



Department of Consumer
and Employment Protection
Government of Western Australia

Our Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Enquiries: Ted Boronovskis - 92227675

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FLEXIBLE WORK PRACTICES

Cabinet has endorsed a number of policies designed to address demographic changes brought about by an ageing population and maturing work force in Western Australia. These policies impinge on the public sector workforce.

The Western Australian public sector has a considerably larger ageing workforce than the total Western Australian labour force. The median age of full time permanent employees in the Western Australian public sector as at June 2003 is 44 years for females, 45 years for males, and 45 years for all employees. Over 50% of the public sector are 45 years or older.

Over half of the public sector chief executive officers are eligible to retire, and within the next 10 years, most senior executives and half of the current workforce will be eligible to retire. This will have a major impact on the public sector with the loss of skilled and experienced staff. Succession planning and the retention of corporate knowledge are critical.

In response to these projections, DOCEP is developing strategies within the public sector in a number of areas to address these policies. These strategies include a:

- a) mature age employment strategy;
- b) work/life balance strategy; and
- c) review of the gender pay gap.

Within the context of mature age employment and work/life balance strategies, DOCEP will be undertaking a number of initiatives including:

- a) promoting the use of flexible working arrangements and phased retirement strategies for mature aged employees, including senior officers;
- b) developing attraction and retention strategies to encourage on-going mature age employment;
- c) establishing a co-ordinated approach to mature age employment;
- d) reviewing all public sector awards, agreements, policies and practices to identify and remove any impediments to the ongoing employment of mature age employees.

It is incumbent on public sector agencies to bring to the attention of employees the scope that exists within public sector awards and agreements to pursue flexible phased retirement and work/life balance options, including:

- a) part time work;
- b) flexitime;
- c) purchased leave – 44/52 salary arrangement;
- d) purchased leave – deferred salary arrangement;
- e) annual leave accessed intermittently based upon personal needs;
- f) flexible access to long service leave:
 - leave on a daily basis;
 - cashing out of accrued entitlements;
 - accrued leave on double pay for half the period accrued; and
 - pro rata leave if employees are within seven years of preservation age for superannuation purposes.
- g) leave without pay; and
- h) personal leave insofar as it includes:
 - carers leave; and
 - short leave.

Public sector agencies are encouraged to promote the use of these entitlements by developing appropriate human resource policies and management practices.

**TED ANTHONY
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LABOUR RELATIONS**

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