WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the guide

The Queensland Government is committed to working with its employees and public sector unions to address workload management issues. This guide has been developed as an optional resource for managers, employees and other staff to complement business planning functions in state government departments and agencies.

The purpose of the Workload Management Guide is to assist managers and employees better plan for, and develop strategies to, proactively manage and effectively address any workload issues that arise within a workplace or business unit. The effective management of workloads within departments is an essential component to achieving desired business outcomes, while maintaining a safe work environment. Discretion rests with agencies as to how they do this and what tool or process they utilise, ensuring that this is aligned to and supportive of their business needs/outcomes. It is not mandatory to use the generic guide that follows.

1.2 Workload management principles

Workload management is underpinned by the following principles:

- Managing workloads and the change that occurs in workplaces on a daily basis is the responsibility of managers and forms part of normal business and project planning processes.

- The maintenance of safe work environments and safe work practices, and adherence to workplace health and safety legislation/policy are a priority objective of workload management.

- Workload management processes must comply with industrial legislation, awards and agreements including hours of work and remuneration provisions.

- Workload management and associated workload allocation supports the pursuit of strategic priorities, and is to be linked to business, operational and workforce planning processes in addition to individual performance management processes.

- Workload management decisions should take account of the work-life balance of employees.

- To ensure the various local and business area needs are met, agency flexibility and discretion is to be maintained in applying workload management processes.

- Workloads are to be equitably distributed in an open and transparent manner with both managers and employees having accountability for effective workload management.

- Employees and managers understand and accept that in each workplace there can be natural peaks and troughs in terms of workload that is associated with service delivery requirements.

- Employees should not be required to undertake work that significantly and regularly exceeds ordinary working hours unless exceptional circumstances exist such as: an urgent or unexpected high volume of work of a short term nature and/or for a specified period of time; or where there are critical community service requirements e.g. emergency management services.
• Workload allocation should take into account the training, skill, knowledge, career and professional development of individual employees.

• Workload management is to be informed by effective identification and analysis of data/information and accurate and consistent performance reporting within the context of the business function.

• Workload management processes should coincide with and complement other workforce management programs or processes e.g. flexible work arrangements, worker health and wellbeing programs, organisational change, workforce renewal programs, voluntary redundancy etc.

• The processes undertaken and the information collected as part of workload management must take into account the privacy of, and confidentiality of issues raised by, individual employees.

• Workload management should include issue escalation processes and dispute resolution mechanisms.

1.3 Workload management guide

This guide has been developed by the Public Service Commission, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Together (formerly the Queensland Public Sector Union) and representatives of stakeholder agencies pursuant to Part 16, clause (4) of the State Government Departments’ Certified Agreement 2009 (‘Core EB’). Consultation on the draft guide occurred with all departments, agencies and unions party to the Core EB.

Part 16 of the Core EB provides:

PART 16: WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

(1) The Queensland Government is committed to working with its employees and the public sector unions to address workload management issues. It is acknowledged that high workloads can in some circumstances lead to unsafe work practices, therefore agencies should ensure safe work environments are not compromised, and that agency responsibilities under legislation including duty of care to all employees are complied with.

(2) It is recognised by the employer that unrealistic expectations should not be placed on employees by line management to consistently perform excessive working hours whereby no opportunities arise to utilise accrued time or time off in lieu (TOIL).

(3) Agencies are obliged to consider the impacts on workloads when organisational change occurs, particularly those impacts arising from the introduction of new programs and from machinery of government changes. Management at the local level should undertake appropriate consultation with affected employees when implementing organisational initiatives including machinery of government changes that may have an impact on the workloads of affected employees.

(4) The Queensland Government remains committed to the implementation of the workload management tool during the life of this Agreement. The parties agree that a review of the workload management tool in the first 12 months after certification of this Agreement will occur through a joint union/PSC working party. In utilising the workload management tool agencies are obliged to adapt the template tool to account for agency-specific circumstances to ensure easier application of the tool.
In addition, the parties agree that each Consultative Committee (CC) will deal with the issue of workload management. The activities of the CC in the area of workload management should include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) To undertake research on local workload management issues;

(b) To address specific workload issues referred by staff of work units, union officials and/or management;

(c) To develop expedient processes for referral of workload issues to the CC;

(d) Based on research, develop strategies to improve immediate and long term workload issues;

(e) To assess the implications of workloads from a workplace health and safety perspective and refer relevant matters to the workplace health and safety committee.

(f) To consider the impacts on workloads when organisational change occurs, particularly those impacts arising from the introduction of new programs and from machinery of government changes, and make recommendations to affected workgroups on the management of potential workload issues where appropriate.

1.4. How to use this guide

As business units vary in what influences their workloads, there is no “one size fits all” approach to managing workload issues. Examples of workload influences include (but are not limited to) availability of appropriately skilled staff, workforce capability, workforce profile, differing levels of employee performance, changes to client demands, resources, internal and external influences, and changes to systems/processes. A locally tailored approach is therefore necessary when identifying and addressing workload management issues.

This workload management guide is not intended to be a tool for specifically calculating or defining what is or is not a reasonable workload. Rather, it provides a framework to assist managers identify and respond to workload issues that impact on the achievement of business goals.

The objective of the guide is to provide a framework that guides and informs, but does not prescribe, decision-making and the development of appropriate solutions. When used as an adjunct to the workforce planning process, workload influences can be monitored and issues quickly addressed. By reviewing workload issues, as part of the regular business planning cycle, the framework outlined in this guide can aid the business unit to keep abreast of any changes and focus the workforce to deliver the best service possible.

When opting to use this guide, departments and agencies are encouraged to modify its contents to appropriately suit their individual organisational context and complement existing business planning and project planning tools or processes. This should be done in consultation with the Agency Consultative Committee (ACC).
2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Central Consultative Forum (CCF) – the role of the CCF is to oversee implementation of the relevant clauses of the State Government Departments’ Certified Agreement 2009, specifically in this case, Part 16 of the Agreement relating to workload management.

Agency Consultative Committee (ACC) – each Committee will deal with their agency’s workload management issues, including addressing specific workload issues referred by staff of work units, union officials and/or management, developing strategies for longer term workload issues, undertaking research on local workload management issues, assessing the implications of workloads from a workplace health and safety (WH&S) perspective and referring relevant matters to WH&S committees, and considering the impacts of other workforce management programs or processes e.g. organisational change, workforce renewal or voluntary redundancy programs.

Local Consultative Committees (LCC) – LCCs are established in some larger agencies to carry out consultative committee responsibilities for a defined local work area. These LCCs report their activities to the whole-of-department ACC. Where an LCC exists workload management issues are to be raised with the LCC in the first instance, rather than with the ACC.

Human Resource Managers and other HR/IR practitioners – within agencies, HR Managers and HR/IR practitioners will be responsible for providing advice and support to managers, employees and ACCs, relating to workload management.

Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S) Managers - WH&S Managers will be responsible for providing advice and support to managers, employees and ACCs, relating to the WH&S implications of workload issues and processes.

Public Service Commission (PSC) – The Commission’s ongoing role for workload management will be to work in conjunction with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (JAG) to provide advice, support and promotion of strategies and actions that enhance the public service’s workforce management and capability, and improve the performance of the departments, in achieving desired business outcomes, while maintaining safe and productive work environments.

Department of Justice and Attorney-General (JAG) – As the agency functionally responsible for managing industrial relations (IR) and associated enterprise bargaining (EB) processes across government JAG will continue to consult and negotiate, provide advice and information, and monitor the performance of public service departments in maintaining effective workload management practices.

Together (formerly Queensland Public Sector Union (QPSU) is responsible for working with government to address and resolve workload management issues in the “core” government departments as per the requirement under the State Government Department’s Certified Agreement 2009 through the implementation of a workload management tool, and generally to assist workers by avoiding unsafe work practices and helping to ensure that safe work environments are maintained.
Managers/Supervisors – it is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to work with employees to review, plan for, implement, address issues and report on workload management in an open, consultative, fair and reasonable manner. In addition, managers/supervisors have an obligation to ensure safe work practices are undertaken and adhered to and consequently safe work environments are maintained.

