics in the Quarter 1 report include reports until 6 March 2024.
- The WHS team and MaPS state managers have established regular meetings to identify enhanced ways of working, including improvements to the incident reporting and ergonomic assessment process.
- Tamsin Anspach provided positive feedback on the Quarter 1 report and queried the definition of a property and security incident, asking whether incidents falling under this category were

based solely on reporting data from the incident management system and if protestor related incidents are being captured effectively overall.

- Sandra Fisher and Mila Logan confirmed incident statistics are based on data from the incident management system, reviewed and reclassified by the WHS team as appropriate. The property and security incident data category includes incidents related to building damage and/or security issues resulting from a protestor event. Work continues on developing an improved incident management system, noting that current incident numbers are likely understated.
- Lisa Banyard commented on the overlap between property/security and psychosocial incident reports, and raised an issue with reporting incidents via various channels. The Chair noted the opportunity for a case study example into incidents reported.
- Sandra Fisher highlighted the importance of treating Case Coordination statistics carefully with respect to confidentiality provisions. The Chair noted case coordination data is collected annually and the 2023 data will be distributed once available.
- Emma Groube (CPSU) noted the importance of capturing incident data effectively, to enable closer reflection of incident types, facilitate constructive conversation and actively address issues raised.
- Mila Logan suggested inclusion of additional text prompts/definitions alongside reporting fields to assist with accurate incident reporting. Emma Groube (CPSU) suggested including options for selecting multiple categories.

ACTION ITEM 1: PWSS WHS Secretariat to seek an update from DPS relating to Recommendation 26 (Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service).

ACTION ITEM 2: PWSS WHS Secretariat to distribute updated psychosocial hazard guide along with final meeting minutes.

ACTION ITEM 3: PWSS WHS Secretariat to distribute 2023 case coordination data once available.

Agenda Item 3 – Standing Items (*Chair*)

3.1 Psychosocial hazards and psychological injury

- Discussed in previous agenda item

3.2 Family friendly working hours

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

3.3 WHS Review

- Discussed in previous agenda item

3.4 Resources Review

- The Chair shared an update on behalf of Debbie Arnold (Head of the Resources Review) who was unable to attend the meeting:
- The Resources Review Terms of Reference have been finalised and available on the PWSS website: [Terms of reference - Independent Review of Resourcing in Parliamentarian Offices](#) .
- Consultation will commence in the first week of April. Contributions can be made via email to: resourcereview@pwss.gov.au.

- Tamsin Anspach advised the committee had to yet to receive a response to feedback provided on the Terms of Reference.
- Emma Groube (CPSU) advised the union had also provided feedback and were awaiting correspondence on how that feedback had been incorporated. CPSU have requested to meet with the Head of the Review to discuss consultation arrangements.
- The HSR Representative requested clarification on the process for consulting electorate offices and finalising the draft Terms of Reference, noting the WHS Committee had been awaiting a response from the Resources Review.
- The Chair noted capital, regional and remote offices were selected and the Resources Review team would provide further information on the consultation process and how the offices were selected. The Chair advised regular updates had been communicated in the PWSS monthly newsletter to all staff.
- Tamsin Anspach, Lisa Banyard and Bonnie Pederson indicated they had not received the monthly newsletter. Kate Sutherland clarified that Members had been invited to participate via their Parliamentarian. Emma Groube (CPSU) raised an issue with this approach, with reliance on initiative from the parliamentarians to encourage participation in the review rather than the information being sent to MOP(S) Act employees.

ACTION ITEM 4: PWSS WHS Secretariat to check distribution list for PWSS monthly newsletter.

Agenda Item 4 – Other Business

4.1 Disability review

- DPS has confirmed receipt of the [Dignified Access Report 2023](#) from the Australian Network on Disability. DPS is responsible for consulting with stakeholders on the implementation of the recommendations.

4.2 Safety when travelling

- The Chair noted advice provided to staff on taxi and scooter use, with the key message that staff should not put their personal safety at risk by questioning charges.
- Emma Groube (CPSU) relayed feedback from members on the use of CabCharge vouchers, with taxi operators in some states refusing to accept CabCharge vouchers as payment.
- Committee members discussed issues with using corporate credit cards, issues with significantly increased fares, additional toll charges and longer routes towards a destination.
- Discussion around the need for more recognition for different transport modes including rideshare options. The Chair advised data confidentiality reasons restricted the use of rideshare services.
- The Chair encouraged committee members to further consider the topic and raise suggestions with the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA).

4.3 WHS Consultation

- The Chair clarified the approach of engaging across various consultation methods, including informal consultation by sharing project ideas at various stages of development. This is to enable early opportunity for members to be consulted and provide their input before a product/approach is finalised. Members can also choose to opt-out of informal consultation opportunities.

Agenda Item 5 – Next meetings and close

- Next meeting: **Wednesday, 12 June 2024**
- Optional extra meeting date: Wednesday, 1 May 2024
- The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contribution during the meeting.
- The meeting closed at 3.57pm.