**Interim Working Group**

**for Australia’s OGP National Action Plan**

**9:00am – 2:30pm, 7 October 2016**

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

**Sydney**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance list:**

* Mr Timothy Pilgrim
* Mr Iain Anderson (via telephone)
* Ms Helen Owens
* Ms Jodi Keall
* Ms Samara Dobbins
* Ms Kayelle Drinkwater (via telephone)
* Ms Fiona McLeod
* Dr Ken Coghill
* Mr Peter Timmins
* Ms Maree Adshead
* Mr Mark Zirnsak
* Ms Katherine Szuminska
* Mr Phil Newman
* Mr Ryan Black

**Apologies:** Dr Steven Kennedy (represented by Ms Helen Owens)

Dr Stein Helgeby (represented by Ms Kayelle Drinkwater)

Ms Meghan Quinn (represented by Ms Jodi Keall)

Ms Elizabeth Tydd (represented by Ms Samara Dobbins)

Ms Anne Lyons

1. **Arrival and welcome**

Ms McLeod noted the key sessions for the day were to:

* Discuss any changes to commitments following feedback from within government.
* Discuss other components of the National Action Plan.
* Engage with Assistant Minister Taylor.
* Discuss the approach to public consultation on the draft National Action Plan and key communication and awareness raising activities.

1. **National Action Plan**

PM&C provided an overview of the process within government to finalise the draft National Action Plan for public consultation.

Members discussed the ultimate authorship of the Plan. Members agreed that as the Plan is in the process of being considered by the Government and is subject to change, the language should reflect that the Plan has been developed by the Australian Government, and informed by the work of the Interim Working Group.

PM&C confirmed that comments received during the public consultation process would inform the Government’s final consideration of the Plan.

* 1. **Feedback from within government and discussion of proposed commitments.**

PM&C provided feedback from within government on several of the proposed commitments. Members discussed potential changes to the commitments and PM&C agreed to make updates where possible, noting that more substantive changes may need to be considered through the upcoming consultation process.

Mr Newman emphasised the opportunity to leverage research currently being undertaken by Griffith University on whistle-blower protections.

Dr Coghill reiterated his preference for the Plan to commit to an inquiry into the funding and expenditure of political parties eligible to receive public funds.

Mr Zirnsak raised the possibility of the Plan including consultation on the implementation of recommendations from the statutory review of the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006*.

Ms Adshead led a discussion on the importance of defining the characteristics of ‘high-value’ datasets.

Civil society members emphasised their desire for ongoing responsibility for the Open Government Partnership and for any future whole-of-government work on improving public participation to be led by PM&C.

***Action: PM&C to make updates to commitments where possible.***

* 1. **Foreword and other content for the National Action Plan.**

PM&C sought feedback from the Group on draft content for the following components of the National Action Plan:

* Introduction;
* Efforts to date;
* Developing this plan; and
* Australia’s leadership internationally.

Members suggested changes to each of the components and for PM&C to consider.

Civil society members raised the need to include a broad vision statement in the Introduction, which would outline the longer term objectives of Australia’s membership of the Open Government Partnership.

Civil society members also emphasised their desire for a separate international commitment in the Plan, noting opportunities for Australia to host an Asia-Pacific regional meeting of the Open Government Partnership, and to leverage Australia’s regional aid and development programs to achieve open government outcomes.

***Action: PM&C to make updates to the other components of the National Action Plan.***

1. **Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, the Hon. Angus Taylor MP**

Assistant Minister Taylor made opening remarks, noting the importance of the open government agenda, and his enthusiasm in seeing the Open Government Partnership operate as a catalyst for action in his areas of responsibility, including the open data agenda and digital transformation of government.

The Assistant Minister also noted that openness and transparency are key tools to achieving better outcomes for all Australians and are also an important economic issue.

Ms McLeod noted the broad spectrum of open government issues and the need for aspirational goals. Civil society members highlighted key issues for Australia’s first National Action Plan:

* Mr Zirnsak raised the opportunities of improving transparency and accountability in the business and corporate sectors to drive social and economic outcomes across Australia, including through measures such as improved corporate whistle-blower laws, a beneficial ownership register, and improving Australia’s compliance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.
* Ms Adshead led discussions on open data and digital transformation noting the opportunities for open data to facilitate not only private sector innovation but also public sector innovation. Members also discussed the need to build data skills and capability at all levels of government.
* Mr Timmins raised the importance of reviewing and reforming information access laws and practice to ensure they are appropriate for the 21st century and the digital information age.
* Ms Szuminska led discussions on improving public participation and engagement within government.
* Dr Coghill led discussions on enhancing the national integrity system, and improving confidence in the electoral system and political parties.

Civil society members also urged Assistant Minister Taylor to support strong Australian representation at the OGP Global Summit in Paris.

1. **Morning Wrap-Up**
2. **Public consultation**
   1. **Timeframes**

PM&C provided an update on timeframes and next steps, including the proposed timeframes for government approval processes. PM&C noted that the Plan would be released for a minimum of two weeks for public consultation.

* 1. **Consideration of submissions**

Members discussed the proposed public consultation and submission process, including timeframes, methods of submission and the scope of public consultation.

Members agreed the most useful feedback would be on the details of commitments in the Plan. Members agreed that it would be difficult to incorporate ideas for new commitments at this late stage of the development of the Plan, and noted that a formal consultation process had been conducted in December 2015-April 2016 to seek ideas for commitments in the Plan.

Civil society members noted the challenge to ensure wide consultation in the consultation timeframes.

* 1. **Communication and awareness raising**

Members held a brainstorming session on communication activities that could be undertaken in the lead up to and during the period of public consultation on the draft National Action Plan.

Some proposed ideas to raise awareness of the public consultation included:

* Utilise Australian Government agencies’ contact lists to ensure relevant stakeholders are engaged on specific commitments.
* Undertake a whole-of-government approach to promotion and communications (including through multiple agency websites and social media), but channelling submissions back through a central process (managed by PM&C).
* Ministerial media releases to target mainstream media, and also encourage further ministerial engagement.
* Develop stakeholder kits (including, for example, social media messages) to assist stakeholders with communications.
* Leverage existing events and public meetings.
* Civil society members and PM&C to work together to organise information sessions in selected locations around Australia.
* Teleconferences with state, territory and local governments.

Members agreed for PM&C to develop a coordinated communication and awareness raising strategy.

***Action: PM&C to draft a communication and awareness raising strategy and circulate to the Group for input.***

1. **Other business**
   1. **OGP Global Summit – Paris, December 2016**

PM&C provided information on the process to attend the OGP Global Summit, noting that the management of civil society invitations rested with the OGP Support Unit. Members were encouraged to register their interest in attending by the deadline of 31 October 2016.

Mr Timmins noted that financial support from the Australian Government could assist civil society representatives with attending the summit.

* 1. **Australian representation on OGP Working Groups**

PM&C provided information on the six thematic working groups that are open to all governments and civil society organisations involved in the OGP. PM&C provided information on any Australian representatives on the working groups, and noted that the process to join was to contact   
co-anchors of the groups.