Employees – it is the responsibility of employees to assist managers/supervisors and contribute to reviewing, planning for, implementing, addressing issues and reporting on workload management within their work team, unit or business function. In addition, employees have an obligation to apply safe work practices as a means of maintaining safe work environments.

3. PROCESS

3.1. Process Flow Chart

The following flow chart outlines in brief the broad process steps for workload management. Further detail on these process steps is outlined from Section 3.2 onwards. The flow chart indicates that this is a continual and cyclical process.

Box 1: Process Flow Chart

3.2. Identification

A need to examine workload management is identified, whether in response to concerns raised by a group of employees or individual employee or other stakeholders, and/or in response to the presence of certain indicators.

Managing workloads and the change that occurs in workplaces on a daily basis is the responsibility of managers and forms part of normal business and/or project planning processes. Early identification of potential workload issues can positively assist work units meet their goals and objectives whilst at the
same time maintain a healthy work environment for staff. This might occur as part of the usual business or operational planning cycle, or in response to an event such as the introduction of major organisational change, unplanned or non-forecasted peaks in work, workload concerns raised by staff within the work unit or other unexpected localised events. It is important for managers to determine what the current workload situation is within the work area/function, identify if any workload management issues exist and, if they exist, what are those issues.

The need to examine workloads might be raised by a group of employees or individual employee within a work unit, a supervisor or line manager, or in some circumstances by someone external to the local work unit, such as a senior management board or a client. In examining the issue, due consideration should be given to the privacy of, and confidentiality of issues raised by, individual employees.

Signs that indicate a need to re-examine how workloads are managed within a team can be prospective (‘leading indicators’) or retrospective (‘lag indicators’).

Examples of possible lead indicators include:

- Introduction of new programs or work
- Major organisational change, including staffing changes
- New or revised business or strategic plans
- Service reprioritisation
- Changes in the external environment such as legislative changes, introduction of new professional or qualification standards
- Budgetary/economic factors
- Changes within the work unit’s client base
- Developments in community expectations

Note: Lead indicators may result in either an increase or decrease in workloads and therefore have different impacts on the need for workload management actions.

Examples of possible lag indicators include:

- Failure to achieve work unit goals or targets
- Increase in unplanned absences
- High levels of recreation leave accruals
- High rates of overtime
- High levels of accrued ADO and/or TOIL
- Outcomes of staff opinion or health and wellbeing surveys
- Increased numbers of complaints (internal and/or external)
- Above average staffing turnover

The identification process step may include a monitoring or data collection exercise, undertaken with a view to ascertaining whether or not a workload problem exists with reference to measurable indicators. This sort of exercise would usually focus on lag indicators, which are by their nature more readily measured. When determining the workload indicators to be measured, it is recommended that an appropriate number of relevant indicators be used, and that consideration be given to the resources required to collect information for each indicator. Where appropriate, it is recommended that data or
information be collected from existing systems and processes, and that the collection period be limited to a minimum representative period of time. See Box 2 below for further examples.

Before moving through the next steps of the workload management process, it is important to take into account, or consider developing benchmarks or parameters for what is considered a reasonable workload in a ‘business as usual’ setting (if these do not already exist).

**EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS AND MEASURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKLOAD INDICATOR</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours overtime – paid and TOIL</td>
<td>Average hours of paid overtime per employee per week for a representative period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of accrued/flex hours forfeited</td>
<td>Average hours of excess banked time forfeited per employee per month for a representative period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours or days sick leave taken</td>
<td>Average number of hours or days sick leave per employee per quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours of excess recreation leave</td>
<td>Number of staff who have accrued excess recreation leave (e.g. beyond eight weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues arising from work schedules/roster arrangements</td>
<td>Number of shifts that have had fewer staff on roster than required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees reported as experiencing workplace stress, excessive workloads or work distress issues</td>
<td>Number of workers’ compensation claims for psychological injury. Number of referrals to Employee Assistance Service providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and nature of employee complaints lodged</td>
<td>Number of employee complaints lodged over a period of time. Number of mediations conducted over a period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and nature of workplace health and safety incidents.</td>
<td>Number or extent of injury-free periods. Number of days lost time due to injury over a period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of separated employees/levels of staff turnover</td>
<td>Percentage or number of employees who have separated from the business unit / service area over the last six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing frequency in the number of casual/temp employees</td>
<td>Number of actual hours worked per employee per week for a representative period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of vacant positions</td>
<td>Number of vacant positions to be filled over a period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backlog of work</td>
<td>Percentage of project milestones that have been met or failed to be met over a period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed work volume, practices and complexity</td>
<td>Percentage decrease or increase in work volume over a period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and nature of reported customer issues or complaints (includes issues related to quality and timeliness of service delivery)</td>
<td>Percentage or number of clients who have provided written or verbal compliments or complaints about the timeliness of service delivery over a period of time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Box 2: Examples of workload indicators and measures*

