

SHIFTING EXPECTATIONS

Flexibility for frontline, shift
and site-based roles



Dear Colleagues

Secure flexible work has always been a cornerstone strategy for enabling all employees to perform at their best. It also advances important business objectives such as gender equality as a way to enable more people to participate in work while managing responsibilities and interests outside paid work.

Over the past 10 years, our Coalition has prioritised flexible work as a strategy to help achieve gender equality in the workforce. Many Members are well advanced through using approaches such as 'all roles flex' where flexibility is available in any role for any reason.

When more employees have access to flexible ways of working, traditional gender stereotypes and barriers that have limited women's engagement and progress in the workplace are disrupted. For example, when all employees are able to play a more active and equal role in caring, more women can play a more active and equal role in the workforce. Overall, access to more flexibility benefits employees, organisations and communities.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a fundamental shift in the way organisations and their leaders view flexible work. In 2020, our Coalition shared a discussion paper identifying four key principles of flexibility and made recommendations for system shifts and practical actions to accelerate change: [Accelerating Change on Flexible Ways of Working](#).

COVID-19 has increased awareness of the benefits of flexible working across our workforces. Our most recent work focuses on enabling flexibility for frontline workforces and looks at ways of creating cultures and workplaces where more people can participate and build secure futures.

Creating fully flexible workplaces in all environments is a complex, long-term workplace design and investment strategy. It involves engaging and collaborating with many stakeholders beyond our own organisations.

This report shares our early insights and lessons learned about the benefits of flexibility for our frontline workforces as we work together to plan for the future.

It includes case studies of mostly male-dominated frontline workforces in industries such as energy, mining, construction, transport, manufacturing, telecommunications and logistics. We believe the principles and practices identified may be applied to many other frontline workforces and may be useful for those wishing to adopt or adapt, and accelerate the pace of change.



It's more complex to improve flexibility for shift and site-based roles. There are gains to be made in engagement, diversity and productivity if we continue to challenge the ways we have worked in the past.

Scott Wyatt
CEO Viva Energy

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Context

The changing business case for flexible work

Secure flexible work has always been a cornerstone strategy for advancing gender equality; a way to enable more people to participate in work while managing responsibilities and interests outside of paid work.

Over the last few years, there has been a fundamental shift in the way organisations and their leaders view flexible work.

Vital for business continuity and growth: Agility and flexibility have become essential for business continuity. People and supply chains continue to face ongoing challenges brought by external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, geopolitical conflict and global economic uncertainty. Employers are looking for security of labour supply so they can plan for future investments with confidence.

Essential for frontline employee attraction, retention and engagement: Despite significant progress in enabling flexible work for office-based employees, most frontline workers have not benefited from flexible work opportunities for a range of operational reasons. Research undertaken by Accenture¹ in the United States found that the priorities of the frontline are evolving. While workers continue to rank safety as their top priority, flexibility and opportunity are now high priorities when considering new roles, particularly for younger workers. Many frontline employees see the lack of flexibility as an issue of fairness and equity. They also want a degree of agency and choice, with different flexibility options.

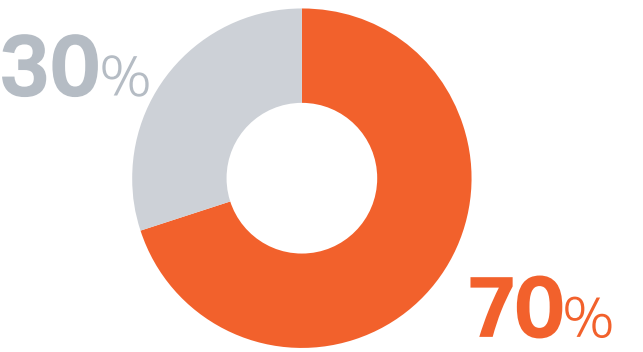
Essential for employee health, safety and wellbeing: Offering secure, flexible work options is vital for a psychologically healthy and safe work environment. Flexible work implemented strategically provides employees with economic security and the ability to manage caring and interests outside of paid work.

A way to reach untapped labour: For many organisations, skills and labour shortages, competition for talent, declining population growth and interruptions to skilled migration are driving the unprecedented commercial imperative to reach previously untapped labour. This includes people with caring responsibilities; those who find it difficult to attend a workplace due to compromised health or neurodiversity, for instance; volunteers; athletes; students; and people wanting to transition to retirement.

Overall, adopting flexible practices encourages workforce participation among workers who would otherwise find it too costly to work or to invest in workplace skills – and all flexible arrangements have a positive influence on workforce participation².

Frontline staff are in high demand in many industries, giving workers options and raising expectations, particularly around job security and flexibility.

About 70% of the workforce are in frontline roles that can't be performed at home



Most people think flexible work means 'working at home' or 'remote working'; however, it is estimated that approximately 70% of the Australian workforce, or 9 million workers, are unable to work at home or remotely due to the frontline nature of their roles.³ It is therefore incumbent on leaders to enable flexible work opportunities, other than remote work, for 70% of the Australian workforce.

1. Y. Silverstone. November 29, 2021. '5 Ways to attract and keep frontline workers'. Accenture Business Functions Blog.
2. A. Gross and S. Mostyn. June 07, 2021. *Equitable Flexibility in Australia: Reshaping Our Workforce*. Bain & Company.
3. A. Pennington and J. Stanford. April 2020. 'Working from Home: Opportunities and Risks'. The Australian Institute. Centre for Future Work.

Understanding the flexible working landscape for frontline, shift and site-based roles

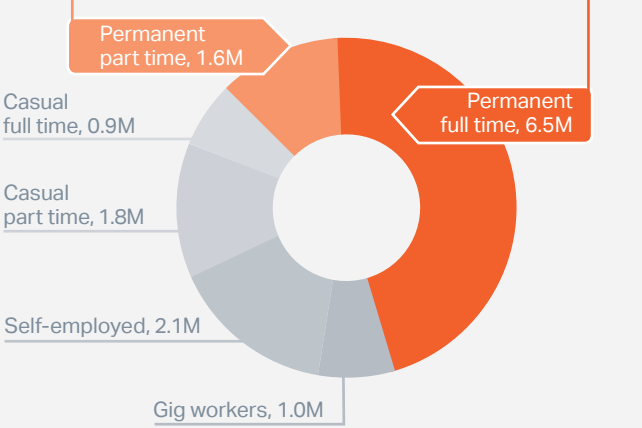
As with all our work at the Champions of Change Coalition, our starting point is to listen and learn from a range of perspectives to understand the issues and systems we need to change.

Over the last 6 months we sought to understand:

- what's important for our employees and what greater flexibility would ideally look like for them
- the operational barriers to more flexible frontline, shift and site-based roles
- the operational impact of more flexible ways of working
- the industrial relations and legal considerations.

Our thanks to everyone who has so generously contributed their time and perspectives to inform this work.

The focus of our work is to increase opportunities for flexible work across permanent workforces.



Source: Dr. J. Stanford. October 2021. Shock Troops of the Pandemic: Casual and Insecure Work in COVID and Beyond. Page 14. The Australian Institute. Centre for Future Work.






What we've heard and understood

Flexible work for the frontline means different things for different roles and to different people

Sites and operating environments have a range of roles with varying requirements to: be physically present to do the role; work shifts; be on site; be available to respond to emergencies; and engage face to face with customers and stakeholders. In recent years, the default for flexible work has been the ability of employees to work at home.

Given the nature of frontline, shift or site-based roles, working at home is just not possible for many people, so greater innovation is needed to find solutions. Flexibility is personal – not everyone wants or needs the same thing. Work is done by individuals and outcomes are achieved by teams. Flexibility needs to work for individuals and employers. Having a broad definition, guiding principles and a range of flexible work options is essential.

Types of flexibility

 Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">When work happens. Includes flexible hours/scheduling, part-time work, job sharing, split shifts, compressed hours/compressed week, and an annual variable employment lifestyle roster employment lifestyle rosters (e.g. fly-in fly-out (FIFO)).	Choice and agency for employees Not all types of flexibility are ideal in every role, but some flexibility is possible in every role. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">choice to work certain scheduled shiftsability for employees to design their own rosters and to swap shiftschoice of locationflexible start and finish timescombining and sharing rolesreduced hours (part time)flexible leave options (e.g. additional purchased leave).
 Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where work happens. Includes working remotely, on the road, at home and from different sites.	
 Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How work happens. Includes technology, equipment and workplace design.	
 Informal flexible work	 Formal flexible work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ad hoc remote workUnplanned change to hoursActivity-based working on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Part timeRegular remote workCompressed work weekJob sharingRegular change of hours/days	

“

In a tight labour market there are huge first mover advantages to those who can crack the code for flexible ways of working in frontline environments. Flexible options open up untapped labour and expand the diversity of your talent pool.

James Fazzino
Convenor, Champions of Change Coalition and Chair of Manufacturing Australia

Grouping roles into three broad categories provides a starting point for identifying opportunities for flexibility

Knowledge and office-based roles



Characterised by: Functional roles that support the frontline operations, traditionally done on site but could be done remotely; shift work not required.

Examples include: Human resources, finance, strategy, legal, marketing.

People in these roles told us flexibility would ideally include options to:

- work 2–3 days per week at home or remotely
- choose which days are worked off site
- work at regional hubs or satellite offices
- work part time
- undertake a job share
- compress the work week.



What flexible working offers me is increased personalisation and control of my time, which can't be underestimated.

People and Culture Business Partner



My partner had his request for flexible working approved (reduced hours) to focus on professional development and share in family responsibilities. This was a game changer for our family. Not only has it allowed him to play a very active and equal role in caring for our children but has allowed me further opportunity to participate in employment and significantly reduce the mental load of juggling work and home.

