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Ambulance attacks 4x5 roster on paramedic appreciation day

Ambulance Executive have been trying to erode the 4x5 roster (12-hour shifts including 2 days and a combination of either an afternoon and a night or two nights). While finishing on a night shift pretty much ruins your first day off, a 5-day block away from work is an ideal way to reduce the acute risk to health associated with shift work.

They chose paramedic appreciation day to try to have the IRC force through a new format, the 12-line roster, today. However, the hearing has been delayed.

NSWA is trying to bring in the 12-line roster in at least 12 rural/regional stations around the state (Kingscliff, Bega, Murwillumbah, Moruya, Byron Bay, Batemans Bay, Casino, Griffith, Inverell, Armidale, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Cowra). We believe it's a precursor to bring it in everywhere, including metro.

A 12-line roster is staffed by 16 paramedics (four inbuilt relief) and is not popular with most paramedics due to the requirement to work shorter but more shifts over the cycle. This leaves paramedics working night shifts with less days off to recover and reconnect with their family. The majority time in the cycle paramedics work four shifts on with only four days off, others it is five days with only four days off. Off course members only receive one crib break for any shift less than 12 hours.

Again, the 4x5 was introduced to provide maximum recovery and family time for a workforce. This is a paramedic workforce with the country's highest injury and psychological injury rate. Like all shift workers, there is also a high level of relationship breakdown.

Ripping the 4x5 away is not exactly the nicest way to show appreciation to paramedics, is it? We'll keep you posted on this issue; however, be prepared for a major industrial fight if Ambulance continues to take away one of the only rosters in NSW that makes the job bearable.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Hayes'.

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD