

# Making flexibility work

A practical guide on implementing flexible work arrangements for managers



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for managers**

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This publication is a guide only and must be read in conjunction with the applicable State or Commonwealth legislation; applicable award; certified agreement and other relevant organisational instruments or policies. The guide is aimed to assist managers in both the public and private sectors with improving the uptake and implementation of work-life balance priorities. Compliance with the information in this publication does not relieve persons of their legislative obligations.

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## Introduction

As a manager you play a key role in making work-life balance policies, including flexible work policies, work for you and your team. Your support is crucial for success.

Many managers feel pressure to deliver business outcomes and may be challenged with the demands that multiple flexible working arrangements can present. As one middle manager said in a focus group, “I’m ok with one or two employees working flexibly, but when can I say “No” to the rest of the team?”

As a manager you need to be aware of the business imperative for flexibility. Flexible work arrangements have many benefits including attracting and retaining employees and the opportunities for increased productivity as employees are more focussed, happier and committed to their job when they are able to achieve greater work-life balance.

You also need to be aware that you have certain legislative obligations to provide flexible workplace arrangements as provided in legislation, including industrial relations and anti-discrimination legislation.

Making flexibility work requires you to actively manage. This guide provides some practical solutions for managers to help make flexibility work. It is supported by a series of smaller guides that each deal with specific flexible work arrangements, including:

- part-time work,
- job sharing,
- telecommuting,
- compressed working hours, and
- flexible working hours.

There is also a quick reference guide for managers which outlines all work-life balance policies that are available for employees.

## Why work flexibly?

Flexible work practices can assist businesses to remain competitive and productive.

This will become even more important in the future as we face a decline in the number of young people available for employment and the increasing number of employees nearing retirement age, resulting in a labour and skills shortage.

### The benefits of flexibility

Cost–benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having flexible arrangements may actually incur costs as employees may leave or work less efficiently with responsibilities in their personal life interfering with work.</li> </ul>
Attract and retain quality employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The availability of flexible working arrangements signals a culture which recognises the importance of employees’ professional and personal commitments.</li> <li>• It may assist in keeping older skilled employees in the workforce longer and will assist your business mitigate challenges of the ageing workforce.</li> <li>• Attract ‘under-utilised’ highly skilled employees e.g. mothers and/or semi-retired employees back into the workforce</li> </ul>
Increased productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy employees are productive employees.</li> </ul>
Achieve goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working options could assist in meeting certain charter, work, unit, budget and workforce planning goals.</li> </ul>
Performance and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working options can help improve motivation and performance and increase employee and client satisfaction.</li> </ul>
Workforce planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better matching between workload and staffing numbers.</li> <li>• Attract and retain a more diverse employee group.</li> <li>• Maximises use of employee capability.</li> </ul>
Energise stressed and tired employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible work, and particular options such as part-time work, sabbatical leave, purchased leave arrangements or leave without pay, can help energise and enthuse employees.</li> </ul>
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working arrangements can alleviate the stress caused through struggling to maintain work-life balance</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental benefits through reduced number of employees commuting to the workplace</li> </ul>
Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible arrangements can contribute to getting the right mix of skills now and ensure future needs are met.</li> </ul>
Expand services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible work hours can expand service delivery times.</li> </ul>

## **Create a climate for flexibility**

### **Management skills**

Managing employees on flexible work schedules requires skills of listening, decision making, evaluating, mentoring and communication.

It requires managers to focus on outputs and to think of jobs in terms of roles, performance and tasks, rather than time spent in the workplace.

### **Start with yourself as the leader**

Managers need to show their support and openly acknowledge that flexibility in the workplace is a contemporary reality.

Directors and managers should be familiar with flexible work options available in their organisation and where possible, attend training sessions to build on skills that will assist you in managing a flexible workplace. Learn from successes and challenges that other managers have experienced.

### **Challenge your own views on flexibility**

Overt or covert negative attitudes are barriers to the success of flexible work practices. Some managers have expressed a personal resistance to implementing arrangements that they felt they could not access themselves, either in their current position, or on the way up the ladder to achieving that position.

Personal resentment can be an active block to managers implementing and supporting flexible workplaces. If your organisation has policy statements that outline a commitment to support employees to work flexibly, as a manager you are required to work with the available flexible workplace policies.

Set the successful management of flexible working arrangements as a management goal.

### **View flexibility from a broad perspective**

As a manager you have a responsibility to balance the organisational and individual employee needs. It is important to view the needs of an employee in a holistic way.

Employees' commitments in their personal and work lives interact and what happens at home affects their work life and vice versa. Life cycle demands mean that employees' circumstances change over time. Different life cycle stages result in different needs to balance people's responsibilities. You may have employees wanting to work part-time to manage very different aspects of their life, for example, returning to work after maternity leave or reducing hours to phase into retirement.

### **Take opportunities to be proactive with flexibility**

Flexibility can be an important solution to the needs of your business. Workforce planning, filling vacancies, implementing new projects, winding down functions, creating or amalgamating new teams all offer opportunities for you as a manager to consider how flexibility can help the business meet human resource needs in the short and longer term.

### **Encourage and communicate flexible work options**

In an organisation serious about work-life balance, both employees and managers should take advantage of flexible work arrangements and actively try to maintain a balance between work and life, particularly in terms of reducing work hours. Try and set an example for your

employees – your behaviour demonstrates a leadership role, so take time to also balance your work and life priorities.

