



What is the Work Life Balance Network?

Under the auspices of the State Health Advisory Committee on Work Life Balance....Creating Family Friendly Workplaces, a Work Life Balance Network has been established to bring together employees across the WA Government Health System who have an interest in flexible work options in order to have more time to attend to personal, family, cultural and social matters, to name a few.

While it is important that Work Life Balance initiatives receive managerial support, it is also vital that there are employees across all levels of the workforce who have an interest in or commitment to this issue and who can act as a focal point for Work Life Balance initiatives throughout the health workforce.

The Role of the Work Life Balance Network

The role of the Network is to:

- share information about Work Life Balance initiatives across the network;
- act as a point of contact to employees to discuss flexible work options;
- receive feedback on workplace initiatives;
- advocate for the implementation of Work Life Balance initiatives in the workplace; and
- encourage others to get involved.

The members of the Work Life Balance Network will not replace other existing structures, such as Grievance and Contact Officer Networks, Peer Support Programs, Employee Assistance Programs, Occupational Safety and Health Representatives, Union Delegates or Human Resource Practitioners. Rather, the Network performs a distinct role, which focuses on work and family issues. It is a network of interested people rather than a formal representative structure.

Other employees may wish to discuss issues relating to Work Life Balance initiatives such as flexible work options, with a member of the Network in the first instance. This enables them to discuss openly with an independent person the options available to them to achieve a balance between work and their personal/family commitments. Employees should still be encouraged to seek advice from and discuss their particular requirements with their Manager and/or Human Resource Department.

Benefits of the Work Life Balance Network

The Network has many advantages for the network member, other employees and the organisation.

Network members provide a positive contribution to the workplace and have the opportunity to develop skills that could contribute to their career development. Network members will be provided with up-to-date information related to Work Life Balance strategies and initiatives, which they can communicate with other network members to seek advice or share information.

Other employees are given the opportunity to discuss the introduction of initiatives with an independent person and to learn more about the range of options generally available to staff. This will enable employees to be better equipped to work together with their manager to find a suitable arrangement to meet their work, personal, family and social responsibilities.

The benefits for the organisation are significant. Through supporting the Network and providing opportunities for staff to join the network, employers are acknowledging the importance of Work Life Balance.

When staff are able to balance work and their other personal/family commitments the potential for workplace stress, grievances and industrial action are reduced.

Improved attraction and retention of employees with personal/family responsibilities also provides numerous benefits to management including cost savings through reduction in turnover of employees resulting in costs associated with replacing and re-training. Retention of experienced employees with commitment, dedication and valuable corporate knowledge may be achieved through introducing simple Work Life Balance initiatives.

Do you wish to join the Work Life Balance Network?

What skills are important for Work Life Balance Network members?

Members of the network:

- Self nominate based on a genuine interest in Work Life Balance issues;
- Have good interpersonal skills;
- Are able to make time for the role;
- Are interested in remaining up-to-date with current initiatives and issues; and
- Undertake to treat content of discussions with other employees in confidence.

Members of the Network will be provided:

- guidelines and support to ensure they are able to perform their role on the Network;
- ongoing support to assist them in their role; and
- access to an e-mail network of other Health employees interested in Work Life Balance initiatives.

How to Join the Work Life Balance Network?

- Contact the Work Life Balance Coordinator on 9222 4426 for an application form or
- E-mail family.friendly@health.wa.gov.au to request an application form or
- Visit the Department of Health Work Life Balance Web Site at <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/familyfriendly/> and download the application form

***We look forward to hearing from you ***