Project Accountant

Blended roles



Characterised by: Roles that contribute to frontline operations and require time on site with and during operations; may require shift work.

Examples include: Research scientist, laboratory technician, site engineer, site maintenance, field sales representative, frontline supervisors.

People in these roles told us flexibility would ideally include options to:

- analyse the role to identify what needs to be done on site versus remotely
- choose and be supported to work remotely when possible
- be provided with technology that enables working remotely
- work at regional hubs or satellite offices.



There is technology available to look at site works and maintenance activities remotely – this would mean we could make a call about small jobs from home when on call rather than having to go to the site.

Site Engineer



Refinery hours used to be fixed and on site. Now some workers, for example, Inspectors, are leaving early and doing their paperwork from home.

Site Inspector

Frontline roles



Characterised by: Work is performed 'on site' most or all the time. Often requires shift work in a 24/7 operating environment.

Examples include: operator, driver, technician, emergency service first responder, front-of-house hospitality worker, service advisors

People in these roles told us flexibility would ideally include options to:

- have a flexible roster, including a lifestyle roster, such as FIFO
- swap shifts
- undertake a job share or other part-time arrangements
- compress the work week
- split shifts
- multiskilling.



At Melbourne Airport everyone (like tanker drivers, refuellers) are skilled up to multi-task and take on different roles, which has improved engagement and is seen as providing flexibility.

Refueller



Flexibility is a new concept for operators and not a 'normal' mindset. It's never really been talked about, and perception is that we are hamstrung with minimum manning requirements.

Operator



Not all types of flexibility are ideal for every role but greater flexibility is nearly always achievable.

Greg Smith AM
Former Deputy President of the Fair Work Commission

Considerations for creating flexibility in shift and site-based roles

Operational, structural, cultural, legal and historical factors are at play that make embedding flexible work at scale more complex for frontline, shift and site-based roles.

The Australian industrial relations system (Appendix) consists of key elements designed to protect the rights of workers and preserve minimum wages and ensure security of employment. These include:

- a safety net of minimum terms and conditions of employment.
- a system of enterprise-level collective bargaining underpinned by bargaining obligations and rules governing industrial action.
- provision for individual flexibility arrangements as a way to allow an individual worker and an employer to make flexible work arrangements that meet their genuine needs, provided that the employee is better off overall.

Where workers are governed by an Enterprise Agreement or Award, options for enabling flexibility include:

- Incorporating flexibility into the Enterprise Agreement during the negotiation process, which enables flexible work options for all employees working under the agreement.
- requesting 'flexible work arrangements', which give employees (other than casual employees) who have worked with the same employer for at least 12 months. The ability to request flexible working arrangements if they meet specific criteria. An employer can only refuse such a request on 'reasonable business grounds'.⁴

- using an Individual Flexibility Agreement (IFA), which is a written agreement the employer and employee enter to change the effect of certain clauses in their award or registered agreement.

Fixed assets, machinery and customer location means work has to happen in a certain place, in a certain way, at a certain time, which can limit individual autonomy and agility.

Traditional mindsets of where and how work is done can be a barrier to enabling new and different ways of working. Challenging rituals and undertaking critical role analysis can, for example, differentiate critical tasks that require site presence and opportunities for remote working.

Enterprise Bargaining cycles take time. It can take several years to change conditions governed by enterprise agreements, given the duration of agreements and the negotiation process required to reach a shared position on flexible work.

Constraints on investing in technology and training is also a factor. Investment that supports production efficiencies and safety, which are both business imperatives, have been prioritised. As organisations strive to support frontline flexibility, investment in technology and training for line managers and operational leaders is critical to ensure the sustainability of flexible workforces. This includes, for example, investment in scheduling and planning technology, remote access for line managers to complete administrative tasks remotely or technology to support operators to participate in shift handover or training online and remotely.

IFA's explained⁵

- An IFA can't be used to reduce or remove an employee's entitlements.
- An employer has to make sure that the employee is better off overall with the IFA than without it compared to their award or registered agreement at the time the IFA was made. To do this they should look at the financial and non-financial benefits for the employee, as well as the employee's personal circumstances.
- In awards, you can use an IFA to vary clauses about:
 - arrangements for when work is performed, such as working hours
 - overtime rates
 - penalty rates
 - allowances
 - leave loading.
- The flexibility clause in a registered agreement will list which clauses in the agreement can be changed.⁵

See Appendix for further detail on the Australian Industrial Context. p45

The principles underpinning flexible work remain the same

In over a decade of working with organisations to embed flexible work in their systems and structures, we have seen workplace flexibility improved and sustained in all kinds of environments, geographies and roles.

Key to success in any setting is the presence of the following principles:

High performance



- Elevate flexibility as a business priority.
- Focus on outcomes not inputs.
- Ensure a culture that promotes trust and accountability to deliver outcomes.
- Monitor and measure access to and the effectiveness of flexible working.
- Ensure capacity and support for balance, health and wellbeing.

Visible leadership



- Provide immediate line manager support, which is critical.
- State and demonstrate commitment to flexibility.
- Have capability to manage flexible teams for results.
- Empower employees to deliver.
- Agree clear expectations on outcomes and performance.
- Manage for results.
- Role model flexibility in practical ways.
- Invest to make flexibility work.
- Share and celebrate success.

Inclusion for all



- Provide inclusive access to forms of flexibility, for every role, for any reason.
- Respond to individual needs.
- Recognise that caring is a shared responsibility.
- Provide secure and meaningful work.

Genuine enablement







- Establish policy settings.
- Work on job design.
- Consider workplace design.
- Provide the tools and technology.
- Ensure safe and supportive conditions.

4. Fair Work Ombudsman, accessed May 2022, 'Requests for Flexible Working Arrangements'. <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/requests-for-flexible-working-arrangements>

5. Fair Work Ombudsman, accessed May 2022, 'Use of individual flexibility arrangements'. <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/use-of-individual-flexibility-arrangements>

Flexibility in the frontline is a long-term strategy

Our organisations are working towards multiple horizons from different starting points, with flexibility for all employees a long-term goal. We are moving from a place of ‘single-point flexibility’ to sustainable flexibility en masse, which requires a more deliberate and comprehensive strategy, and more time to implement at scale.

The horizon our organisation is focused on...		Now: What can we do now to provide flexibility in some way for individuals who need it?	Next: What small but impactful investments can we make to create more flexibility for more people?	Future: What cultural, structural or operational changes and long-term investments do we need to make to sustain flexible ways of working?
Is influenced by the leadership mindset across our organisation		I understand flexibility is important for the health and wellbeing of team members and I am curious and open to how I can help create opportunities for people in my team.	I feel confident and empowered to test and enable flexibility for individuals and teams, and I am prepared to work with internal and external stakeholders and customers to balance the needs of individuals with business outcomes.	I am bold and aspirational in reimagining how, when and where work can be done, and by whom. I advocate for flexible work opportunities across the organisation and within our value chain, considering individual needs and business outcomes.
And drives the action we take, guided by key principles				
 High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elevate flexibility as a strategic priority that supports the achievement of business objectives.Review workforce strategy around secure flexible employment with a focus on health and safety; retention and engagement.Set targets, define metrics and ensure performance evaluation is consistent across all ways of working.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Build flexible ways of working into the operations strategy.Engage with customers, clients and other stakeholders to advance flexible work while continuing to maintain service levels.Monitor team performance across all ways of working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure flexibility is core to the operating model.Measure and report on key business metrics in a way that links ways of working to outcomes; e.g. health and safety; retention and engagement.
 Visible leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Invest in additional and different training for line managers, focusing on skills development and mindset shifts.Share examples of how flexibility is being enabled to encourage others.Engage employees and union representatives to discuss openly the need for secure and flexible work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Build on education for managers and teams, focusing on innovation, job redesign and team-based approaches.Share and celebrate leadership of innovative team based solutions.Keep engaging with employees, union representatives and unions to discuss openly the need for secure and flexible work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make the ability to lead a cohesive and inclusive flexible team a core leadership capability, with incentives tied to performance.Recognise and reward leadership excellence.Keep engaging with employees, union representatives and unions to discuss openly the need for secure and flexible work.
 Inclusion for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage with people individually to understand changing needs for flexible work.Communicate with employees about your openness to flexibility.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep engaging with people individually to understand their changing needs for flexibility, and integrate these across team settings.Ensure flexibility is clearly communicated at all stages of recruitment to attract previously untapped workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep engaging with people individually to understand their changing needs for flexibility.Identify and engage specific groups of previously untapped workers who require flexible work.
 Genuine enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Critique roles and rituals that could be done differently or remotely for greater flexibility; e.g. administration, tool box talks.Invest in basic technology to enable connectivity; e.g. offsite access for training or meetings.Work within current Industrial Relations frameworks to enable flexibility, either at an individual or group level, depending on the agreement.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide additional OPEX , focusing on FTE rather than headcount, and CAPEX as required to enable flexible work.Develop a suite of flexible work options and opportunities for the frontline; e.g. enable and encourage multiskilling.Invest in tools and technology to enable substantive work to be undertaken offsite; e.g. scheduling resource tools to balance work across sites and branch networks; undertake remote maintenance.As new and/or current Enterprise Agreements are negotiated, look for ways to incorporate flexible work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitor OPEX and CAPEX budgets to ensure the long-term sustainability of flexible work.Redesign roles or processes with flexibility embedded; create new sites or workplaces to make them more comfortable for the people who need to work there; e.g. family accommodation on FIFO sites.Invest in assets that enable flexibility; e.g. autonomous equipment, enabling workers to work remotely and more safely.Enhance flexible work opportunities in each Enterprise Agreement as it is renegotiated.

CASE STUDIES

What we have tried and learned

Learning from each other will accelerate progress

There is no playbook for enabling flexible work for frontline workers; however, there is a great deal of experimentation underway. Context and maturity of environments plays into how far organisations have to go, but to varying degrees, organisations have needed to challenge their rituals, innovate and find the technological adaptation to support flexibility.

This resource draws together the testing and learning that has been underway on the front lines of our organisations.

The examples included on the following pages are candid stories of what some of our Member organisations have been trying and learning.

Our hope is they offer ideas outside usual networks and insight into new industries, organisations and roles.

We have much more to learn but by sharing these experiences and working together we will continue to innovate and accelerate progress for flexibility for all employees.



We are making progress in many areas across our workplaces to enable equal participation. By challenging traditional ways of working and sharing our experiences in relation to flexibility for frontline and site-based roles across industries, we are creating the environment to deliver not only gender diversity, but significant social and mental benefits for our employees and communities.

Gillian Cagney
President ANZ, Worley

Enabling flexibility through an Individual Flexibility Agreement

Role: Driver

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

Hanson is a manufacturer and distributor of building and construction materials. Eighty per cent of its workforce is covered by forty Enterprise Agreements.

At present, most of the Enterprise Agreements covering the workforce have limited opportunity for flexibility, meaning that IFAs are required to enable requests for flexible work.



Organisation profile: Hanson Australia

- **About the organisation/operation:**
Manufacturer of building and construction materials with an extensive production and logistics network across Australia
- Around 4,000 employees in Australia
- 24/7 operations

A driver requested a change in his work schedule from Monday to Friday to Sunday to Thursday to enable him to perform his ordinary hours on days of the week more favourable to his personal life.

In the current Enterprise Agreement, flexible work arrangements are limited to:

- job sharing:
 - split work day – working either morning or afternoon
 - split work week – working less than 5 days per week
- truck sharing:
 - sharing truck among two drivers (rather than each truck being assigned to one driver)

Given the request was not covered by the Enterprise Agreement, an IFA was sought to enable the request, which requires the new arrangement to pass the Better Off Overall Test (BOOT).

To ensure the individual's request was valid against the BOOT, Hanson sought legal advice.

The BOOT involves weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of the IFA to the employee. It typically requires a comparison between employees' entitlements under the proposed IFA against their entitlements under their award or registered agreement.

Objectives:

- To enable flexible work opportunities for individuals that are aligned to business requirements
- To increase the diversity of the workforce

Steps:

- Communicate and encourage people to request flexible work arrangements
- Build line manager skills to have conversations on flexibility
- Communicate how the change will positively impact turnover/attraction and retention

Early indicators of success:

- Retention of talent
- Attraction of applicants
- Stability in workforce

The Fair Work Ombudsman suggests that the following questions should be considered when deciding if the employee is better off overall:

- Who initiated the request?
- What entitlements are being changed? (For example, hours, overtime, penalty rates, etc.)
- What is the value of these entitlements under the award or registered agreement?
- Does changing the employee's span of hours change their penalty rates?
- Is the employee better off financially? (For example, will they receive more on a flat rate of pay under the IFA than they would as separate entitlements under their award or registered agreement?)
- Are there any situations where the employee wouldn't be financially better off? (Such as a roster cycle or after a certain amount of overtime.)
- Are there any other circumstances or characteristics unique to the employee that should be considered? (For example, factors such as the employee's family commitments, their health, whether they have a second job, study, or other interests).

The advice from the legal team concluded that:

- Based on the roster earnings comparison the employee would not be disadvantaged. It is therefore arguable that he would be 'better off overall' due to his personal circumstances.
- That said, to avoid a situation where the employee may theoretically be disadvantaged, it was recommended the IFA include the statements:
 - work from Sunday to Thursday would be paid as ordinary hours; and
 - work from Friday to Saturday would be paid at weekend rates.
- It was also recommended that the IFA address meal allowance, which was higher for weekend work.
- An IFA was put in place for the individual to meet their needs.

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:

- Encourage employees to come forward with flexible work requests.
- Check the Enterprise Agreement/employment contract (flexibility clause) to ensure the individual will be 'better off' under the BOOT.
- Seek legal advice if in doubt.



Job share in 24/7 refinery operation

Role: Operators

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

With an aging workforce and limited diversity across the refinery, Viva Energy set about increasing women's representation in frontline operator roles.

It was recognised that two significant barriers stood in the way: the assumption that operator roles needed to be performed on a full-time, 24/7 shift roster and that a trades qualification was required.

Attracting and retaining talented women in the Viva Energy refinery has historically been a challenge, due largely to the nature of the work and the 24/7 operating environment. In 2017, the refinery workforce consisted of 84% men and 16% women, with most of the women in corporate roles.

To incorporate more flexibility into operator roles, working with a group of operations managers, roles were redesigned as job shares. From an industrial relations perspective, a new part-time shift was created within the framework of the current Enterprise Agreement. Following extensive consultation with the union representatives, the new part-time shift (50% of the standard 24/7 roster including days and nights) was agreed. A number of sessions with current employees were undertaken to explore the opportunity for part-time work and outline the rationale.

In order to attract more diverse candidates, including women, traditional competence requirements were challenged by focusing on mechanical aptitude rather than mechanical experience, and looking for values alignment and transferable skills during recruitment.

For the first operator campaign, an exception to advertise and recruit for people identifying as women was sought from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC).



Organisation profile:
Viva Energy

- **About the organisation/operation:** Key manufacturer and supplier of fuels, lubricants, solvents and bitumen for national and international markets
- **Primary sites in Australia:** Refinery in Geelong and import terminals around Australia. Refuelling operations at a number of small and large airports
- **Type of operation:** 24/7 operation at Geelong Refinery and varying shift patterns at other operational sites
- 1,400 employees in Australia

Objectives:

- Improve gender balance
- Improve diversity
- Provide a transition to retirement

Steps:

- Role redesign for part-time job share
- Consultation with employees on a new shift as part of the current Enterprise Agreement
- Exemption sought from VEOHRC to advertise for women only
- Overhaul of the recruitment campaign
- Training of staff on diversity and inclusion
- Operator training modules adapted to align to shorter shifts
- Purchase of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and investment in amenities

Early indicators of success:

- Increase in women operators from 9% to 23% of total operators in 4 years
- Increase in women's overall representation in the refinery, from 16% to 24% in 4 years

A new advertising campaign and recruiting process was developed, highlighting the ability people would have to manage commitments outside of work, as well as benefits in parental leave and above-market superannuation. Removing unintended bias in advertising, including in language and imagery, was also undertaken. Comprehensive consultation occurred with the workforce given this was a change to historical recruitment.

Several investments across training, induction and shift patterns were required to ensure the part-time operator

model was structured appropriately. The incumbent workforce underwent revitalised diversity and inclusion training. The induction program and skills training were modified and shift patterns were adapted during training periods to ensure the part-time operators met all requirements to become fully qualified.

A review of PPE was undertaken for operators, which identified the need for smaller and different-shaped garments, including gloves.



The new approach, first undertaken in 2018, enabled Viva Energy to successfully recruit 14 part-time women operators – women's representation in operator roles at this time was 9%. Since then, there have been two additional new operator campaigns and women now make up 23% of the total operator population. Women's overall representation in the refinery has moved from 16% to 24% in 4 years and their presence is having a positive impact on the culture, bringing different thinking, and questioning long-held assumptions.



Field Operators Producing Fuel for Victoria

Viva Energy is a leading energy company that supplies about a quarter of Australia's fuel requirements. We make, import, blend and deliver fuels, lubricants, solvents and bitumen through our extensive supply chains.

We're proudly Australian, extremely proud of our history and excited to be an important part of Australia's future.

Our refinery at Geelong manufactures and supplies more than half of Victoria's fuel requirements. Employing more than 700 people, our refinery is the only manufacturer of bitumen, solvents and asphalt in Australia and a vital part of our country's energy security.

For over 65 years our Geelong refinery has offered rewarding careers, helping to supply Australians with the fuel they need to reach their destinations.

Our team members are the key to us delivering our strategic objectives of being Safe, More Reliable, More Competitive and Driven by Our People.

Now hiring Field Operators

We're looking for a diverse range of talented people to join our team of Field Operators. There are 18 positions available, with opportunities for experienced Operators as well as individuals who are new to industry.

As an Operator you will work as a shift team member playing a key part in ensuring the refinery operates in a safe and efficient manner. You will love problem solving, being hands on, working as a team, and thinking on your feet, whilst being focused on safety and delivering quality outcomes.

Activities in this position will include:

- Operation of production machinery and processes to meet production requirements
- Safe isolation and preparation of equipment for maintenance repairs or inspection
- Performing minor maintenance and preventative maintenance
- Taking samples for laboratory analysis and perform some testing

We're offering:

- A safe, respectful and inclusive working environment
- Ongoing training and development
- Work-life balance
- Full Time and Part Time roles
- Shift work across 24 x 7 Operations
- Above market wages and conditions
- 12% superannuation
- 25% discount on fuel purchased through our retail network
- Onsite parking and canteen

Diversity and inclusion

Like all great places to work we embrace the diversity of thought that comes with providing equal opportunity for everyone. In our existing team we have gender, religious and cultural diversity and we actively support the LGBTIQ+ community. We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have a strong connection with the local community and we are proud of the role that we play in maintaining a strong local economy.

Whether you're seeking a career change or you are an experienced operator, please get in touch.

Be part of a workplace that respects the individual, where people can thrive and develop to their full potential in an environment that helps them to feel safe, confident and proud.

People who have a trades background or mechanical aptitude, are process orientated, analytical problem solvers and love contributing to a successful team will be well suited to this role.

Enquire today

Visit vivaenergy.com.au/careers and submit your application before Sunday 2 October 2021

VIVA Energy Australia

WGEA
Employer of Choice in
Energy Sector

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:

- Extensive training is required for operators in a major hazard facility. Training on a part-time roster is difficult given there is a lack of continuity between day and night shifts and rostered days off. This issue is lessened for those moving from full time to part time roles once they are qualified.
- Ensure appropriate PPE is available to women from their first day of work.
- Ensure suitable amenities are available for all genders in the area in which they work.
- Ensure all operations staff (all genders) are included in communications about how the arrangements will work to ensure the right support is available.
- Recruiting part-time women operators in a group provided them with a support network from the start.
- Consider issues that may arise from job sharing; e.g. the arrangement worked well where two part-time operators were able to split a full roster. However, it requires adaptability when one of the job share partners needs extended leave or a change to the roster pattern.
- Targets for women's representation and monthly diversity and inclusion reporting at the Executive Leadership Team via a diversity and inclusion dashboard helps to keep progress on diversity top of mind.
- It came to light that some of the valves and equipment can be quite large, difficult and heavy for some employees to operate. Ensuring adequate support and pairing has helped to enable work to be done successfully.

Relevant Enterprise Agreement flexibility clause

- 'Work will be performed in the most efficient manner without artificial constraints. The only limitation on the work performed by an employee will be that it is safe, efficient, logical and legal'.



4-day work week trial at power station

Role: Power station electrical and mechanical technicians

Industrial context: Enterprise agreement

The opportunity to trial a 4-day work week was tabled as part of the Enterprise Agreement negotiation process for electrical and mechanical technicians working in the Latrobe Valley site, in Victoria.

Site employees were keen to explore the option to enable them more flexibility in a physically demanding work environment. Worley was open to trial this from a health and safety perspective and to leverage more diversity.



Organisation profile: Worley

- Global provider of professional project and asset services in the energy, chemicals and resources sectors
- 48,000 employees globally and over 12,300 in the Australia Pacific operational region

Site overview:

- Worley Power Services power station maintenance team in the Latrobe Valley
- 80–120 employees on site in mostly mechanical and electrical roles

Originally proposed 3 years ago by Worley, the opportunity to trial a 4-day work week was not seen as a priority at the time.

However, in the lead-up to the new enterprise bargaining process, Worley worked with the bargaining group and consultative committee, to once again explore the opportunity.

The concerns of the workforce were predominantly based on the impact of their existing weekend arrangements and public holiday work, their roster and hours, and the impact on their leave and accruals.

As part of the most recent negotiation, the opportunity for a 4-day work week was tabled by the union members. The new shift was included in the Agreement, which was agreed upon and voted up in April 2022. The agreed commitment was to trial the change through consultation with both the union and the workforce.

The planned approach to the trial includes:

- an opt-in approach to a 4-day-week trial while maintaining the option of a traditional 5-day work week by splitting the work areas.

Objectives:

- To increase diversity
- To support health and wellbeing of employees
- To increase flexibility
- To improve engagement

Steps:

- Consult with the workforce
- Include 4-day work week shift in the Enterprise Agreement
- Consider any financial implications for workers
- Undertake a role and task analysis
- Test and trial 4-day work week
- Analyse and report results
- Survey employees

Early indicators of success:

- Retention of key talent
- Safer workplaces
- Improved morale

- Employees will be asked to nominate the schedule they wish to work.
- A role and task analysis will be undertaken to identify tasks that can be undertaken within a 4-day work week and a 5-day work week.
- Individuals and teams will be allocated to the tasks, based on their shift preferences.

Following the trial, an analysis will be undertaken to identify the benefits to the workforce and considerations that arise from adapting to the changed way of working. A determination will be made regarding the long-term sustainability of a 4-day work week at the power station. If successful, given the 4-day work shift was included in the recent Enterprise Agreement, a 4-day work week can be implemented for interested workers without further requirements for negotiation.

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:



- Collectively talk about the benefits with all parties, which takes time.
- Recognise some people won't want to change, so balancing all perspectives and recognising this fact is important to bring everyone on the journey.

Relevant Enterprise Agreement flexibility clause

Hours of Work Clause:

The following is incorporated into the hours of work clause of the Enterprise Agreement.

- Parties are committed to trialling a 4-day working week during the life of the agreement. This will be done by the parties meeting and agreement, and setting out the work arrangements for the 4-day week. The matters on this agreement that may be reached for the purposes of this clause are:
 - the duration of the trial for the 4-day week
 - roster pattern
 - start and finish times
 - annual Leave, personal leave and public holiday arrangements
 - any other matters.

The outcome of the above will be put in writing before being implemented. Any implementation of a 4-day work will be by the agreement of the majority of affected employees.



Permanent part-time employment rostering embedded into Enterprise Agreement

Role: Airport refuellers

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

Viva Energy made a commitment some years ago to providing both part-time and full-time employment options for employees working as refuellers at major airports. From a business perspective, this enabled rostering around fluctuating flight schedules. Having part-time workers means we have a larger number of trained and competent team members to support customer requirements. It is about having the enterprise agreements, company policy and contracts structured in a way that is win-win, supporting the company to deliver while attracting and retaining people who prefer flexible work.



Organisation profile: Viva Energy

- **About the organisation/operation:** Key manufacturer and supplier of fuels, lubricants, solvents and bitumen for national and international markets
- **Primary sites in Australia:** Refinery in Geelong and import terminals around Australia. Refuelling operations at a number of small and large airports
- **Type of operation:** 24/7 operation at Geelong Refinery and varying shift patterns at other operational sites
- 1,400 employees in Australia

As part of the enterprise bargaining process, both full-time and part-time employment rostering options for refuellers were embedded into relevant enterprise agreements. There has been a view historically that part-time employment was merely a 'stepping stone' to full-time employment – rather than an opportunity for genuine workplace flexibility.

Over time, Viva Energy has leveraged the part-time employment frameworks that exist in the refueller enterprise agreements to move away from the 'stepping stone to full-time employment' mindset – towards a culture that embraces genuine flexibility for all employees (noting this work group is heavily male dominated) to better balance both work and family commitments, and attract new talent.

Through Viva Energy's genuine commitment to flexibility – demonstrated in its refreshed Ways of Working guidelines – part-time employment in our Aviation business has begun to be seen as a genuine employment pathway for a refueller – rather than just a 'stepping stone' to full-time employment.

Objectives:

- To align enterprise agreement with desire by workforce to have a part-time flexible arrangement

Steps:

- Continued consultation with the group about how they wish to work, taking into account different needs of different demographic groups
- Communicate what is available under the agreement and bring it to life by sharing examples of where team members have benefited

Early indicators of success:

- Having the opportunity to work part time has helped the team of refuellers to feel part of the broader company Ways of Working refresh

Currently, 35 out of 130 refuellers are working on a part-time basis at airports around Australia.

Two examples of part-time employment options currently being utilised at Sydney Airport are Adam McLennan and Ross Parkin, who enjoy the challenge of their busy role at Sydney Airport. They work shifts across 7 days, to keep planes refuelled and in the air. They also enjoy being able to balance it with working part time. For Adam it means he is able to spend time caring for his 4-year-old daughter and for Ross it means more time to support his family given his partner also works shifts.

“

I can enjoy time with Daisy before she starts going to school and I can also pick up extra shifts if needed.

Adam, Refueller at Sydney Airport

“

It allows me to help out more at home and support my partner's career too, so I'm grateful for the flexibility.

Ross, Refueller at Sydney Airport

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:



- Ensure that the company's genuine commitment to flexibility is regularly communicated to and understood by the work group (and the market when sourcing new talent) – which over time has enabled the cultural shift to occur.
- Undertake ongoing engagement with the workforce and align existing enterprise agreement frameworks with broader company policy, and reinforce messages embracing genuine flexibility.

Relevant Enterprise Agreement flexibility clause

Ordinary Hours of Work:

- The ordinary hours of work for a full-time Employee shall be a minimum of 38 hours per week, averaged over the roster cycle, and may include reasonable additional hours paid at the applicable hourly rate. The ordinary hours of work for a part-time Employee shall be a minimum of 25 hours, and a maximum of 35 hours per week, averaged over the roster cycle, subject to business needs.



Technology enabling remote work for wind farm engineers

Role: Windfarm electrical, mechanical maintenance and operations team members

Industrial context: Enterprise agreement

The windfarm maintenance/operations team was encouraged to explore opportunities to undertake remote work in order to comply with Victorian and New South Wales COVID lockdown restrictions and requirements from 2020–2021.

Windfarm maintenance/operations teams traditionally spend 8–9 hours on site each day and are regularly on after-hours call back. Their job involves mechanical and electrical maintenance of the wind turbines and balance of plant and involves remote access and operations.

The opportunity to work remotely was discussed and agreed as part of the Enterprise Agreement. This established the foundation for a transition to more flexible work.



Organisation profile: Worley

- Global provider of professional project and asset services in the energy, chemicals and resources sectors
- 48,000 employees globally and over 12,300 in the Australia Pacific operational region

Site overview:

- Worley Power Services power station maintenance team in the Latrobe Valley
- 80–120 employees on site in mostly mechanical and electrical roles

Working with the windfarm maintenance/operations team, it was identified that some of the service requirements could be completed remotely via the use of technology.