Regular ongoing communication about flexible work is important to the success of any strategy. Employees should be regularly made aware that flexible work options are available and that the organisation supports these options being used.

Some suggestions for regular communication:

- dedicate regular time at staff meetings to discuss flexible work options
- remind employees of flexible work policies in circulars, emails or newsletters
- find examples of employees who are working flexibly and publicise them as case studies
- recognise team members' assistance with the implementation flexible work arrangements in their team
- ensure appropriate flexible working options are available to all, regardless of seniority, age and gender and not seen as the prerogative of only certain groups.

### **Advertise flexibility**

If a position is vacant and is suitable for flexible working arrangements, advertise this in the position description for the job. This will encourage applicants seeking flexible arrangements to apply. However, it is important to ensure that any claims made in job advertisements about flexibility are followed through, and that the workplace culture actively promotes all employees using flexible work arrangements.

### **Comply with legislative requirements**

Flexible work options should be available to all employees regardless of seniority, except where genuine job requirements make this unreasonable. "Operational inconvenience" is a reason often given by managers in not approving flexible work requests. Ensure that you are able to openly stand by such a statement as an appropriate reason to refuse a request.

Requests for flexible work should not be rejected without serious consideration, particularly where such requests relate to an employee's status as a parent, carer or worker with family responsibilities. More information on legislative requirements is provided in the section on Obligations under legislation.

## Thinking flexibly about flexibility

In considering requests for specific flexible work options, you should explore the ways jobs and tasks could be performed under such options.

Thinking laterally about how jobs can be structured can better match the needs of your business to the needs of your employees. Consider work flows – your peak periods on a daily or weekly basis. Temporary combinations of part-time work and full-time work may be ideal, for example to cover periods of school holidays.

Many managers view each position that is available as one full-time employee. An alternative is to calculate the number of days of employment available for each position. For example: four full-time positions equate to 20 days per week employment available, and this is often filled by four full-time employees working five days per week each. However, there are multiple combinations of options, for example:

Total days employment	= 20 days
2 x employees at 5 days per week	= 10 days
1 x employee at 4 days per week	= 4 days
2 x employees at 3 days per week	= 6 days
Total employees	= 5 employees

Managers often express resistance to such working arrangements due to the simple sense that managing more employees results in a lot more work for the manager. This may be partially true, but will generally only be true for the short term.

Research shows that companies and teams who offer flexible work have lower employee turn over, higher employee satisfaction and productivity. These positive aspects of working flexibly result in companies retaining their productive employees.

Flexible work practices can reduce the costs of replacing employees and inducting new employees. Flexible work practices do demand active management to implement, however companies do reap cost and productivity benefits over a longer period of time through having a stable and continuous workforce. The costs of recruitment and induction, which are demanding on management, need to be weighed against a resistance to managing more employees.

## Obligations under legislation

There are two types of legislation that are particularly important for you to be aware of in relation to managing work-life balance and flexible work arrangements.

### Industrial relations legislation

Employees have certain entitlements under industrial relations legislation. The Queensland *Industrial Relations Act 1999* applies to employees employed in the public sector, which includes State and local government, plus certain wholly-owned or controlled local government entities and certain State government agencies.

For those working in the private sector, the Commonwealth Government's *Fair Work Act 2009* applies. Both pieces of legislation provide for a range of work-life balance and flexible work arrangements, such as carer's leave, parental leave and bereavement leave. For detailed information on the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees covered by the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* or the *Fair Work Act 2009*, please refer to the Quick Reference Guides.

### Right to request flexible work

For employees and employers covered by the *Fair Work Act 2009* a new 'right to request' flexible work arrangement has been available from January 2010. The 'right to request' provides that an employee with a child or with responsibility for the care of a child under school age or under 18 with a disability may make a request in writing to the employer for flexible working arrangements and the employer must respond in writing to the request within 21 days. An employer may only refuse the request on 'reasonable business grounds'.

### Anti-discrimination legislation

The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* promotes equality of opportunity for everyone by protecting them from unfair discrimination in certain areas of activity, including employment. The Act includes family responsibilities as a ground for discrimination.

There is a significant intersection between industrial law and anti-discrimination law. It is not sufficient for employers to rely merely on the terms of industrial instruments to discharge their obligations, particularly with respect to pregnant employees, parental leave and working arrangements for employees with family responsibilities. Employers need to be aware of the relevant aspects of anti-discrimination law, which provides important 'back-up' legislation for employees who are refused flexible work arrangements.

## Processes for managing flexible work arrangements

### *Decision making, implementation and documentation*

*An employee has requested to work a flexible arrangement – what do I do now?*

The process to deal with an employee's request to flexible work is similar regardless of whether the request is for part-time work, telecommuting, job sharing, compressed work hours, etc.

The processes required to effectively manage employees using flexible work arrangements are at the basis of good management in general. Managers who are able to have an effective team working flexibly are better equipped to deal with unexpected absenteeism that all businesses have to deal with from time to time.

The steps outlined in this chapter provide a step-by-step guide for managers to effectively assess, implement and review flexible work requests to achieve the best possible outcomes for all parties involved.

The final section of this chapter will briefly discuss management of multiple requests and a team with various flexible work arrangements. The following steps apply in this case as well, so read them carefully before proceeding to the final section.

