



Update on NSW's attack on the 4x5 roster

On the 19th of November, the rostering matter will go back before the IRC. The Ambulance Service is seeking to introduce the roster as shown below (sometimes called a 12-line roster).

Line	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	Off	Off	7-19	10-1830	19-7	19-7	Off
2	Off	Off	Off	7-19	10-1830	7-19	19-7
3	Off	Off	Off	Off	7-19	10-1830	10-1830
4	19-7	19-7	Off	Off	Off	Off	7-19
5	10-1830	10-19	19-7	Off	Off	Off	Off
6	7-19	7-19	10-1830	19-7	Off	Off	Off
7	Off	Off	7-19	10-1830	19-7	19-7	Off
8	Off	Off	Off	7-19	10-1830	7-19	19-7
9	Off	Off	Off	Off	7-19	10-1830	10-1830
10	19-7	19-7	Off	Off	Off	Off	7-19
11	10-1830	10-19	19-7	Off	Off	Off	Off
12	7-19	7-19	10-1830	19-7	Off	Off	Off

This is an attempt by the Service to reduce recovery time afforded by the current '4x5' roster format, widely used in NSW Ambulance. When NSW Ambulance introduced the so-called '4x5' they cunningly gave it a name that made out that Paramedics were getting the better end of the deal – i.e. 4 days at work and 5 off. You don't need to be a forensic accountant to know that if you start work on a Monday and finish on a Friday that is 5 days ON, with 4 days OFF before recommencing shift. So let's start calling the current format what it really is: it's a '5x4'. Paramedics that work the roster certainly know how it works.

Remember that the **5x4 format** was actually introduced by NSW to help address fatigue and staff welfare over a decade ago. We know NSW is being chased by SafeWork about paramedic fatigue. So far, their response has been to [re-word a failed crib break policy and tell paramedics things are going to change for the better](#) (we assume this is an attempt to fool SafeWork, but don't worry, we'll be in contact with them).

The new format would see Paramedics mainly having three shifts away from work. This is an inadequate time to recover. Recovery time isn't just about catching up on sleep – it's about reconnecting with families, it's about enjoying the time off from working hard, and it's about being an active community member. These are the types of activities that help to build up resilience to the rigours and challenges Paramedics face in their duties. It shouldn't be about survival. Again, this demonstrates NSW Ambulance's lack of understanding of its workforce and challenges that modern professional Paramedics face.

While the Service may try and claim it only wants to introduce the roster at a select number of stations at this point, be under no illusion they would seek to implement it more widely. The Service has lodged this roster dispute directly into the IRC in an attempt to have it 'stamped' Award-compliant so they can inflict it on their workforce at any location of their choosing. Members should be ready to protect their working conditions as the Service and the Government seek to erode not only take-home pay under their wages policy, but with this latest attack on rosters seeking to further suck the blood from Paramedics.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
 Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD