

More 12-hour shifts – the key to managing fatigue and staffing levels

The PSA has been advised that management has been insisting on covering staff absences on the 12-hour roster with staff on shorter shifts. This has led to very low staffing levels early in the morning causing significant stress to staff working at these times. There is no reason for this to be happening.

Despite any misinformation that may be circulating, the PSA has no issues with members on this new roster working 12-hour shifts.

The new flexible rostering agreement signed last year allows non-matrix staff to be placed on 12-hour shifts, either as single shifts or in blocks to cover gaps in the 12-hour roster. The 12-hour roster is the backbone of the demand-based rostering system and the number of staff on the 12-hour roster determines the number on duty in the hours leading up to the start of the morning shift.

Since the implementation of the roster for new full-time staff commencing from January 2018, Radio Operations Group has employed a significant number of new full-timers following over six years of only employing part time staff.

The PSA fought for these positions and part of the negotiation involved developing a set of rules that would guide the roster, including:

- » A minimum of six RLDs per fortnight (for example, 18 days off across the roster cycle)
- » Shift lengths between seven and 12 hours
- » Rules for when 12-hour shifts are worked.

The full set of rules can be seen in the Flexible Rostering Agreement available [HERE](#).

It was always envisaged that this roster would entail a mix of shift lengths, including some 12-hour shifts and some shorter shifts. The rules merely set out the *minimum* numbers of days off per roster period but specifically allowed the opportunity for longer shifts and more days off per roster period.

Where there are gaps in the matrix roster due to staff absences, for example, there is no reason a full timer on this new roster cannot be slotted into the 'matrix' roster for a number of weeks to cover this vacancy.

As well as blocks like this, members can work individual 12-hour shifts, although the rules set out that no more than three of these individual 12-hour shifts can be worked in any roster cycle. This is because having more than three unblocked 12-hour shifts creates a very patchy, ad-hoc roster that doesn't allow adequate fatigue management for individuals.

When the PSA intervened last year to enforce this rule, the Command responded by not rostering *any* 12-hour shifts for new full-timers. This has been detrimental to both the fatigue management of members on this roster, as well as to the overall staffing levels. The PSA believes that allowing longer shifts will assist in providing a much better backbone of adequate staffing levels between 0300 and 1000.

At the August 2018 meeting of the Joint Communications Consultative Committee (JCCC), the PSA was advised that the Centre Commander has autonomy over rosters and that they are not



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sent out unless approved by the Centre Commander (see Minutes available [HERE](#)).

The PSA strongly encourages members to speak to their Centre Commander about whether alternative models are available with regard to their rostering. If the Centre Commander supports the use of longer shifts, there should be no barrier to making the changes.

A reminder that it is critically important that anybody with concerns about specific workload issues on a shift completes a **Workload Concern Report** (found [HERE](#)) as soon as possible, emailing it to their Centre Commander and copying their delegate and PSA Industrial staff into the email as outlined in an earlier bulletin available [HERE](#).

By collectivising these individual complaints, we will be able to build up a strong picture over time of how frequently and severely major concerns occur and how they are managed.

For any questions or to discuss further, please contact:

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