Don't be discouraged by the multiple steps involved in the process of managing flexible work arrangements. It might seem overwhelming at first but once you get the hang of it, it will be easy to do and the outcomes will be more than worth it.

You are encouraged to consider all eight steps. However, if you are a manager in a small business you may normally not engage in such a formal process, and the size of your organisation would allow for a more informal approach. Nevertheless the eight steps provide a guide for good practice which you can adapt for your organisation.

## **Step 1 - Ask the employee to complete a formal proposal**

A simple, formal system for employees requesting flexible work options contributes to a fair, strategic and transparent approach. Provide employees with clear instructions on the issues they need to consider in the first instance when requesting flexible work arrangements and refer them to the relevant organisational policy.

Employees should be asked to provide information on the following:

- current work arrangement
  - proposed work arrangement
  - benefits to the employee of the proposed arrangement
  - additional equipment required to implement the proposed arrangement (e.g. remote access)
  - impact on employee's work unit (e.g. coverage issues, supervisory responsibilities of employee)
  - impact on other parts of the organisation they may interact with to do their job
  - impact on clients
  - proposed solution to impacts
  - benefits to the organisation
  - proposed implementation and review (i.e. proposed starting date, length of arrangement and date for review).
- Ask the employee to provide this information by completing the Employee Proposal (an example is provided at Appendix 1)
  - Set up a meeting with the employee within a short time after receiving the formal proposal - within 10 days is recommended.

## **Step 2 - Assess workability of the proposal**

Before meeting with the employee you need to:

- look at the current work arrangements of your team
- assess the nature and responsibilities of the employee
- consider the fit between existing arrangements and the employee request.

### **Look at the current work arrangements of your team**

Map the existing work arrangements of all team members in a work schedule (Appendix 2) to ensure you have a clear picture of who is working when and how (e.g. in or outside the office). The work schedule can be used to determine if there are enough employees available on each working day (either in or outside the office) during business hours.

Also draw up a task list (Appendix 3) to map the work being undertaken and whether people have ‘buddies’, that is, a person who can take care of someone else’s work in their absence, if an urgent situation arises. If you find that some people have exclusive knowledge of important business information you will need to address this (this issue is further discussed under Step 7 – buddy systems)

Creating work schedules and task lists are useful measures at any time even when all your employees work full-time because people get sick, go on annual leave, get pregnant or have an emergency of some sort, which means their work needs to be covered.

### **Assess the nature and responsibilities of the employee**

You need to consider the following issues:

- Is there significant customer/client contact?
- Is client contact face-to-face or remote?
- Are there any supervisory responsibilities?
- Can the job/sections of the job be done outside regular business hours (but within the spread of ordinary hours)?
- Can the job be divided into separate tasks?
- Is there a requirement to be present in the workplace at all times?

Write down each of these answers, and what this may mean. For example:

- If the employee has client contact, determine what day(s) and hours and consider whether some time (hours, part of day, day) can be set aside as client-free time. This may allow the person to do some tasks from home, or to take time off.
- If the employee has supervisory responsibilities you need to consider whether they need to be in the office at all times to fulfil these responsibilities and whether they require full-time attention or can be delegated if necessary.

### **Consider the fit between existing arrangements and the employee request**

Consider how the request of the employee fits with existing arrangements of other employees, using the work schedule and your task list. Examples of possible problems that need to be addressed:

- no-one will be in at the start or end of normal business hours
- on certain days there is no-one working with knowledge of a particular important issue for your team.

If the fit is not appropriate, consider Step 3 which outlines some possibilities of ‘making the fit’.

### Step 3 - Meet with the employee to discuss their request

Assist your employees to see all the dimensions of their request. Employees who are considering taking up or making the transition to flexible work arrangements may need assistance from you in understanding the needs of the work unit and in choosing the best ways of meeting their personal needs.

Issues to be discussed should include:

- nature of request (what flexible arrangement(s) does the employee want)
- details of the request (e.g. how many days part-time; how many days from home; new start and finish times)
- reason for request (circumstances that gave rise to the application, e.g. the employees' role as child's caregiver, responsibilities for elder care, study plans, etc). Assure confidentiality of any personal issues that may be disclosed to you in the request
- impact of refusal (the potential impact that a refusal of the application might have on the employee and the employee's dependants)
- impact of agreement on your work unit:
  - any additional costs the unit would incur
  - the unit's capacity to reorganise work arrangements
  - the availability of competent replacement employees
  - any loss of efficiency in the conduct of the unit's business
  - the impact of the employee's absence or temporary absence on the delivery of customer service.
- how this employee works:
  - discuss their performance record
  - discuss their work style
  - discuss personal suitability for specific flexible working options.
- impact of proposed change on:
  - the work unit
  - role in the work unit
  - meeting family/lifestyle need
  - their financial situation.
- Take clear notes of the discussion. Make a decision within seven days of the meeting.

#### **Poor performance**

If an employee is not performing well, this should be addressed immediately when it is noticed and not used as a reason for refusing a flexible work arrangement when an employee makes a request. However, it may be appropriate to refuse a request if an employee has commenced a performance improvement plan.

