

## Managing rosters

While it can be more difficult to realise work-life balance in a workplace that relies on rostered shifts, it can be achieved with thoughtful design and careful planning. Involving staff in both aspects can provide positive results, and there is a number of good software packages available which can be tailored to particular business needs.

### Designing rosters

- Work with staff to predict work demands, so rosters can be designed accordingly.
- Discuss with people what their preferences are, being clear that you will try to accommodate them, but can't always promise to meet them.
- It is useful to have core workers working reasonably predictable hours that a roster can be built around.
- Be clear about minimum staffing requirements, such as numbers of staff, skill and experience mix. This makes it easier for people to negotiate and organise swapping shifts/days.

### Planning rosters

- It is useful to plan rosters in advance. It gives more predictability for staff and for you. However there is a balance between doing weekend rosters far enough in advance so people can plan weekend travel or commitments, and having it close enough to the time to minimise last minute changes.
- It is useful to have at least one full time 'anchor' person per shift to provide continuity and stability.
- Check the rosters at the staff meeting each week.
- Work with staff to develop clear protocols for rosters e.g. not working more than six days in a row, two days off together is the norm, optional hours will be shared between interested staff. It may take time to develop and get agreement on, but the results include reduced absenteeism and ease of finding people to fill rosters.
- Give everyone (including those in other areas) a copy of the roster so everyone knows what is going on.

### Flexibility around rosters

- Have clear procedures and principles for doing shift swaps.
- When swapping get people to write down what they have agreed to and have both sign it. This is useful for clarifying agreements, minimising misunderstandings, and helping you sort out any problems later if they occur.



## WorkLifeBalance:Fact Sheet

- If there are requests for sudden changes, ask for a bit of space and time to check out all the factors involved to see whether it is possible.
- When you have to turn down a request for a roster change, explain why.
- Talk with the team about unreasonable requests such as not thinking about colleagues, having too many 'turns', cutting someone less assertive out or asking for a day off when it's going to be hectic.
- Be clear when the business needs to be non-negotiable and when individuals need to be non-negotiable; for example the staff member who is prepared to work late when asked, except on Thursdays when they have a regular commitment. It is useful to remember and respect that.