Over a trial period, the team used existing technology and was able to construct work packages that enabled the wind farm technician to work at home. Therefore, normal pay and conditions would apply as if they were at the work site.

In addition to the above arrangement, the Enterprise Agreement contains provisions for on-call and call-out allowances. This enables the wind farm technicians to perform wind turbine resets at home.

Obstacles overcome included the technical specification of hardware being used and ensuring that the individual's home set-up allowed for effective operations. This assessment formed a part of the trial.

Objectives:

- To reduce on site after-hours workforce while maintaining agreed customer outcomes
- To support health and wellbeing of employees

Steps:

- Consult with the workforce
- Include remote work in the Enterprise Agreement
- Call-out rates retained while working remotely
- Test and trial remote work

Early indicators of success:

- Retention of key talent
- Safer workplaces

From an industrial relations perspective, on-call and call-out rates are paid to undertake this type of work. These were already included in the Enterprise Agreement, meaning there is no detriment to the pay and conditions of team members by undertaking the work remotely.

As a result of the trial, the windfarm maintenance/operations team is now doing most call-outs/after-hours work remotely using technology, which has resulted in safer workplaces and more efficient diagnoses. This has reduced the need for extensive travel and provided more flexibility to workers and their families.

Team members have indicated that they feel much more comfortable and safer undertaking this aspect of the role. They have a sense of ownership and feel empowered to fix issues as they arise, in a timely manner.

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:



- Hold effective consultations at the start of the process – this consultation occurred during the union conversations process.
- Include written provisions in the EBA encompassing the rules and expectations for specific elements of the work.
- Ensure any business understands the significant investment required for appropriate technology and hardware to enable team members to complete the work effectively.

Alignment in the bargaining process creates simplified flexibility options in new EA

Role: Maintenance and engineering services

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

Viva Energy has approximately 50 employees covered by the Maintenance Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA). Significant changes have been negotiated including improved opportunities for flexible working arrangements.

A new EBA has been negotiated that covers mechanical fitters, boilermakers, electricians and instrumentation technicians.

The previous agreement included the following working arrangements:

- 35 hours per week worked across a 9-day fortnight between 6.30am and 5.30pm
- additional hours allowance paid for set number of additional hours that are worked before overtime is paid
- limited ability to request flexibility.

The new agreement will provide significant flexibility improvements for the frontline team members covered by this agreement including:

- moving to a 4-day week/8-day fortnight, which is a reduction of 26 working days per annum
- rostered additional hours that will reduce disruption to the team members' personal life
- access to the Viva Energy annual leave purchase policy, which has previously only been available for employees working under contracts
- ability to request individual flexibility arrangements including part time, job share, start and finish times, and either reducing or opting out of additional hours.

During the bargaining process both parties constructively discussed enhanced flexibility for frontline workers in addition to wage outcomes, job security and simplification of the agreement to improve its application. It is the first time discussions on flexibility have been included as a priority for the workforce. The changes have been welcomed by the group and have demonstrated an appetite for alternative working arrangements for frontline, shift and site-based roles by both the work group and Viva Energy.

The change in rostering has also been applied to the contractor work group to align delivery of maintenance requirements across the Refinery.



Organisation profile: Viva Energy

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- **Primary sites in Australia:** Refinery in Geelong and import terminals around Australia. Refuelling operations at a number of small and large airports
- **Type of operation:** 24/7 operation at Geelong Refinery and varying shift patterns at other operational sites
- 1,400 employees in Australia

Objectives:

- To improve opportunity for flexibility
- To remove complex overtime allowance and associated administration
- To align contractor workforce to new working arrangement

Steps:

- Extensive consultation with impacted employees
- Detailed analysis of the current agreement and how proposed changes would improve productivity

Early indicators of success:

- Overall productivity gains from changes to existing additional hours allowance and associated administration
- Increased flexibility for those covered under the agreement

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:

- Extensive consultation is required and a willingness to openly consider how different working arrangements and productivity gains can both be delivered.
- Adopt a mindset that the starting position for any request is 'Yes'
- Stay up to date with what is being discussed within the community and business world.
- Talk to people and find out what really matters to them so that you can provide both group and individual flexibility options.
- Enhanced flexibility will increase productivity, reduce unplanned absences, uplift engagement and provide better opportunities for people to enter the workforce, transition to and from parental leave, and transition to retirement.
- Share and celebrate the success stories.

Relevant Enterprise Agreement Flexibility Clause

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements is a fundamental principle that supports job roles and flexibilities, to ensure that work is shared between award groups, staff and contract personnel as is currently contained in individual awards. The spirit behind the flexible allocation of work, encompassed in the detail of the 1991/1992 site awards, will be the basis of defining work flexibility, in order to ensure work methods are consistent. Where there is disagreement on the level of flexibility needed to complete a task, the consultative process will be utilised. Subject to the principles outlined in the relevant awards, this allocation of work will only be limited by the competence required and efficiency of the tasks being performed.

3.4.1 Principles

- Flexibility is required to enable the most effective completion of work, and work should always be conducted in a safe, efficient, logical and legal way.
- Work tasks should fit easily into the natural scope of the work cycle and yield significant productivity and job satisfaction benefits.

- The core discipline is involved in setting quality standards for training in shared work, e.g. by involvement in training advisory groups.
- For a multi-disciplined work team working on a particular job, the core discipline member/s acts as mentor for the group in his/her particular area of expertise.
- The work group planning and allocating the work will decide the allocation of tasks and should be focused on those tasks that add value to the performance of the Refinery. The core work will be given to the core discipline as defined by the relevant award.

The incidental work associated with the core work will be organised to enable the effective flow of the whole job and will generally be carried out by the person doing the core work.

The job will not be stopped to look for a primary discipline person to come and do shared work. If a job exists that lies totally within the shared area, then it will be allocated to whichever of the sharing groups is available at the time.

- Individuals work to enable their team to perform effectively by understanding and being committed to the team's purpose

and goals and being aware of the impact on the team's performance of what they contribute and do.

- The purpose of training is to develop individual competencies required by the job, and to develop the individual.
- Agreed performance standards need to be established and adhered to, to enable a person to be assessed as being competent and allow progression through the category structure.
- These standards will
 - encourage flexible work arrangements,
 - provide an incentive to develop further specific skills,
 - reward acceptance of responsibility for team performance,
 - allow individuals to have a choice of career options after initial flexibility's have been developed,
 - provide exit standards that will ensure tasks can be competently performed.

Work will be performed in the most efficient manner without artificial constraint and where appropriate taking into account relevant national standards.

Addressing barriers through work design and cultural change

Role: Frontline operations

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

South32 is a globally diversified mining and metals company with operations in Australia, Southern Africa and South America.

South32 is committed to increasing women's representation in the workforce across all operations. In 2017, a targeted recruitment campaign was initiated seeking women for the company's Worsley Alumina refinery operations in Western Australia's South West.

The manual handling and hazardous material roles were staffed almost exclusively by men, and closed recruitment methods only served to reinforce a gender imbalance in the workplace.

Overcoming this cultural norm was difficult and the recruitment campaign was initially poorly received by the existing workforce.

Early in the program, women felt isolated by their colleagues, and unfortunately many chose to exit the business after a short period of time. It was recognised that without early consultation to share 'the why', the existing, predominantly male, workforce did not understand or accept the need for the targeted recruitment campaign.

Worsley Alumina has since partnered with Diversity Australia to develop an Inclusion Roadmap, working to create a more inclusive workplace through:

- redesign of work to reduce manual labour tasks
- resetting behaviour standards and expectations, and supporting leaders
- supporting employment pathways for women, and Indigenous and other community members.

Organisation profile: South32 – Worsley Alumina



- **About the organisation/operation:** Integrated bauxite mining and alumina refining operation located approximately 130 kilometres south-west of Perth, Western Australia
- Operating for more than 35 years, Worsley Alumina supports more than 1,500 direct employees and 800 contractors
- **Type of operation:** 24/7 operation
- Operation injects more than \$1 million per day into the local economy, supporting the communities of Boddington, Collie and the Greater Bunbury regions

Objectives:

- To increase employee engagement
- To attract and retain more women in operations
- To improve gender balance

Steps:

- Articulating the business case for change
- Consulting with the workforce
- Redesigning jobs and job criteria

Early indicators of success:

- Tapping into a broader labour pool
- Anecdotally, it was observed that women show greater adherence to safety protocols
- Increasing mine utility with extra shifts
- Increasing local employment rates, as one of the largest employers in the region

Attracting and retaining talented women remains a core value proposition for Worsley Alumina.

Worsley Alumina's mining operations, located in Boddington WA, also presented an opportunity to attract and retain talented women in operational and professional roles. Mobile equipment operation roles were identified early as a way to introduce shorter rosters during school hours to attract stay-at-home parents who are traditionally under-represented in regional and remote workforces where it is also more difficult to access formal or informal after-school care. The shorter rosters are generally between 9am and 2.30pm.

The strategy is inclusive of anyone with caring responsibilities.

Leveraging community goodwill and engagement, Worsley Alumina found it was relatively easy to recruit women operators, who as a segment were discouraged from participating in operational mining roles.

Previous experience requirements were overcome by offering training at regular recruitment intakes. This directly increased the number of women applying for operational roles.

Maintaining flexibility in the roles and their design meant that:

- parents and primary carers could work within school hours
- recruits new to the mining sector could access on-the-job training.