#### **Adaptation to make the fit**

After the discussion with the employee, if you have come to the conclusion that the proposed work arrangement genuinely will not be suitable in the current structure, you and the employee should consider what reasonable changes could be made to 'make the fit'. The following options can be considered:

- adapting the employee's request
- adapting work of other team members – requested changes should be communicated.  
There may be employees who want to increase their work hours, change their work times, change their work responsibilities etc., and thereby 'making the fit'
- explore other options for flexible work that may be more suitable for the work unit, while still meeting employee needs.

## **Step 4 - Complete the Request Evaluation form**

Using the notes from your discussion with the employee (Step 3) complete the Request Evaluation form (Appendix 4)

Information to be completed in the request evaluation form:

- nature of employee request
- details of request
- reason for request
- impact of refusal on employee
- impact of agreement on the employer
- detailed reasons if the request is refused
  
- You should keep the completed form and send a copy to:
  - the employee
  - your supervisor (if applicable)
  - your human resources or personnel area (if applicable)

## **Step 5 - Ensure support from other team members**

Generally a request for flexible work by one employee affects others, in particular their team members. While your support for the arrangements is crucial, support from colleagues is just as important for it to be successful.

It is up to you to determine:

- Who is affected?
- What are their perspectives?
- What are the objections/barriers/concerns?
- How can the concerns be addressed?

You can explore these issues during a staff meeting or through individual discussions. You will know what is the most appropriate.

Exploring issues with other members of the team is an important step in ensuring that any agreed arrangement has the best chance of working. However, as the manager, you make the final decision, not the team.

## **Step 6 - Document proposal into an agreement**

### **Formalise the agreement**

This is a business agreement, so formalise the agreement.

Confirm any new arrangements with your supervisor, relevant budget areas and human resources areas. Document the arrangement in a Manager-Employee Agreement (example provided at Appendices 5 and 6).

It is vital when you are trialling flexibility to do the paper work properly.

Keep clear documentation of position numbers, job sharers and flexible work agreements.

### **A trial period for flexible work**

Be clear - is the request a temporary or permanent arrangement?

Negotiate the start and finish dates for the temporary period and ensure this is in writing.

Even if the arrangement is to be permanent, it is recommended to review the arrangement on a regular basis (e.g. six monthly, yearly). The date of review should be negotiated with the employee and documented in the Manager-Employee Agreement.

### **Performance management**

Performance management of employees on flexible work arrangements should be the same as for anyone else. While work performance should be discussed during initial negotiations of flexible work arrangements, once the decision has been made to approve the request, treatment of employees should be the same regardless of their work arrangements.

While there should be no separate or special performance management plans for employees on flexible arrangements, the workability of the arrangement should be reviewed to ensure employee and business needs are met (see Step 8).

## Step 7 - Implement proposal

### Interventions to make work arrangements work more efficiently

To make the implementation and use of the agreed flexible work arrangement run smoothly, the following interventions can be used:

- **Buddy systems:** It is not always necessary that for each project, client, or other work activity multiple people have in depth knowledge on performing the associated work. BUT it is good to have for each 'expert' employee at least one employee who has enough knowledge about the work to be able to step in when necessary (e.g. when the 'expert' employee has a day off). A buddy system is also important to deal with absenteeism due to sickness or other unexpected absenteeism.

A task list (Appendix 3) can help set up a buddy system. The task list should outline for each employee their major projects/clients/work activities and their "buddy", which is someone with enough knowledge to step in to do the work when necessary.

If you find that some people work in isolation with no-one able to cover for them, then you have a problem which you need to address. Get someone to familiarise themselves with the work!

- **Aim for all employees to attend team meetings:** This is not impossible. Ensure all part-time and casual employees work at least some hours in common each week or fortnight, so that the staff meetings can be held at that time, for example every Wednesday morning.

Attending staff meetings helps all employees feel more connected to the bigger team and provides managers with a forum for common communication about organisational changes and discussions, and allows employees to hear other team project updates.

If employees miss the meetings, expect them to check what happened, or set a system where employees who attend take responsibility for updating employees who missed the meeting.

- **Transferring phones:** When working away from the office phones should be transferred to mobile phones or to phones at the alternative work location.
- **Script for people working out of the office:** A standard message should be distributed to all employees that they can use to answer phone calls from those who are working outside the office (Appendix 7).
- **Shared calendars:** To create transparency of employees' work arrangements and allow professional handling of client inquiries, employees in a team should have access to each other's calendar. This allows people to tell clients when colleagues will return to the office if they wish to talk to them, or book in an urgently requested meeting.
- **Create work schedules:** Employees' work arrangements (e.g. start and finish times, when in and out of the office, days off) should be recorded and clearly outlined in a work schedule. The work schedule should be distributed throughout the office (Appendix 2).
- **"Out of office" message when on leave or not working:** When people will be away from the office on leave or as part of their part-time arrangement, an out-of-office

message should be turned on, outlining when they will be back and who can be contacted in the meantime.

- **E-mail signature showing part-time hours, days off, or days working out of the office:** Ensure that employees communicate their availability and presence in the office through an e-mail signature block (Appendix 8). The signature block could provide an alternative contact person when not working.
- **Transparent filing of documentation:** Paperwork is properly filed if all employees know where to find it and have access. This will ensure continuity of work even when employees are not in the office or have time off.

These interventions form part of good management practice and are important for any team even if work-life balance policies are not used widely. After all, employees get sick, have emergencies for which they have to leave work, take annual leave, and long service leave while the work continues to come in and needs to be dealt with.