### 3.3. Analysis

**Analyse any identified workload issue/s and any relevant metrics/data, and determine underlying causes or contributing factors**

This process step calls for a detailed examination of the indicators and other information collected in the first step so as to develop a complete understanding of the nature of the workload issue.

Considerations at this step should include:
What factors - underlying causes, problems or trends - are contributing to the workload issue? (See Box 3 below for examples of contributing factors)

Are these factors temporary or ongoing?

To what extent are these factors within the control of management, of employees and/or of the work unit generally?

What is the impact of each contributing factor?

Is there any kind of causal or correlative relationship between the indicators identified in step one and what are the assumptions underpinning that?

What is the relative experience, capability and capacity of individuals within the work unit?

Is there relevant historical and/or empirical data available that could help put a particular indicator in context? (For example, historical data that shows client demand for particular services typically increases in June but decreases again in August).

**EXAMPLES OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

- Implementation of a new policy initiative during this period
- Excessive work demands have reportedly inhibited the taking of accrued time
- Organisational change has commenced as a result of a review of departmental or branch functions
- Implementation of a new system during this period
- Sick leave has been unusually high due to flu season and backfill arrangements have not been possible
- Higher than average client service demands during this period
- Role requirements have changed during this period due to organisational change
- Career opportunities for the specific occupational group have increased within the public and private sectors
- Advertised positions have failed to attract suitable applicant pools
- New federal or state policy has direct link to increasing workload

*Box 3: Examples of contributing factors*

**Determine the levels of risk associated with each workload issue, the impact of such risk and the consequences of taking or not taking action.**

Another analytical tool that may be useful at this stage is a risk assessment. Your agency may have an existing risk assessment methodology or tool (an example is provided in Box 5 on page 14).

In general, a risk assessment would include identifying: the risks the workload issues pose (to the work unit, individual staff, the organisation, and to the achievement of business outcomes); the level of impact associated with those risks; likelihood of those risks occurring; how immediate are the risks; and what steps or costs would be involved in mitigating the risks. Bear in mind that the consequences of a workload issue can be multi-dimensional – community, health and safety, industrial, economic/financial and political.

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The analysis of the issue is a responsibility that generally falls to the relevant supervisor or manager. However, it is important to maintain open communication, discussion and, where appropriate, information sharing with affected staff while being cognisant of confidentiality and privacy obligations. Support or advice may be sought where relevant, from sources such as your agency’s human resources, industrial relations or health and safety staff or those with expertise in survey analysis or change management.

What constitutes a reasonable timeframe for the analysis process step will vary according to the dimensions and immediacy of the workload issue and any parameters set within the agency governance structure.

**Is further action required?**

It may become apparent through the identification and analysis steps that there are in fact no existing or potential problems with workload in the business unit. As such, the preferred final option may be to do nothing and to address any issues within the context of normal, day-to-day business or project management responsibilities.

If the indication and analysis steps indicate the existence of a genuine workload management issues there will then need to be an identification of the various options available to the work team/function to resolve the issue.

**3.4. Development of options**

**If action is required, develop a list of options/actions to best resolve the workload issues and to manage the associated risks**

The next key step is to determine a range of options for implementation as a way of planning for effective workload management or responding to workload management issues that may arise. These options should sit within the context of existing business and/or operational planning. In addition to developing a range of workload management options a range of possible steps/processes for implementing these options need to be established.