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:



- Worsley Alumina learnt that having conversations with teams first and foremost is critical – having an engaged workforce will deliver better results.
- Overcoming inertia to change and redefining merit was important – historical recruitment methods resulted in a closed and narrow workforce.
- The business case was shaped to activate the 50% of the talent pool that reside in the operation's local community.



A flexible approach to contact centres is improving engagement and reducing unplanned absences

Role: Contact centre agents

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

Historically, contact centre roles at Telstra have been centred in large call centre locations in major cities, working to tightly managed shift rosters to meet customer demand. This made it hard for agents to have flexible work arrangements that supported a work-life balance, particularly if they lived a large travelling distance from the office.

In 2019, results from the Employee Pulse survey indicated team members experienced the work as relentless at times. Many with long commutes into the office, and they were looking for more flexibility to manage health and wellbeing, and balance work and family commitments. At the time, unplanned absences (UPAs) were 10–15% on any given day.

With the intention of providing more flexibility to Contact Centre agents, and in alignment with Telstra's enterprise-wide approach to flexibility, the agent@home trial was launched in October 2019. With the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020, the transition to working at home was fast-tracked, and now all agents have the choice to work remotely or from a central office.

Within three weeks of the COVID-19 transition commencing, Telstra transitioned all existing employees to work at home and then prepared to onboard many new starters who also had to be set up with this capability. Most agents still had desktop computers at this time, so it was many hands on deck to ensure technology and equipment were made available to agents at home, sometimes with personal delivery by managers.

Over the last two years, Telstra has been gradually updating the equipment employees have at home.

Organisation profile:

Telstra
Contact Centres Australia



- **About the organisation/operation:**
 - Front of House Voice Operations for Sales, Service and Faults
 - Specialist Case Management and Complaints teams, including Managing your Move, our SAFE team that provides support for victims of domestic violence and our First Nations Connect Team
- **Primary sites in Australia:** Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Bathurst, Newcastle, Maryborough QLD, Longreach, Darwin and Townsville
- **Type of operation:** Front of House Voice Operations open 8am–7pm Monday to Friday in some queues and 24/7 operations for some priority fault queues

Objectives:

- Reduce unplanned absences
- Ensure operational resilience and continuity to meet customer needs
- Enable flexibility as a key employee value proposition element in a tight market for skilled talent
- Address needs of existing employees for more balance and flexibility (time and location)

With worldwide shortages of laptops and all of the peripherals, along with shipping delays, it has taken much longer than anticipated.

Alongside an intention to be more flexible was the fierce competition in the labour market as Telstra announced in 2020 its intention to bring Front of House Call Centres back to Australia.

The organisation also partnered with another Champions of Change Coalition Member, PwC, to implement a Front-Line Ways of Working Program (Perform) for its frontline teams. This focused on:

- training and coaching leaders on driving performance in a remote work environment
- introducing virtual meeting cadences, including daily stand-ups and weekly problem-solving sessions
- simplifying operational reporting into a single easy-to-use dashboard for agents and leaders that is updated daily so leaders can coach to performance from the day before.

From an industrial relations perspective, the current Enterprise Agreement already has the option for employees to request to work flexibly, including part time. Recently, Telstra negotiated four new Enterprise Agreements. Each Enterprise Agreement received a majority YES vote by eligible employees and has been submitted to the Fair Work Commission for approval. The new Enterprise Agreement that will apply to contact centre agents, gives staff further options to work flexibly and request to work split shifts now that they are predominantly working at home. Employees expressed their interest in having this option to better manage home and work commitments and break up their working day/week.

Further innovations on the horizon include:

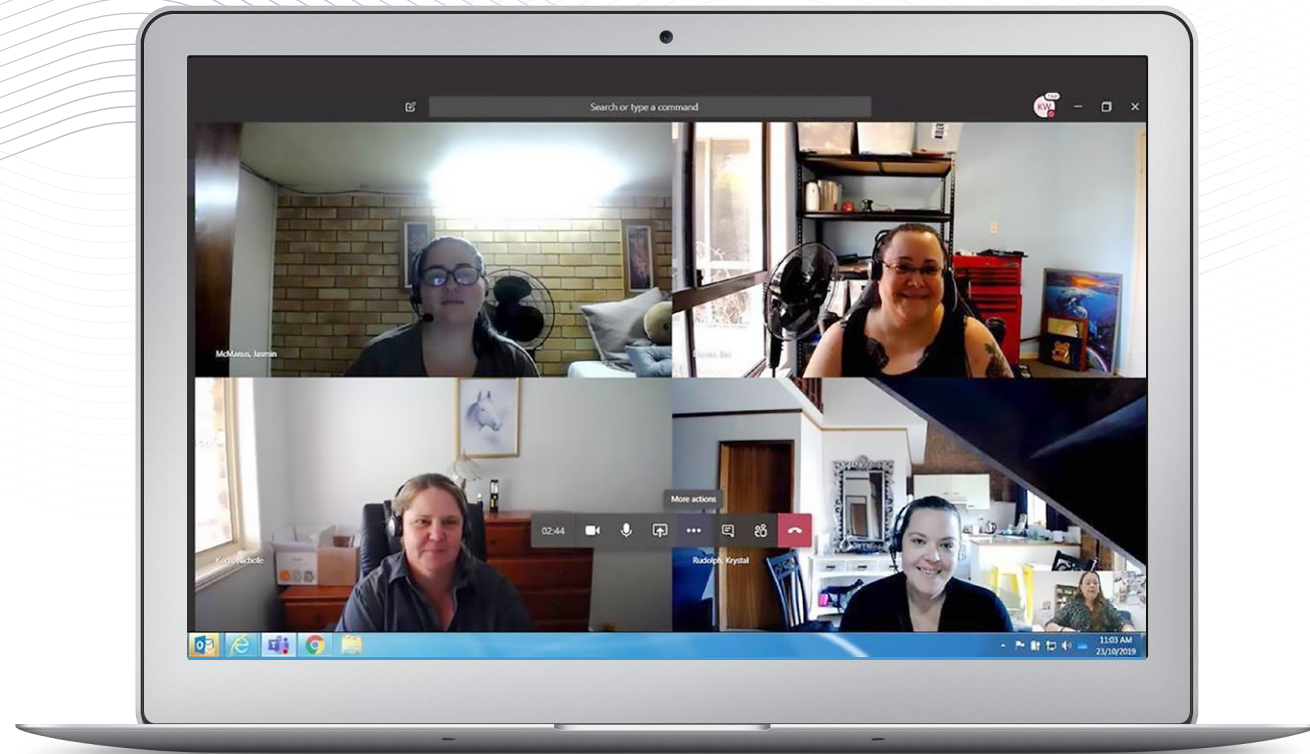
- exploring a trial of a self-managed shift rostering tool to give people more flexibility to move around their shifts to suit their needs, balanced with incentives to encourage shift take-up to maintain service levels for customers.
- advertising more permanent part-time roles and completely remote/location-agnostic work-at-home roles to increase the pool of potential candidates.

Steps:

- Trial in October 2019
- Fast-track during COVID-19, including all staff to work at home and technology upgrades
- Coaching for leaders on performance via remote work, virtual meetings, simple real-time performance dashboards
- EA voted up by the majority of eligible employees includes the ability to perform split shifts – currently with the FWC for approval.

Early indicators of success:

- Immediate reduction in unplanned absences to half of the initial rate.
- An increase in employee engagement to high performing norm levels for employee engagement globally based on Qualtrics benchmarks.
- Able to sustain Australian call centre operations during multiple COVID-19 lockdowns, and support customers.
- Able to recruit and train hundreds of agents remotely during COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Almost completed the transition of all front-of-house calls to be answered back in Australia by June 2022.



The organisation is continually monitoring and changing break structures for teams that are managing particularly challenging calls (like support for victims of domestic violence) and need extra time to maintain resilience.

Providing agents with more flexibility, appropriate tools, technology and support, increased engagement by 20 points (to 81%). UPAs declined to less than 5%.

Comments around working at home were the single largest topic from verbatim feedback in the Employee Pulse survey on engagement, with comments including:

Working from home has created a very positive work-life balance as it has removed hours of travel time. I was super impressed with our early response to Covid-19 as well and felt we are leaders in the way we quickly pivoted staff ahead of government orders, helping to minimize both Telstra and employee risk.

Working from home has significantly improved my quality of life.

Working from home, having our leader check in via a team call each morning for us to raise any issues and to just know we are still very much part of the team even though most of us are not in the office.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to assist our customers with the new agent@home through these hard times. It's made work-home life a lot easier, actually life changing in many ways as I'm a single mother of two. I am able to concentrate more and have found myself to be more self-sufficient. agent@home should continue.

Telstra's approach to flexibility is long standing, as the organisation that first created 'All Roles Flex' in 2014. The recent adoption of the agent@home approach to flexibility and work-at-home options is helping Telstra to position itself as an employer of choice in an increasingly competitive job market.

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:

- ▶ Having the right equipment for your team and ensuring they have a stable internet connection at home is key. Telstra is exploring welcome kits and home internet to offer to employees, particularly in frontline customer service roles.
- ▶ Daily connection between frontline employees and leaders is critical. Without the corridor or on-the-floor chatter in the office, people can become isolated very quickly and not reach out for help when it might be needed.
- ▶ Every cadence in the business has to be adjusted to support people working remotely and it requires ongoing fine-tuning to meet the needs of the team. For example, extending onboarding training to cater for remote learning.
- ▶ Don't underestimate the investment needed to move people to working in a remote environment. Having daily stand-ups and visible goals or simple dashboard reporting in place to keep the team focused remotely is critical (especially in a frontline call centre environment).
- ▶ Don't underestimate the investment needed in the coaching capability of leaders and how they need to change the way they operate with people working flexibly. For some leaders it can be unsettling if they have been used to seeing people in-person over the years.
- ▶ There is no one approach that works for every person, so leaders need to build a culture in their teams that supports a hybrid working environment where people can choose what hybrid means for them.

