



## Work Health and Safety Committee – Minutes

### Meeting 9 – Wednesday 4 December 2024

- Meeting opened – 3:06 pm
- Meeting closed – 3:52 pm
- Location – Teleconference.

### Meeting chair

Mr Scott Mischke – Chief People Officer

### Attendees

Health & Safety Representative	Lisa Banyard	Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
	Chantal D'Argaville	Hon Peter Dutton MP
	Susan Kappel	Senator Alex Antic
	Simon Kelly	Llew O'Brien
	Mary von Marburg	Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
	Kate Sutherland	Ms Lisa Chesters MP
Other attendees	Jess Stone	CPSU
Invited presenters	Sandra Fisher	Director, WHS – PWSS
Observers	Bonnie Pederson	Senator the Hon Don Farrell
Secretariat	Gai Jansen	Director, Strategic Unit
	Mila Logan	Assistant Director, Strategic Unit

### Apologies

- Tamsin Anspach – Senator the Hon Penny Wong
- Hafiz Jan – Ms Cassandra Fernando MP
- Cathy Heidrich – Hon David Littleproud MP
- Christina Grant – Resourcing Review
- Emma Groube – CPSU
- Hannah Smith – CPSU
- Ebony Roach – Assistant Director, WHS – PWSS
- Brendan Macnamara – Director – Parliamentary Business Resources, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services, Department of Finance
- Leanne Coleman – Hon Kristy McBain MP
- Sienna Parrott – Senator Larissa Waters
- HSR – Dr Helen Haines MP

## Agenda Item 1 – Meeting opening

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The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed all attendees.

Apologies were noted from Tamsin Anspach (HSR), Christina Grant, Hannah Smith (CPSU), and Joshua Polak (USU).

The Chair provided the following updates:

- The Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission (IPSC) commenced 14 October 2024. The investigation function has been transferred from the PWSS to the IPSC, which will be able to apply sanctions. The Behaviour Codes and Standard were implemented on the same day as the IPSC's establishment.
- Machinery of Government transfer arrangements are now complete. The agency is largely fully staffed, particularly service delivery teams.
- Preparations have begun for the upcoming election. The PWSS is developing material and resources to guide staff through the election process, including guidance on specific circumstances. Members are invited to provide feedback on the development of this material, particularly those with experience and insight from previous election processes.

## Agenda Item 2 – WHS Committee Report

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Sandra Fisher presented the WHS Committee Report as follows.

### Action item updates

- **PWSS Website** – the rebranded PWSS website is now live. Work is underway to update website attachments to the new branding and ensure links are functioning properly.
- **WHS Policies** – work on WHS policies is progressing. The draft policies will be consulted on out-of-session, including the early intervention policy and Reasonable Adjustment policy. In addition to physical adjustments, the draft Reasonable Adjustment policy includes adjustments for psychological conditions, ADHD and neurodiversity. Work on reviewing the fatigue management policy has begun and is in its early stages.
- **Election risks** – an election campaign risk register is being developed to capture election-specific risks. The draft risk register will be consulted through the WHSC given members' experience. The draft risk register will include controls recommended by PWSS WHS as well as measures adopted by individual offices.
- **HSR vacancies** – the WHS team will communicate HSR vacancies out-of-session.
- **EAP** – staff are reminded that EAP services offered through TelusHealth are available to all parliamentarians and MOP(S) Act employees and their extended family members, including the Before Blue service (previously NewAccess).
- **Ergonomic assessments** – as part of its work on streamlining processes, the WHS team is reviewing the process for requesting an ergonomic assessment. To enable visibility and triaging of request submissions, staff should email their ergonomic assessment requests to: [whs@pwss.gov.au](mailto:whs@pwss.gov.au).
- **Travel risk register** – work has commenced on developing a travel risk register.
- **Baseline risk register** – the draft WHS baseline risk register has been finalised. Member feedback is welcome on the draft register, which aims to capture hazards and risks commonly encountered by offices. In developing the risk register, the WHS team reviewed all incident reports to determine key baseline risks. The risk register is not intended to be the same for each office but provides a base set of risk and controls for offices to consider and adopt for their particular circumstances.

- **Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces (CPW) HR Advisory Panel** – the third meeting of the CPW HR Advisory Panel was held on 26 September 2024. The following items were discussed:
  - *Incident reporting* – The Panel is continuing to prioritise work to enhance WHS and risk reporting. A new intranet page on the DPS website is now available for those who work at APH and provides a central source for reporting WHS hazards and providing key contact information.
  - *Smoking policy* – the APH smoking policy has been updated to reference vaping and to capture the reconfigured no-smoking areas at APH.
  - *EAP harmonisation* – The CPW HR panel is considering harmonising Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services across APH. There is an opportunity to streamline the EAP service offering across CPWs by providing access through PWSS' EAP contract. Implementation will depend on the timing of existing contracts and their end dates.
- **WHS training update** – WHS modules on the PWSS Academy are outdated and will be reviewed. The agency will seek to incorporate WHS training material from Comcare as the subject matter experts in the first instance.
- **Physical document mailout** – a resource package of documents in the new PWSS branding will be sent to offices early December.
- **Stakeholder map** – the Secretariat is finalising the stakeholder map for out-of-session distribution to members.
- **Incident reporting update** – there has been a high number of protesters and graffiti incidents recently, with increased activity and reporting expected after the January period. The most frequently reported are fire and emergency, workplace and environmental, security and psychosocial hazards.
- **Workplace inspections** – the 6-monthly workplace inspection program has begun, and offices are no longer required to undergo quarterly workplace inspections. The new program requires offices to undergo workplace inspections twice a year: one by the nominated WHS Site Officer, and the second by both the WHS Site Officer and a Marsh inspector.