### **If working with clients**

- Let clients know what times their ‘case workers’ are available – transparency is important.
- Let clients know who they can contact outside of the days/hours their ‘case workers’ work (buddy system) – this practice should be part of every workplace even if there are only full-time employees as there is still sickness, annual leave, emergent leave, or other types of absenteeism. Clients can be assured they will be looked after at any time.

### **Crisis arrangement**

In certain lines of work unexpected emergencies, or important events, meetings etc. can occur on the days when a required employee is not working or in the office. There are some ways to deal with these situations, which should be discussed with employees.

- Is there flexibility in the hours and days of work of employees (e.g. swapping your telecommuting day for an important meeting, coming in on your day off)?
- Is there budget to pay an employee for working extra hours?
- Can an employee be contacted outside normal working hours for emergencies?

As a manager you should consider whether a situation is urgent enough to warrant having employees work outside of their agreed arrangements. It must be understood that in some cases, particularly where child care or elder care agreements are in place, it may be difficult for the employee to accommodate changes at short notice.

## **Step 8 - Review**

Before the trial starts, agree how the trial will be assessed and what criteria will be used. A Review of Arrangement form (examples provided at Appendices 9 and 10 outline some of these issues for you. You and the employee should have negotiated a date for review of the arrangement, which is documented in the Manager-Employee Agreement (example provided at Appendices 5 and 6.

You may wish to seek feedback from colleagues as part of the review – flexible work needs to work for the whole team and not just for some people. Confidentiality in this process is vital, and colleague feedback can provide useful input to refining flexible work arrangements after the trial period.

## **Managing teams with employees on different arrangements**

*Now the whole work unit wants to work flexibly*

Some managers are nervous that approving some flexible work arrangements may result in a flood of requests from the whole work unit. Flexible working requires you to consider how you manage your team. It will change the team dynamic so ensure that it is a positive change.

Open and transparent processes are essential when dealing with multiple requests. You have to consider each individual's request as per Steps 1 to 4 and assess any interactions between the various requests, which may provide opportunities or pose challenges.

### **Potential opportunities**

- If multiple people want to work part-time you may be able to create job share positions.
- If people want to work different work schedules, starting and finishing at different times, you will have wider coverage of the business hours. This can be particularly advantageous in client service delivery areas.
- Junior employees may get opportunities to learn about the roles of more senior employees if they have to cover them on days off.
- Team cohesion and collaboration will be enhanced as flexible work arrangements require people to more closely negotiate work allocation to ensure equal division of workloads.

### **Potential challenges**

- Multiple employees want to have Fridays off as part of their compressed work hours, leaving a gap on that day.
- All employees want to start late, which would leave a gap in the earlier morning where no-one is available.
- Employees who want to work part-time can't be put in a job share arrangement as their work is too different.

Once you understand the individual requests as well as the potential opportunities and challenges you can further explore the potential options to address the situation.

- Is there the capacity to give the employee who works reduced hours the full variety of duties but fewer of them?
- Can some or all of the team's work be reorganised to accommodate the arrangements?
- Do team members have flexibility in the days they need off, so all employees have a chance to get their preferred day off at least once in a while? If there is flexibility you can adopt a 'rotating days off' system. This means not the same person gets the Monday or Friday off every time.
- Do team members have flexibility in their start and finish times? If so, a more equitable distribution of start and finish times can be adopted, which allows all employees to start later or leave earlier on some days, according to their preference. An inflexible roster which requires some employees to always work late may cause resentment.
- Is this an opportunity to change the way work is performed and perhaps streamline some of the processes?
- If employees go part-time, does this free up enough budget to enable you to employ more employees to cover gaps in the workload either on a temporary or permanent basis?
- Get the team together to brainstorm these issues. Communication with the team and amongst team members is crucial to make new arrangements work for all parties involved.

**Practical tools**

Some of the tools that will be useful to manage teams with employees on different arrangements have already been mentioned in the eight steps for policy implementation and include:

- an employee work schedule (Appendix 2) showing each person's hours for each day
- distinguishing clearly between days off and telecommuting days
- using wall charts so everyone can see this information easily (including Directors/CEOs)
- ensuring Directors and administration staff have a roster sign on display so it is clear who is in and who is responsible for each project.

## Further information

For further information on work-life balance, please visit [www.justice.qld.gov.au](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au)

Guides on implementing specific flexible work arrangements, including part-time work, job sharing, telecommuting, compressed working schedules, flexible work hours and parental leave are available as part of this guide.

### Employee proposal for flexible work

Name:

Job title:

Work unit:

Name and email of your manager

Name:

email:

Current work arrangement:

Full-time, usually work 9.00am - 5.00pm, accrue hours from time-to-time under the Balanced working hours policy.

Proposed work arrangement:

nine-day fortnight with every second Thursday off.

Benefits to you:

To give me a regular day to do some study.

Having the same day off on a regular basis will help me plan my study schedule.

Additional equipment required? (If yes, details, e.g. remote access.)

No.

Impact on your work unit:

Impact limited: Thursday not as popular an ADO day; can work on a pay week which is quieter; will mean team will have to cover my phone and client enquiries.

Impact on clients:

Impact limited as other team members can respond to client queries.

Proposed solution to impacts:

Will ensure work is up-to-date as much as possible prior to day off.