Relevant EA clause to enable flexibility

- The current Telstra Enterprise Agreement 2019–2021 includes the following clauses:
 - Clause 14 (Ordinary hours of work)
 - Section 5 (Flexible work)

The Telstra Limited 2022–2024 Enterprise Agreement has been voted up by eligible employees and has been submitted to the Fair Work Commission for approval. The proposed EA also introduces a clause that would enable employees to request to perform split shifts.



Creating blended working options for frontline operations

Role: Site engineers and technical experts

Industrial context: Individual contracts

At Viva Energy's oil refinery in Geelong, most employees need to be physically on site for the business to operate, with many working shift rosters across a 24/7 work week.

With the ongoing pressures stemming from the pandemic, and a traditional work environment that makes it more challenging for work to be undertaken in a flexible way, employees were encouraged to think laterally about incorporating elements of flexibility into their work.



Organisation profile: Viva Energy

- **About the organisation/operation:** Key manufacturer and supplier of fuels, lubricants, solvents and bitumen for national and international markets
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- **Type of operation:** 24/7 operation at Geelong Refinery and varying shift patterns at other operational sites
- 1,400 employees in Australia

James Bird, Integrity Manager, leads a team that are responsible for the integrity of Geelong Refinery assets. James identified an opportunity for his team members to balance physical inspection work on site with working at home to review ultrasound and ultrasonic results, write reports, write inspection recommendations, review drawings, conduct data analysis and plan upcoming inspections and events.

James identified that he could reorganise his and the team's time between the Refinery and home offices and at the same time become more effective by using time-saving approaches; e.g Microsoft Teams meetings in lieu of needing to travel across the Refinery from meeting to meeting.

It was identified that technology needed to be made available to all employees to enable meetings to be held virtually. It was also important for paper-based files to be translated to electronic documents so they could be accessed readily outside of the Refinery.

Objectives:

- To include frontline employees in the Viva Ways of Working Program
- To enable supervisors to make decisions about how best to manage working preferences to meet the needs of individuals and teams and also ensure operational needs are met

Steps:

- Frontline employees included in broader company communications on ways of working and invited to give feedback via a staff survey
- Supervisors explicitly given permission to experiment with different ways of working

Early indicators of success:

- Experiments are in the early stages but employees and leaders are reporting positive impacts on productivity and wellbeing

James works at home half the week and at the Refinery half the week. His team all work in a hybrid manner and balance working at home 1–2 days a week with an on site presence, depending on their work requirements. James commented, "Through challenging ourselves to try hybrid working the team feels empowered to balance their work life commitments and feel the tangible benefits."

One of James' team members mentioned he doesn't feel any difference to how the team is being led; regardless of whether he is working at the Refinery office or working at home. "This was a great sense check on whether I am applying the right balance of communications within the team through online meetings, F2F communications and emails."

Similarly, the Refinery Turnaround team of 30 people are responsible for planning and executing major Refinery maintenance events and have a critical role to play in ensuring Refinery assets are maintained. While historically working 100% of the time on site, the team has recently agreed to working at home on Mondays and Fridays during the planning stage of a Turnaround event. On the days they are on site at the Refinery they are able to carry out visits to the plant areas to inspect equipment and collect information. When working at home the team can concentrate on building plans and other work that can be completed remotely.

“ ”

The working from home arrangement was forced on us by COVID, but what we found is that productivity increased and so we have decided to maintain a hybrid model with a combination of working from home and site-based work. People value the flexibility of a hybrid working model

Ryan Williams
Acting Turnaround Manager

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:



- The team need to be engaged in the decision making, so they own the decisions.
- Leaders need to actively seek feedback and adopt agile thinking to make changes.
- Leaders need to lead by example.
- There needs to be a win-win for all who participate – addressing communication methods is important to ensure all team members feel connected.
- Be flexible and open minded, particularly in environments that have had traditional working arrangements in the past.
- Set clear expectations; e.g. minimum presence requirements in the office. Responding to urgent needs can mean people need to come to the site on a work-at-home day.
- It was fortunate timing that prior to the hybrid model, our team was progressing towards a paperless document approvals process. Paperless communications for various document approvals is essential.
- The first and second hybrid models are unlikely to be the last. Be willing to modify the model.

Shift-swap app promotes and enables flexibility

Role: 24/7 customer facing roles at Crown Melbourne Limited, including Dealers and Area Managers

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreements

Crown Melbourne employs a large cohort who are required to work 24/7 on a rostered basis in specialised roles on the gaming floor in a casino, hotels and food and beverage outlets. Once trained and certified with the relevant skills, Crown facilitates frontline employee shift swaps within each business unit. The relative compatibility of skills supports greater personal flexibility for employees.

Frontline roles require employees to be physically present for effective operations. The challenging context for flexible work was how Crown could enable these employees to manage their own roster, maintain capacity to serve customers, preserve industrial relations elements such as minimum shift durations and ensure employees maintained enough hours to sustain their income.

The key barrier to widespread flexibility was the manual nature of the shift-swap system and the limited capacity of the administrative team to process shift swaps. Crown's desire was to replace a manual system with a technological solution.

An in-house project team defined the problem and worked closely with the frontline on a simple, user-friendly fix. The answer was an app-based shift-swap tool where individual employees could swap, give-away or pick up shifts, and effectively write their own roster.

Crown had negotiated flexibility for scheduled roles into their enterprise agreements. Crown proactively consulted with the relevant union to ensure the proposed platform was an appropriate replacement solution that factored employee feedback, included organisational parameters, compliance with Enterprise Agreements and user experience.

Organisation profile: Crown Resorts



- **About the organisation/operation:** Integrated resort including luxury accommodation, dining, casino, conferencing, shopping and entertainment facilities
- **Primary sites in Australia:** Melbourne, Perth, Sydney
- 24/7 operation
- Approximately 20,000 employees in Australia (inclusive of contingent workers)

Objectives:

- Greater flexibility for frontline employees
- Reduction in manual administrative tasks
- Enhanced rostering

Steps:

- Identify a manual process that may be solved by technology
- Engage a team to define the business solution and develop the technology
- Consult with unions and employees on the change process
- Test, pilot and refine
- Support the system change with communication and training

Early indicators of success:

- Increased number of processed shift swaps from 2,000 to 15,000 per month
- Flexibility for all, supports attraction and retention of employees

The introduction of this employee app was Crown's first foray into providing employees accessibility to IP from external devices. As such, there were initially some concerns about system security. However, Crown worked through these concerns to ensure appropriate controls were in place to mitigate the risk.

This system was supported extensively by managers and underpinned by the introduction of an organisation wide Flexible Working Arrangements Policy.

The positive response to the shift-swap app has been overwhelming. The number of processed shift swaps increased from 2,000 to 15,000 per month. Employees are empowered to take control of their flexibility needs, demonstrating that user-friendly accessibility creates a better employee experience and flexible work outcomes.

The benefit of this app also skews to positive business outcomes. A more engaged shift worker will create an uplifted customer service experience due to the accessibility to flexibility. Resulting from this, Crown continues to identify opportunities to enhance the app and the ongoing technological solutions to continue to enhance the employee experience.

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:



- Seek opportunities to replace limiting manual administrative systems with technological solutions.
- Invest time, expertise, and resources into understanding the current state, defining the problem and aligning solutions with employee feedback.
- Proactively consult with unions and employees on the change process.
- Identify and communicate clearly to all employees the benefits for change.
- Ensure the program of work is aligned to broader cultural change initiatives to embed flexible mindsets and new ways of working.



Flexible work options built into the Enterprise Agreement allow flexible rostering and part-time hours

Role: Warehouse and production roles

Industrial context: Enterprise Agreement

Unilever looks at the future of work through three different lenses – the work, the workplace and the workforce – and our three big goals relate to the future of work in each of these areas. These goals are to reskill or upskill our employees with future-fit skills by 2025; pioneer new models to provide our employees with flexible employment options by 2030; and help equip 10 million young people with essential skills by 2030.

The Unilever global future of work goal – to pioneer new models to provide employees with flexible employment options – is operationalised by local sites in ways that work best for their employees and their business.

The Unilever Tatura factory in Victoria manufactures and distributes Continental food products. It is a regional site employing 140 local people. Flexibility at the factory responds to individual and business needs.

The Enterprise Agreement in place incorporates;

- flexible start times across multiple shifts (7am, 3pm, 11pm) – workers can start an hour either side of the normal shift start time. Further to this, by agreement, operators can start outside of these hours. This is managed on a line-by-line basis as not all lines run 24 hours.
- permanent flexible part-time roles, guaranteeing 900 hours per annum (instead of casual hours).

This has meant that the Tatura site has been able to offer a range of flexible work options and solutions.

Organisation profile: Unilever



- **About the organisation/operation:** Multinational consumer goods company producing food, beverages, cleaning agents, beauty and personal care. Iconic brands include Dove, Rexona, Lynx, Vaseline, OMO, Surf, TRESemmé, Toni & Guy, Continental, Weis, Ben & Jerry's and Streets
- **Employees:** 148,000 globally and 882 in Australia

Site overview:

- Tatura factory, Victoria
- The factory runs 24 hours a day (3 x 8-hour shifts), 5 days a week.
- There are 140 employees currently working in the factory
- There are 13 production lines in total, which make over 200 different Continental products (taking into account different flavours, pack sizes and formats)

Objectives:

- Retain valued employees
- Accommodate work-life balance
- Offer secure yet flexible work

Steps:

- Have an EA that allows for some flexibility options
- Let the workforce know you are open to conversations about flexibility
- Work with managers to make sure individual solutions work for the team and the operations

Examples of flexible work

Return to work following parental leave

There have been a number of examples where, on return from parental leave, requests were made by permanent full-time operators to return to work on reduced days (e.g. 2 days per week).

