Flexible working arrangements

What are flexible working arrangements?

Working arrangements in the Commonwealth public sector provide employees with flexibility to manage their personal commitments while ensuring agency operational requirements are met.

Flexible working arrangements allow employees to balance family, caring and other responsibilities and interests alongside their work commitments and career goals. Flexible working arrangements include initiatives such as flex time, time off in lieu, part time work, home based work, telework and job sharing.

What does the Workplace Bargaining Policy 2018 (the Policy) require?

The Policy does not require agencies to remove flexible working arrangements from enterprise agreements. In fact, it encourages greater workplace flexibility.

Some clauses in current agreements place restrictions around how flexible working arrangements operate in practice. The Policy requires restrictive practices to be removed from agreements. This ensures agencies and their employees can operate efficiently with maximum flexibility.

What is meant by a restrictive work practice?

Agencies must be able to effectively manage their workforces to meet operational needs. Having access to workplace flexibility cannot mean employees have a veto power over their work arrangements.

While managers make every attempt to accommodate employee’s preferences, ultimately, employees are employed to deliver outcomes for their agencies.

What flexible working arrangements do I have access to?

The Fair Work Act 2009 requires enterprise agreements to include an individual flexibility clause. These clauses allow some terms and conditions in an enterprise agreement to be varied for an individual employee where the employer and employee agree to this. Many agencies use these provisions to help employees balance their work and family commitments. Their use is encouraged and welcomed.

Most agencies have an enterprise agreement that outlines the flexible working arrangements available to employees. Many employees generally have access to arrangements such as flex time or time off in lieu, part time work, home based work and job sharing.