Will educate clients and ensure they have alternate contact for queries.

Will be available on mobile for urgent queries.

Benefits to [name organisation]:

Will be able to plan for the days I have off to study.

Will have a less stressed employee.

Proposed implementation and review:

Three-month trial period. To be reviewed at three months in meeting between myself and manager. Will ensure that we discuss negative impacts on business openly and honestly by both keeping a record of any.

## Appendix 2

### Sample employee work schedule

- Include mobile numbers for employees working out of the office
- Distinguish clearly between employees working out of the office (telecommuting) and those on a day off
- Make this a wall chart so everyone can see this information easily, including directors, CEOs and administration staff
- Update the roster regularly

Employee	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday Staff Meeting 10-11am	Thursday	Friday	Key projects
Employee A	8.30am-5pm	8.30am-4.45pm	8.30am-4.45pm	Working from Home	8.30am-12.30pm	List major work areas
				8:30-4pm		
Employee B	All day	All day	All day	All day	All day	
Employee C	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	
Employee D	8:15am-5pm	Working from Home	9am-5pm	<b>Day off</b>	9am-5pm	
		9am-5pm				
Employee E	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	9am-11am	9am-5pm	9am-5pm	
Employee F	<b>Day off</b>	8.30am-4.15pm	9am-4.30pm	9am-5.30pm	<b>Day off</b>	

## Appendix 3

### Task list

Name of employee	Major projects	Buddy
Employee A	Project 1	Employee B
	Project 2	Employee B
	Project 3	Employee C
	Project 4	No-one
Employee B	Project 1	Employee A
	Project 2	Employee A
Employee C	Project 1	Employee A
	Project 2	No-one
	Project 3	Employee D
Employee D	Project 1	Employee C
	Project 2	Employee F
	Project 3	Employee F
Employee E	Project 1	No-one
	Project 2	Employee F
Employee F	Project 1	Employee E
	Project 2	Employee D
	Project 3	Employee D

## Appendix 4

### Request evaluation

<b>Employee's name:</b>			
<b>Division:</b>			
<b>Unit:</b>			
<b>Age:</b>		<b>Gender:</b>	
		<b>Classification:</b>	
<b>Nature of request:</b>	<i>[eg telecommuting, part-time work, etc]</i>		
<b>Details of request:</b>	<i>[eg how many days part-time, how many days working from home; new start and finish times, etc]</i>		
<b>Reason for request:</b>	<i>[Circumstances that gave rise to the application, eg the employees' role as child's caregiver, responsibilities for elder care, study plans, etc]</i>		
<b>Impact of refusal:</b>	<i>[A brief outline of the potential impact that a refusal of the application might have on the employee and the employee's dependants]</i>		
<b>Impact of agreement on the employer:</b>	Any additional costs the employer would incur:		
	The employer's capacity to reorganise work arrangements:		
	The availability of competent replacement staff:		
	Any loss of efficiency in the conduct of the employer's business:		
	The impact of the employee's absence or temporary absence on the delivery of customer service:		
<b>If request is refused, provide detailed reasons:</b>			
<b>If request is approved, provide details of agreement in an attachment to this form.</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <p>Employee's Signature</p> <p>___ / ___ / ___</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <p>Manager's Signature</p> <p>___ / ___ / ___</p> </div> </div>		

Manager-employee agreement (sample form)

<b>Departmental Logo</b>	<b>Agreement for</b> [ <i>flexible work arrangement</i> ]
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<b>Employee name</b>	
<b>Employee number</b>	
<b>Job title</b>	
<b>Classification</b>	
<b>Division</b>	
<b>Unit</b>	
<b>Phone number (work)</b>	
<b>Phone number (home)</b>	
<b>Phone number (mobile)</b>	
<b>Manager name</b>	
<b>Manager telephone number (work)</b>	

[Manager name] and [employee name] have agreed to trial the following work-life balance provisions for a [X] month(s) period.

(tick all boxes that are applicable)

- flexible start and finish times
- part-time work
- telecommuting
- compressed working hours (e.g. 9-day fortnight)
- breastfeeding breaks

*(Separate agreements are available for leave arrangements (carer’s leave, purchased leave, parental leave, special leave), and job sharing)*

**Work hours and location**

This agreement is reflected in the schedule of work hours and location below.

**Week 1**

Weekday	Start time	Finish time	General break (lunch)		Break(s) for breastfeeding		Location of work (home/office)
			From	To	From	To	
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

Total hours worked in week 1 ..... hours

**Week 2** *(only to be completed for compressed work on fortnightly basis)*

Weekday	Start time	Finish time	General break (lunch)		Break(s) for breastfeeding		Location of work (home/office)
			From	To	From	To	
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

Total hours worked in week 2 ..... hours

**Period of agreement**

The agreement commences on [commencement date] and remains in force until [end date] unless revoked by mutual agreement between the employee and the relevant manager.

**Review of agreement**

After the first period of the agreement being in force, between the dates outlined under ‘period of agreement’ the agreement will need to be reviewed by the employee and manager, if continuation of the agreement is to occur for a further period.

A new agreement needs to be established for the continued use of the agreed work-life balance arrangements between the employees and the relevant manager.

Agreed date of review is [review date].

**Amendments to the agreement**

This agreement can be discussed and amended at any time as a result of changed employee or employer circumstances, subject to departmental approval and reasonable periods of notice.