Varied start time

Where the line can accommodate it, there are also examples of varied start times outside the standard 7am, 3pm and 11pm shifts. For example, one operator is able to start at 8.30am in order to drop children at school because she works further down the line, and it takes some time for the product to get there. The Manager reviewed and agreed the request, and this was set up in the system to cater for this request. This agreement has allowed the new parents to balance caring and maintain a secure income.

Job sharing to support career transition

A full-time permanent operator requested a reduction to 3 days per week to enable her to study nursing. The Manager reviewed and agreed the request, and a contract was put in place to formalise the request.

Permanent flexible part-time work for greater security

To help manage peaks and flows of business, Unilever offers permanent flexible part-time work, typically for a minimum of 900 hours per annum. The majority of the work occurs during peak season, during which time workers have the ability to accept or decline additional shifts, enabling them to balance work and other life commitments. The permanent part-time status provides some security in regard to annual hours and assists people with gaining loans etc. (which a casual work force can struggle to achieve).

Early indicators of success:

- Retains valued employees
- Builds the site's reputation (in a local community) as a good employer
- Enables the business to respond to operational fluctuations

Advice to others who may want to replicate this approach:

- Consider how the company's global aspirations and policies can be operationalised in local businesses
- Be open to conversations about individual needs and solutions within your business constraints
- Having an EA with some broader flexibility clauses helps you to accommodate individual needs
- Sometimes it makes it harder as a business to offer flexibility but there are overall benefits if you can accommodate it
- Changing the perception of factory work will attract a more diverse mix of applicants



APPENDIX



Flexible work never means employment conditions falling below the safety net. Neither should flexibility manifest itself in insecure employment through greater casualisation of labour, rather, that organisations find ways to navigate the system to create secure, flexible options for people and at scale.

Greg Smith AM
Former Deputy President of the Fair Work Commission

Appendix The Australian industrial context

The Australian industrial context

The Australian national workplace relations system is established by the *Fair Work Act 2009*, and other laws cover the majority of private sector employees and employers in Australia.

The key elements of the workplace relations framework are:

- a safety net of minimum terms and conditions of employment
- a system of enterprise-level collective bargaining underpinned by bargaining obligations and rules governing industrial action
- provision for individual flexibility arrangements as a way to allow an individual worker and an employer to make flexible work arrangements that meet their genuine needs, provided that the employee is better off overall
- protections against unfair or unlawful termination of employment
- protection of the freedom of both employers and employees to choose whether or not to be represented by a third party in workplace matters, and the provision of rules governing the rights and responsibilities of employer and employee representatives.

The practical application of the Fair Work Act in workplaces is overseen by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) and the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO).⁶

Enterprise agreements

Enterprise bargaining is the process of negotiation between an employer and their employees and their bargaining representatives with the goal of making an Enterprise Agreement (EA). EAs contain the terms and conditions of employment between employers and employees. Enterprise bargaining is regulated under Part 2.4 of the *Fair Work Act 2009*, which establishes a set of rules and obligations about the enterprise bargaining process. This includes rules about bargaining, the content of EAs, and how an EA is made and approved.

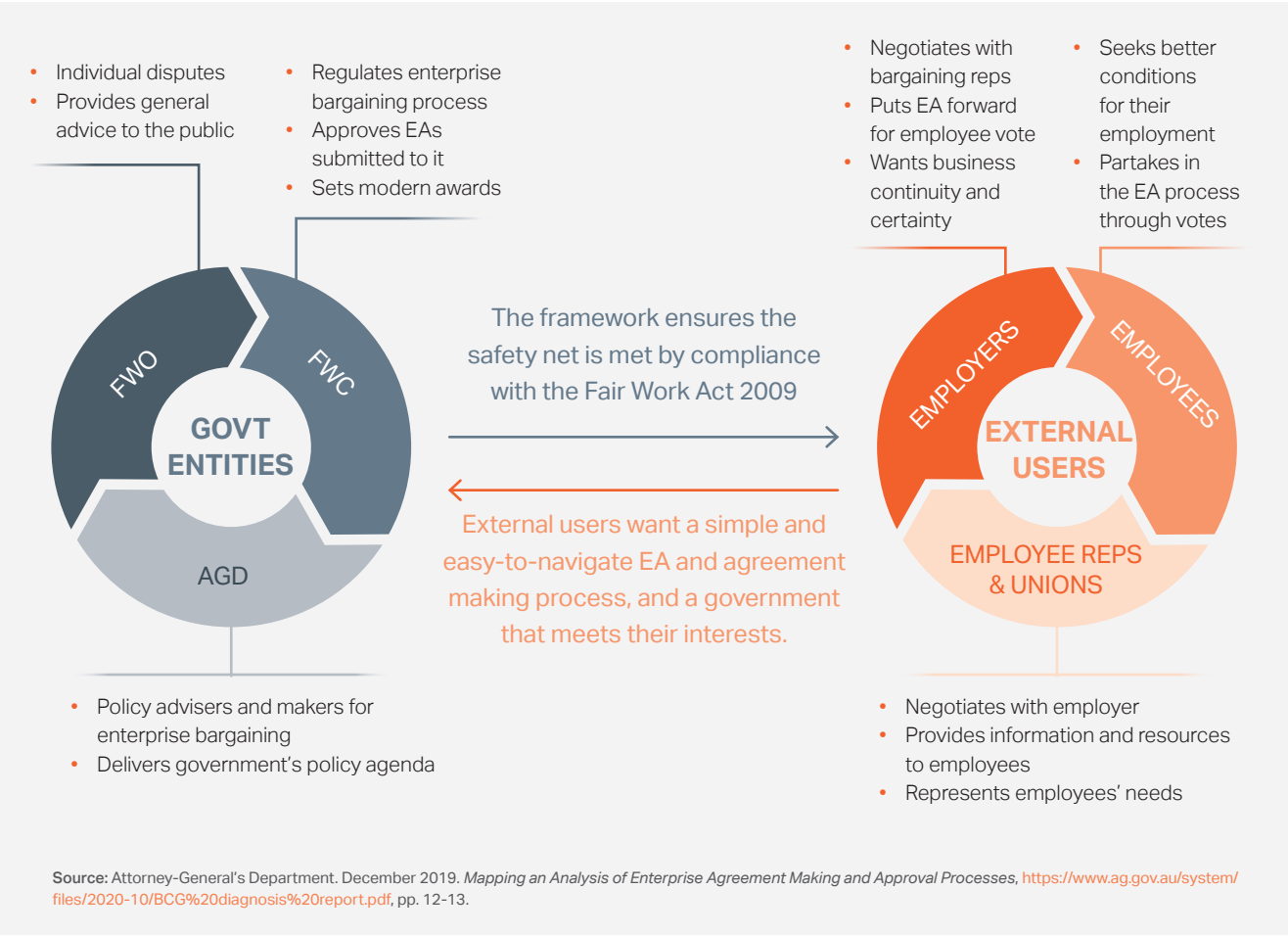
It is during this process that the opportunity for flexible work as part of the agreement can be explored. Examples could include:

- variable shifts (work week vs weekend work)
- variable start and finish times
- part-time and full-time options
- compressed working hours or weeks
- job share
- flexitime
- different work locations
- earlier or later start and finish times
- purchased leave
- time off in lieu
- flexible rostering (such as taking rostered days off as two half days)
- gradual increases or decreases in working hours.

The stakeholder landscape for enterprise bargaining is complex and interlinked, with many parties involved. They include (1) government entities such as the FWO, the FWC and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (AGD); and (2) employers, employees, and their representatives.⁷

Each stakeholder has different perceptions and interests. Employees, employers and their representatives want an agreement that is simple and easy to navigate, a government service that can readily respond to their requests, and an Enterprise Agreement that provides tangible benefits to them. Government entities have an overarching regulatory oversight to ensure that EAs registered with them are scrutinised to ensure fairness, and the policy intent of increasing productivity on a macroeconomic level.⁸

Our industrial ecosystem



Once an Enterprise Agreement is in place, variations may only be made by agreement between employees and employers. In some cases, Fair Work Commission approval is required.

6. Attorney-General's Department. accessed May 2022. 'Australia's national workplace relation system', <https://www.ag.gov.au/industrial-relations/australias-national-workplace-relations-system>.
7. Attorney-General's Department. December 2019. Mapping an Analysis of Enterprise Agreement Making and Approval Processes, <https://www.ag.gov.au/system/files/2020-10/BCG%20diagnosis%20report.pdf>, pp. 12-13.

8. Attorney-General's Department. December 2019. Mapping an Analysis of Enterprise Agreement Making and Approval Processes, <https://www.ag.gov.au/system/files/2020-10/BCG%20diagnosis%20report.pdf>, pp. 12-13.



Improving frontline flexibility is not only about increasing the representation of women in the workforce, to advance gender equality flexible practices need to be designed to be relevant to all genders.

James Fazzino
Convenor, Champions of Change Coalition and Chair of Manufacturing Australia

Our thanks

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About the Champions of Change Coalition

The Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve gender equality and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

championsofchangecoalition.org



Men stepping up beside women on gender equality