



## **Work Life Balance and Rostering**

### **The Desired Future State:**

To create and maintain a workforce that meets stakeholder needs that will:

- Attract and maintain Medical Laboratory Staff; and
- Deliver WLB for Medical Laboratory Staff; and
- Provide a clear and visible career path.

The parties recognise the changing environment and clinical demand and will review rostering to develop best practice rostering guidelines for Medical Laboratory Services, including consideration of:

- Work life balance of staff, and
- Flexible rostering practices, and
- Employee health and safety, protection from fatigue and adequate recuperative time, and
- Time rostering and backfilling for those training.

### **Issues identified from a roster review include:**

- On Duty Rosters not necessarily connected to On Call rosters resulting in the overall demand and potential pattern of work not being easily identified.
- Rosters with frequent shift changes per week (up to 4).
- Inadequate recovery time after sets of nights.
- Shift changes not following circadian rhythm.
- Rosters that appear almost entirely service driven without balance for impact on the employee.
- Absence of a template – therefore difficult for long-term planning for staff.
- Use of call to cover fluctuating demand and absence (out of hours shifts may be inadequately staffed; appears to be no “flex”). Now getting into the situation where we have to ask if someone can be called in i.e. two calls before cover may arrive.
- Full time employee’s potentially at greater risk as a result of part timers having fixed patterns of work.
- Number of days on duty and on call, without days completely free from work (12 days without a break as one example)

# NLEEG



National Laboratory Engagement Group

- Number of consecutive nights; 7 in a row is not uncommon and often attached to consecutive days leading into nights making the total number of consecutive days worked up to 12.

## **Barriers to healthy rostering:**

- Inadequate staffing levels to maintain a healthy roster.
- Lack of training or knowledge of safe rostering practices.
- Lack of a roster template to evenly distribute shifts etc.
- Long term employees with fixed roster patterns.
- Personal ownership of current practices, resistant to changing the status quo.

## **Resources:**

We don't need to rewrite best rostering guidelines, there are already proven guidelines available:

## **The way forward:**

- Gains for both, the employer – efficiency and productivity, and the employee - physical as well as psychological, increased job satisfaction.
- Education of both managers and employees.
- Any guidelines not intended to alter current terms and conditions of employees.

## **Recommendations:**

- LLEGs to provide NLEG with the names and designations of the staff who are responsible for producing both the rostered hours roster and the on call roster, to assist with future communication.
- This Review to be distributed to LLEGs for discussion and feedback.
- LLEGs to discuss reference material from ACC and feed-back. Also to distribute reference material to roster writers.
- Run a workshop/s on Best Rostering Practice, LLEGS to decide if this should be on a national or regional level.