Any amendments to this agreement must be signed by all parties prior to the employee changing work patterns and/or location and/or duties. A copy of the agreed amendments should be attached to the original agreements and a copy given to all parties.

**Costs**

If there are costs associated with the implementation of this agreement they should be discussed between the employee and the manager and an agreement reached on how the costs will be shared.

**Employee responsibilities**

- Read and familiarise yourself with the relevant departmental work-life balance policy
- Organise for a workplace health and safety check to be completed if you are going to telecommute/work from home
- [Other responsibilities to be listed].

**Manager responsibilities**

- Read and familiarise yourself with the relevant departmental work-life balance policy
- Discuss and establish appropriate communication processes to keep employee informed of relevant work issues and workplace changes
- [Other responsibilities to be listed].

**Acknowledgement**

The employee acknowledges that they have read this agreement, understand the contents and agreed to be bound by the terms and conditions.

<b>Signatures</b>	
Employee:	Date:
Manager:	Date:

## Appendix 6

### Manager-employee job share agreement (sample form)

<b>Departmental Logo</b>	<b>Job Share Agreement</b>
--------------------------	----------------------------

	Job share employee 1	Job share employee 2
<b>Employee name</b>		
<b>Employee number</b>		
<b>Job title</b>		
<b>Classification</b>		
<b>Division</b>		
<b>Unit</b>		
<b>Phone number (work)</b>		
<b>Phone number (mobile)</b>		
<b>Manager name</b>		
<b>Manager telephone number (work)</b>		

The job share agreement is made between:

[Name of Manger] [Name of Workplace]

**and**

[Job Share Employee 1] and [Job Share Employee 2]

This job share agreement is made in accordance with the provisions of the [insert name of relevant award or industrial instrument if applicable]

#### **Duties and responsibilities**

The duties of the position will be in accordance with the attached position description.

[If applicable, detail duties/projects that will be assigned to a particular job share employee and those that will be shared]

#### **Classification**

The classification assigned to the job share arrangement described herein is to be [insert classification]

[Job share employee 1] has a full-time-equivalency (FTE) factor of [e.g. 0.6 FTE]

[Job share employee 2] has a full-time-equivalency (FTE) factor of [e.g. 0.4 FTE]

#### **Hours of work**

Each job share employee will work the hours indicated below until modified by mutual agreement between job share employees and between job share employees and their manager.

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
--	---------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------	---------------

Name of job share employee 1					
Name of job share employee 2					

Total standard hours of work will be [insert number of hours] per week/fortnight.

**Period of job share agreement**

The agreement will be effective from [insert commencement date] to [insert agreement end date] unless otherwise determined.

**Review of job share agreement**

After the first period of the agreement being in force, between the dates outlined under ‘period of job share agreement’ the agreement will need to be reviewed by the employees and manager, if continuation of the agreement is to occur for a further period.

A new agreement needs to be established for the continued use of the job share arrangement between the employees and the relevant manager.

Agreed date of review is [review date].

**Amendments to the agreement**

This agreement can be discussed and amended at any time as a result of changed employee or employer circumstances, subject to departmental approval and reasonable periods of notice.

Any amendments to this agreement must be signed by all parties prior to the employee changing work patterns and/or duties. A copy of the agreed amendments should be attached to the original agreements and a copy given to all parties.

**Resignation**

Job share employees will be eligible to continue their job sharing roles in the event a job sharing partner vacates his/her job for whatever reason. It is expected that when a job-sharing role is vacated, a replacement will be found through the normal procedures for filling vacancies. If there are significant difficulties in filling the position, the job share arrangement may have to be reviewed.

**Employee responsibilities**

- Read and familiarise yourself with the departmental job share policy
- Develop a joint work plan, to ensure all responsibilities of the position are fully covered, and agree on work priorities
- Set up a plan for structured communication processes and handovers between job share employees
- Job share employees to attend staff meetings and in-service activities on their scheduled work days and inform the other partner of what occurred
- [Other responsibilities to be listed].

**Manager responsibilities**

- Read and familiarise yourself with the departmental job share policy

- Advise clients and other employees about the job share arrangement and the days/times when each job share employee will work
- Discuss and establish appropriate communication processes to keep job share employees informed of relevant work issues and workplace changes
- [Other responsibilities to be listed].

**Acknowledgement**

The job share employees acknowledge that they have read this agreement, understand the contents and agreed to be bound by the terms and conditions.

<b>SIGNATURES</b>	
Job Share Employee 1:	Date:
Job Share Employee 2:	Date:
Manager:	Date:

### Phone script for when employees are working out of the office

- Provide appropriate contact details of employees who work from home or outside the office to each employee. Employees should clarify which contact details can be provided to external clients.
- If you cannot forward phones directly to a mobile or to the home office, provide all employees with this script to ensure clear communication of information.

**Hello, [employee's name] is working away from the office today but he/she is still contactable by email.  
Or I can forward a message for him/her to contact you.**

- ★ Remember to take down name of person calling, their phone number *and* email address.

## Appendix 8

### Email signature block showing part time hours

- Ensure employees communicate any changed hours through an email signature block
- Provide an alternative contact person for information
- Ensure all part time employees turn on out of office with a message about who to call on their days off, so that external relationships are not affected by email lapses.