### Discussion

- **CPSU (Jess Stone)** – the following items raised by the CPSU were discussed:
  - *PWSS Rules* – an update was requested on the status of the PWSS Rules, and the composition and appointment of members to the PWSS Consultative Committee once established. The Chair advised the PWSS Rules were awaiting approval by the SMOS, which will confirm the composition of members on the Consultative Committee.
  - *PWSS website* – the CPSU commented positively on the new PWSS website and noted that some navigation issues still remain. The Chair stated that additional enhancements would be made to the website with the commencement of a new Director of Communications. Members are encouraged to continue providing feedback on the website's development.
  - *Draft WHS documents* – in response to the CPSU's question about consultation timeframes on the draft WHS documents, Sandra Fisher noted the intention to begin consultation on the draft early intervention policy before Christmas. Members agreed to a 3-week consultation period, depending on when documents are issued for consultation. The Chair invited requests for extensions if timeframes prove unachievable.
  - *Drug & alcohol policy* – the CPSU noted the policy had dropped off the WHSC agenda. The Chair advised that the policy is currently on pause and will be consulted through the PWSS Consultative committee once established, subject to the PWSS Rules which are awaiting approval by the SMOS.
  - *HSR vacancies* – the CPSU requested a list of HSR vacancies be provided to the WHSC.
  - *Risk register consultation timeframe* – Sandra Fisher indicated the intention to distribute working drafts of the risk register before Christmas. The CPSU suggested that the risk register be distributed in its current form to enable members to provide feedback to assist in finalising the document. Sandra informed members that the team is considering ways to distribute documents via a centralised access point to enable more efficient way for collaboration and consulting documents. For example, SharePoint or GovTeams.

- *Shared incident reporting* – Sandra Fisher provided a description of shared incident reporting in practice, with an example of a trip hazard incident reported at APH. The process for mitigating security related risks was noted, with additional work required on WHS incident reporting due to the various methods for reporting incidents.
- *Dignified Access Review* – the Chair stated that the Access and inclusion Champions group oversee implementation of recommendations from the Dignified Access Review report.
- *Smoking policy* – members commented on the portable signage in APH courtyards marking the new smoking exclusion zones for DPS workers in courtyards.
- *Panel representatives* – the CPSU requested clarification on the composition of the HR Advisory Panel, including the process for selecting panel representatives. Sandra Fisher advised chairing responsibilities are rotated among the parliamentary departments, with DPS responsible this year and House of Representatives next year.

**ACTION 1 (20241209):** WHS to provide a list of HSR vacancies.

**ACTION 2 (20241209):** WHS to advise process for appointing representatives to the Cth HR Advisory Panel and confirm if there are external representatives on the Panel.

### Agenda Item 3 – Other business

- *CPSU Letter* – The Chair acknowledged the CPSU's letter of 29 November 2024 on behalf of its members regarding risk management and PCBU obligations and thanked the CPSU for bringing matters of relevance to the Committee's attention.

The Chair noted that given the entities' separate functions in relation to the issues raised in the CPSU letter, each request will be considered and addressed by the responsible agency. The Committee will be kept informed on those matters. The CPSU agreed to table the issues raised in the letter as an item on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting, and for the letter to be attached to the minutes for Meeting 9.

- *West Block accommodation* – the CPSU requested an update on West Block accommodation arrangements. The Chair stated that the agency will no longer be moving to West Block and will remain at APH.
- *Resourcing Review* – the CPSU and Guy Mosel (HSR) enquired about the release of the Resources Review report. The Chair undertook to seek a status update on the report from the Head of the Review, including decision by Government on its release.
- *Recruitment process improvements* – in response to a question from Guy Mosel (HSR) about recruitment processes, the Chair noted continued work on maturing recruitment services offered, including the development of a centralised recruitment portal. The Chair clarified that the funding for MOP(S) staff advertisements is paid for centrally, and the onboarding process remains with MaPS, Finance.

**ACTION 3 (20241209):** Secretariat to distribute the CPSU Letter of 29 November 2024 to the Committee with the Meeting 9 minutes.

**ACTION 4 (20241209):** Secretariat to include matters raised in the CPSU Letter of 29 November 2024 as an agenda item at the next meeting.

### Agenda Item 4 – Meeting close

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contribution towards WHS initiatives throughout the year. The Chair confirmed the next meeting of the WHSC on Wednesday 5 March 2025.