

ROSTER REPORT



Queensland
Government
Department of
Emergency Services

Issue 3, December 2007

The Staff Consultation Tour has now concluded and all staff should have received their ballot package. There was healthy debate and discussion around the state on many aspects of the proposal, with many staff welcoming the flexibility and options proposed. To ensure your vote counts, your ballot paper needs to be received by first mail on 20 December 2007.

During the consultation process there was overwhelming staff support for the proposal. There has been a genuine attempt to embrace the feedback from staff and design a roster package that services both the needs of our patients and of our staff.

Whilst there have been some changes to the Roster Package as a result of the staff consultation, key elements from the original proposal forwarded to the Premier in October have been maintained. Contrary to some misleading information, there has been no change to the core principle of the proposal. The proposal accepted and endorsed by Government has always included:

- Stations which provide 24 hour, 7 day service to have a core roster consisting of 12 hour day and 12 hour night shifts to provide a base line level of coverage.
- In order to balance working hours to an average of 40 hours per week, core rosters will incorporate some support shifts.
- Support rosters will also be available to provide additional flexibility where required, consisting of day and afternoon shifts.
- Any revised roster arrangements are to be in line with community demand profiles and therefore will not compromise service delivery requirements to the community.

As a direct result of the Staff Consultation sessions, some modifications were made to the original proposal to provide even greater flexibility for Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) employees, these include:

- Not proceeding with the plan to expand the meal window,
- Being more flexible around 12 hour day shifts start time,
- Removing the 10 hour cap from support rosters.

Unfortunately there has been an attempt to derail the roster process through the circulation of wrong and misleading information. The claims in these unauthorised documents include:

- The false claim: *This proposal will diminish working rights for QAS staff.*
This claim is NOT true

No working rights of staff are diminished. In fact the process to amend the *QAS Enterprise Partnership Certified Agreement 2005* (EPA 2005) through a ballot is part of the process to protect staff working rights. It has been staff that sought a greater flexibility in determining when a day shift may start and finish.

To accommodate the reasonable needs of staff it was agreed to amend the EPA 2005 to ensure that 12 hour day shifts only could be introduced commencing up to 0700 hrs and finishing no later than 1900hrs.

The wording has been specific to apply only to 12 hour shifts. The proposed amendment **does not change** any entitlement to afternoon shift allowances for any shift less than 12 hours (e.g. 10 hour shifts).

Day shifts do not attract a shift penalty; therefore the proposal will not change this. It is important to note that any afternoon shift in a core roster or in support rosters will still attract shift penalties.

- The false claim: *The ballot is not independent and has been forced on staff.*
This claim is NOT true

A strong view that emerged from the Staff Consultation Tour was for staff to be actively involved in the process through a ballot, a view fully supported by the QAS.

To identify if a majority of staff are in favour of the proposal, including an amendment to the EPA 2005, a ballot has now been issued. This ballot is designed to protect employees' rights.

The ballot process is being conducted in accordance with the *Industrial Relations Act 1999 (QLD)*. While it was not a legislative requirement, the QAS is nevertheless utilising the services of a returning officer from the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations who is independent of the QAS and the LHMU. The Returning Officer will be responsible for the count and will advise the QAS of the result.

- The false claim: *This proposal is not the four days on four days off roster as promised.*
This claim is NOT true

The ballot on the roster package is not a ballot on a specified roster. Staff will go through the same roster approval process as currently applies to agree on a roster that meets the roster parameters.

Throughout the consultation period no single proposed roster pattern received unanimous support from QAS staff, however the need for greater flexibility was a common theme expressed by staff to meet their varying needs.

The QAS is opposed to any view that would dictate only one roster pattern for all employees and have developed parameters that allow for flexibility and choice in roster design.

A core roster will contain 12 hour day and night shifts, balanced with supporting shifts that will average the roster to the Award requirement for a 40hour week (preserving the 38 hour week and accrued time). This was the original proposal put to, and endorsed, by Government. It has not changed. No roster pattern of 12 hour shifts only will provide a balanced 40 hour a week roster; hence the need for balancing shifts

Any roster of 12 hour shifts will be based around a principle of approximately four shifts followed by approximately 4 days off. For example a 42 day roster can provide employees with 21 rostered days and 21 days off (which includes 17 clear days off and 4 "grey" days following night shift). Staff will have their input into their own station roster and determine a roster pattern that meets local needs.

Parameters have been designed to allow individual stations flexibility in their roster design. Sample rosters shown in the Staff Consultation Tour included periods of 5 days off and others have been designed by staff to only have a pattern of one night shift in a block.

Further Questions?

Your Regional Management Team and Regional Consultative Committee will be your most valuable resource for station or regional issues. Your first point of contact is your OIC, supported by your Area Director. Your union delegate will also be kept well informed and can seek information on your behalf.

For more information on the ballot you can contact the ballot hotline on 3247 8089.