

Aggregating working hours enables employees to work varied weekly hours, provided that at the end of a stated work cycle such as three months, the employee has worked the total ordinary hours.

Averaging working hours arrangements enable employees to average ordinary hours of work over a cycle with differential daily and weekly hours. For example, in a two-week work cycle an employee (whose ordinary hours are 36.25 per week) may work 45 hours in the first week and 27.5 hours in the second week.

Overtime arrangements and penalty payments apply only to time worked in excess of the agreed hours of duty depending on the relevant industrial instrument such as award provisions or certified agreement.

Considerations

Aggregated hours arrangements are designed to cater mainly for seasonal work or industries that experience discernible peaks and troughs in workloads at different times of the year, for example, audit functions, rural fire fighting, gardening related functions.

Averaging hours arrangements are designed to cater mainly for consistently fluctuating demands over regular and usually short term periods. For example, payroll functions aligned to fortnightly pay periods that involve a busy week and a quiet week.

In both instances, the total number of ordinary hours worked over a defined period are rearranged, rather than reduced or increased. These arrangements are specifically intended to enable a business to open to best suit the client in order to improve service delivery, and to assist individual employees to balance their work and other life commitments if organisationally viable. There may also be the broader benefit of improved productivity, for example, altered hours patterns to align with internal cyclical demands.

These options need to be assessed first to ensure the outcomes benefit all concerned. Any arrangement needs to be recorded and agreed between the employee and the employer with any changes also agreed and recorded.

Source: Office of the Public Service Commissioner 'Attraction and Retention Series: Flexible Work Practices Options Kit Resource document'