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Contact: James Fox



Annual leave – don't give it away without a fight

We've been receiving many calls from concerned members about the Ministry's latest attempt to make life miserable for its hard working, underpaid Ambulance staff.

The Ministry has always had a policy on the books that seeks to keep 'excessive' annual leave balances down. It reserves the right to force staff onto annual leave if their balances exceed six weeks. Why six weeks? Because six weeks is what a 9-5 worker accrues at the 18-month mark. This is because most non-shift workers accumulate four weeks leave a year.

It's generally deemed reasonable for an employer to ask a staff member to take annual leave at the 18-month mark given annual leave is designed to give the worker a decent break every year.

However, what the Ministry has forgotten is that NSW paramedics earn six weeks in a single year. This means the Ministry's policy, probably written by a non-shift worker, falsely assumes paramedics are 'excessive' before the 18-month mark.

We've contacted NSWA and asked them to fix this on behalf of its dedicated Ambulance staff. They told us there's nothing to fix, because it's government policy.

This is not good enough and we'll be taking up the fight until we win. We recommend politely refusing any request to take annual leave whatsoever until NSWA does the right thing and stands up for its staff.

If you are rostered on leave against your will, contact james.fox@hsu.asn.au immediately.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Hayes', written in a cursive style.

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD