



Hon Neil Roberts MP
Member for Nudgee



Queensland
Government

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Minister for Emergency Services

27 MAR 2008

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your correspondence received on 15 February 2008, regarding petition number 977-07, lodged by Mr Ted Malone, Member for Mirani, concerning Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) rostering arrangements.

As a result of the *QAS Enterprise Partnership Agreement 2002*, it was agreed that rosters would be reviewed. The QAS and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union have conducted a review of the roster reform process including the impact of increased demand for services on front-line staff. The new rostering proposal has been developed as part of the review.

A recent free and open ballot of QAS staff resulted in overwhelming support for the introduction of 12 hour shift rostering for Category 5 ambulance stations and communications centres. The Acting Commissioner, QAS advises that more than 80% of staff who voted in the ballot supported the move to the new roster proposal, incorporating 12 hour core shifts. This also includes amendment to the *QAS Enterprise Partnership Agreement 2005* to allow for a 12 hour day shift to extend to 7pm.

Changes to QAS's rostering practices will benefit paramedics as follows:

- better align resources to match demand for service, which will result in a more even spread of workload over the duration of a shift;
- increased rest days;
- the introduction of a support roster with shorter shift duration for staff who do not wish to work a 12 hour shift pattern; and
- greater flexibility with shift starting times.

Other expected outcomes include improving the on-time provision of fair and reasonable breaks for staff on duty, better fatigue management and the reduction of post-shift overtime.

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The new roster system will see front-line staff at the State's 24 hour ambulance stations move to 12 hour shifts, meaning they will have more rostered days away from work. Combined with the 38 hour week, which was introduced on 1 October 2007, the State's 3,000 front-line staff will effectively receive nine weeks time away from work a year. This is the work-life balance and industrial safety that ambulance officers feel is appropriate to their particular vocational circumstances.

The recent announcement by the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier, of the QAS Audit Report recommendations will provide further opportunities to enhance roster coverage. The primary focus of the recommendations is to reduce non essential services and redirect savings to boost front-line staff, through the reassignment of staff into core service related roles.

I am confident that the new initiatives and the realignment of existing staff positions will provide more front-line ambulance officers, following the 250 extra officers provided for in the 2007-2008 financial year budget. This will make a significant difference to the services provided by QAS to the Queensland community.

Should you require any further information, please contact Ms Leanne Linard (Policy Advisor) of my office on telephone number (07) 3247 8015.

Yours sincerely

Neil Roberts MP
Minister for Emergency Services