**Peter Jones**  
**Senior Policy Officer**  
**Department of X**

**Direct: 07 333 5678**  
**Email: qrst @ xyz**  
**In office: Tues Wed Thurs**

**Please contact member Y on Mondays and Fridays on 3444 5566, for information on project D**

## Appendix 9

### Review of arrangement form (sample form)

Departmental Logo	Review plan for [ <i>flexible work arrangement</i> ]
-------------------	--

Employee name	
Employee number	
Job title	
Classification	
Division	
Unit	
Phone number (work)	
Phone number (home)	
Phone number (mobile)	
Manager name	
Manager telephone number (work)	

This document reviews the following work-life balance provision(s) agreed between [Manager name] and [employee name] on [date the agreement was signed]:

(tick all boxes that are applicable)

- flexible start and finish times
- part-time work
- telecommuting
- compressed working hours (e.g. 9-day fortnight)
- breastfeeding breaks

*(A separate review plan is available for job sharing)*

#### Issues for consideration and discussion

To evaluate the trialled work-life balance provision(s), the manager and employee need to discuss and record how well the provision(s) is/are working for both parties.

The following questions are to be used to guide the discussion and outcomes are to be recorded in the allocated blank spaces. If required, other issues can be discussed and recorded.

**Q1.** Have the trialled provisions provided a working solution to the employee's work-life balance needs?

**Comments:**

**Q2.** Are the costs for the organisation associated with the provision(s) sustainable, keeping in mind the benefits that may justify these costs?

**Comments:**

**Q3.** What has been the impact of the provision(s) on the quality and amount of work produced by the employee?

**Comments:**

**Q4.** How is/are the provision(s) used by the employee affecting his/her colleagues and their work load?

**Comments:**

**Q5.** Are there any negative responses from colleagues regarding the changes caused by the introduction of the provision that need to be addressed?

**Comments:**

**Q6.** How are the provision(s) used by the employee affecting customer service?

**Comments:**

**Q7.** Are the communication processes in place effective?

**Comments:**

**Q8:** What still needs to be improved?

**Comments:**

**Review outcomes**

Based on the discussion between the manager and the employee it has been decided:

- To continue the existing work provision(s)
- Discontinue the existing work provision(s)
- Continue the existing work provision(s), but with the following changes:

**Important Note:** These changes need to be reflected in a new agreement form.

**Next review date**

If it has been decided to continue the existing work provision, the next date to review the provision will be on [date].

**Amendments to the agreement**

If it has been decided to amend the trialled work-life balance provision(s), the original agreement form needs to be replaced to reflect these amendments.

Any amendments to the original agreement must be signed by all parties prior to the employee changing work patterns and/or location and/or duties. A copy of the agreed amendments should be attached to the original agreements and a copy given to all parties.

<b>Signatures</b>	
Employee:	Date:
Manager:	Date:

## Appendix 10

### Review of job share arrangement form (sample form)

<b>Departmental Logo</b>	<b>Review plan for job share arrangement</b>
--------------------------	--

	Job share employee 1	Job share employee 2
<b>Employee name</b>		
<b>Employee number</b>		
<b>Job title</b>		
<b>Classification</b>		
<b>Division</b>		
<b>Unit</b>		
<b>Phone number (work)</b>		
<b>Phone number (mobile)</b>		
<b>Manager name</b>		
<b>Manager telephone number (work)</b>		

This document reviews the job share arrangement between [manager name] and [job share employee 1] and [job share employee 2] on [date the agreement was signed]:

#### **Issues for consideration and discussion**

To evaluate the job share arrangement, the manager and job share employees need to discuss and record how well the arrangement is working for all parties.

The following questions are to be used to guide the discussion and outcomes are to be recorded in the allocated blank spaces. If required, other issues can be discussed and recorded.

**Q1.** Is the quality and volume of work produced by the job share partnership acceptable?

**Comments:**

**Q2.** Are job share employees' duties and responsibilities equitably divided?

**Comments:**

**Q3.** How effective are handovers and the overall communication between job share employees?

**Comments:**

**Q4.** Is information being reliably transferred? Is there acceptable continuity of service?

**Comments:**

**Q5.** Are communication processes between the job share employees and manager functioning well?

**Comments:**

**Q5.** Are the costs for the organisation associated with the job share sustainable, keeping in mind the benefits that may justify these costs?

**Comments:**

**Q7.** How is the job share arrangement affecting other employees in the unit/workplace and their work load?

**Comments:**

**Q8.** Are there any comments from co-workers regarding the job share arrangement that need to be addressed?

**Comments:**

**Q9.** How are the job share arrangements affecting customer service?

**Comments:**

**Q10:** What needs to be improved in the job share arrangement?

**Comments:**

### **Review outcomes**

Based on the discussion between the managers and the job share employees it has been decided to make the following amendments to the job share arrangement [list amendments]

**Important Note:** These changes need to be reflected in a new agreement form.

**Next review date**

The next date to review the job share arrangement will be [date].

**Amendments to the agreement**

If it has been decided to amend the job share arrangements, the original agreement form needs to be replaced to reflect these amendments.

Any amendments to the original agreement must be signed by all parties prior to the employee changing work patterns and/or duties. A copy of the agreed amendments should be attached to the original agreements and a copy given to all parties.

<b>SIGNATURES</b>	
Job share employee 1:	Date:
Job share employee 2:	Date:
Manager:	Date: