

# Information Sheet – Working Flexibly

*This information sheet is supplementary information to support Determination 8: Working Flexibly. It is intended as guidance for agencies and is not binding.*

## Flexibility Options

All public sector employees have a right to request flexibility.

Agencies are encouraged to give positive consideration any request from employees, including executives, provided it is practicable and appropriate.

Flexibility can be applied to an employee's pattern of work, hours of work, or their work location.

Not all types of flexibility will work for every role. If a requested flexible working arrangement cannot be accommodated because of the nature of the role, the manager and employee should work together to determine if different flexible arrangements will work.

There are many options available to support flexibility in the workplace. The below information is a guide as to what arrangements could be considered, but agencies may have alternative or additional options available for their staff.

Agencies looking to implement flexibility options should refer to *Determination 8: Working Flexibly* for further information on minimum standards.

### **WORKING FROM HOME (WFH) AND REMOTE WORKING**

WFH or remote working involves an employee performing their duties from a location other than their usual workplace for an agreed portion of their usual hours, or on an ad hoc basis. WFH or remote working may be used for any shift work situation that has been approved by a chief executive or agency head or delegate.

An employee works remotely when they perform their role from a different place to their colleagues. This could include a workstation in a different office such as a regional centre or from another agency's office. This operates in a similar way to working from home, with the same provisions and consideration to be applied by agencies.

When setting up a WFH or remote working arrangement, managers should consider:

- what portion of the employee's usual hours of work is appropriate to be worked from home or remotely
- how the employee will access emails, electronic files and make or receive telephone calls
- how the employee will remain accessible and interact with other team members and colleagues
- work health and safety risks of the alternate work location
- appropriate duties that can be performed outside of the usual office location including, but not limited to, confidentiality of information.

Ad hoc arrangements can be implemented in an informal manner. However, appropriate prior consideration of the above factors still needs to occur.

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## **FLEXITIME**

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Flexitime enables employees to negotiate start and finish times within the agency's recognised hours of work, without increasing or reducing the total number of hours worked when averaged over a four-week cycle. Additional hours may be worked and accrued, with the employee then able to take a day or part-day off using those accrued hours without reducing their pay.

Flexitime is not an entitlement, and in some cases is subject to additional enterprise agreement provisions relating to flexi accruals.

## **PART-TIME**

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Employees work part-time when they work fewer hours than full-time arrangements. Employees may work part-time on an ongoing basis or may request to reduce their hours for a set period. Salary is adjusted to reflect the actual hours worked. Different part-time options that might be implemented include:

- working a set number of days in the week
- working a set number of hours a day
- working one week on, one week off
- staggered hours, creating different start and finish times for employees to allow for greatest coverage of staff during core business hours
- transition to retirement which may incorporate superannuation salary supplementation to retain full time equivalent pay
- progressively increasing working hours until full schedule of agreed hours is reached, for example, when employees return from parental leave.

## **JOB SHARING**

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Job sharing is where a role is shared between two or more employees who work part-time to cover a full-time role. Job share provides flexibility for employees to choose their preferred work patterns to suit their lifestyles. Job share may be accommodated by:

- separately allocating tasks and responsibilities
- sharing all tasks and responsibilities with no division of duties over different days
- a combination of these.



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## **COMPRESSED WEEKS**

An employee may work compressed weeks to take a regular day off by:

- working weekly full-time hours over a shorter period
- a weekday-weekend swap, where employees request to swap a weekday working day for working on a weekend
- weeks on, weeks off: working one or several weeks and then taking one or several weeks off
- annualised hours - agreed number of hours are worked on an annual rather than a weekly basis.

An agreed arrangement needs to consider any work health and safety concerns with working extended hours or isolated work, and managers must ensure adequate breaks are taken by the employee.

Compressed weeks arrangements generally exclude availability of flexitime.

## **PURCHASED LEAVE**

Employees may reduce their rate of salary in return for additional periods of leave over a specified period of time. An appropriate arrangement should be negotiated and agreed before taking the additional period of leave. Purchased leave could include:

- working during the school terms and then taking time off during the school holidays
- annual purchased leave: employee exchanges an agreed reduction in salary for up to 4 weeks of extra leave in a 12-month period
- a five-year plan: an employee sacrifices some pay every fortnight for 4 years and then takes the fifth year off with pay.