

Consultation around Ways of Working – Flexible Working Toolkit

DPIE has begun discussions with the PSA around a document titled *Ways of Working – Flexible Working Toolkit*. This document is intended to replace policies related to flexible work options (such as job sharing, working from home, reduced hours' arrangements), but it does not impact or alter your Flexible Working Hours Agreement.

While a final document has not been provided to the PSA as yet, there are currently areas of agreement and areas of disagreement with the current draft.

The “If not, why not?” approach

The NSW Government made an often publicised commitment to making all roles flexible in the NSW Government sector on the basis of “if not, why not?” by 2019. Unfortunately, the PSA believes that too often flexible work practices are declined by management not in tune with this media-friendly Governmental commitment.

As such, the PSA is seeking that any document makes it clear that managers should have a supportive attitude in regards to the promotion of flexible working practices for their staff, and there needs to be adequate reasons clearly explained before declining any request. This will require adequate training for all managers so that they understand the commitment made by the NSW Government. DPIE agrees with this approach.

Despite the agreement with solidifying the “if not, why not?” approach, there remains areas of disagreement.

- The PSA disagreed with wording in the document that prevents employees using commute periods as work time. We advised that the previous Flexible Work Policies for Environment and Heritage and Planning and Environment had “work in journey” that allows this. While the PSA is pragmatic and can understand that “work in journey” may not

always be appropriate, there is undoubtedly some situations in which such an arrangement would work well for both the employee and the Department.

- The PSA disagreed with the WHS self-assessment process put in place by the employer for employees working from another location as we remain concerned that individuals may not have the expertise to ensure they are working safely.

Where to from here?

It is the intent of DPIE to put this document out in the near future. While the PSA acknowledges some positive aspects of the document, there remains other areas where the parties disagree.

Whatever form the document ultimately takes members have a right to expect good communication with their managers in terms of discussions around flexible working practices, in keeping with the NSW Government’s “if not, why not?” commitment.

When problems arise you should contact your local delegate, or call the PSA Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679.

Not a member? Ensure you receive assistance if your flexible working request is unfairly declined by joining today at www.psa.asn.au.