In arriving at a final list of options the following needs to be considered:

- What is the scope of the option i.e. is it a local level application or beyond to potentially an across agency scope?
- Given the scope of the option, what levels of and mechanisms for approval of the option are required?
- What is the potential impact on the existing workload within the work area, both at point of action and in an ongoing manner?
- Is reprioritisation of services or work performed by the business unit a viable option?
- What level of resource investment or service rationalisation is required e.g. human or financial resources?
• Is there the current capability or capacity to implement the option, and if not how might this capability/capacity be achieved?

• Are the options realistic, achievable, practical or viable?

• Has there been an appropriate level of consultation amongst affected staff?

• What level of involvement and/or impact does the option/s have on other stakeholders?

• What impact does it have on clients or the community?

• Referencing back to the risk assessment process step, what is the degree of urgency and importance around each of the potential options?

• Do the potential options meet legislative, policy, financial and/or cultural requirements relating to the work area and agency?

• Are external sources of expertise or advice required to develop the options?

• Have local, national and international level best practice examples, where available, been referred to (ensuring that these are contextualised within the organisation’s culture, environment, capability, capacity etc)?

A final list of options will need to be developed at a local level. The list of options will then need to be prioritised and incorporated into some form of action plan/work plan of which the ACC or LCC will be advised (unless it is a local level issue that can be resolved between employee/s and manager/supervisor). The priority listing of options would normally be categorised in the following way:

• Short term/immediate

• Medium term

• Long term

As stated earlier, the identification and analysis steps may indicate that there are in fact no existing or potential problems with workload in the business unit. As such, the preferred final option may be to do nothing.

Within this process step the agency’s discretion specifically relates to how the options are developed, who is actually involved in the process, the approval and formal advice mechanisms employed within the agency, how the ACC or LCC is engaged as part of the process and the composition of the final list of options and priorities within these options.
EXAMPLES OF OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING WORKLOAD ISSUES

- Review task allocation within the team
- Review work processes
- Conduct skills analysis and relevant training
- Review complexity and size of caseloads
- Re prioritisation of services
- Monitor number of new clients and review workloads as required
- Identify if former staff are interested in working part-time or as a mentor to less skilled staff
- Consider spreading out staff start and finish times to cover peak periods
- Consider flexible work arrangements, e.g. compressed working hours
- Arrange for casual staff to be on call to provide additional resources e.g. when permanent staff are sick
- Review processes to identify efficiencies
- Cross train staff in the critical skills that have the most impact on producing outcomes
- Engage HR Branch to determine strategies to make the area more attractive to potential employees, e.g. job redesign, offer flexible work arrangements, etc.
- Consult with employees to determine impacts of new systems, organisational change, new policies, etc. on work demands prior to implementation

Box 4: Examples of options for resolving workload issues

The following template – *Risk Assessment Matrix* – is provided as an optional tool to assist agencies determine the levels of risk associated with each workload issue, the impact of such risk and the consequences of taking or not taking action.
**RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Id</th>
<th>Key Issues (including any identified 'triggers')</th>
<th>Impact on Workload (Identify consequences)</th>
<th>Assessment of Likelihood</th>
<th>Assessment of Seriousness</th>
<th>Grade (combined Likelihood and Seriousness)</th>
<th>Change to Grade since last assessment</th>
<th>Date of Review</th>
<th>Mitigation Actions (Preventative or Contingency)</th>
<th>Responsibility for mitigation action(s)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Timeline for mitigation action(s)</th>
<th>Task Breakdown Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eg</td>
<td>Backlog in processing applications for housing assistance due to significant increase in applications over past 4 months.</td>
<td>Application process to be reviewed. Minor Org restructure required to focus resources. Some overtime required for 3 months. Taking accrued time and rec leave will be limited for 3 months.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1 Sept 2011</td>
<td>Complete project plan including full workload analysis.</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>20 June 2011</td>
<td>Complete draft plan by 1 June. Feedback from team by 12 June.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating for Likelihood and Seriousness for each risk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Seriousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommended actions for grades of risk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Risk mitigation actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Mitigation actions, to reduce the likelihood and seriousness, to be identified and implemented as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mitigation actions, to reduce the likelihood and seriousness, to be identified and appropriate actions implemented within identified timeframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Mitigation actions, to reduce the likelihood and seriousness, to be identified and costed for possible action if funds permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>To be noted - no action is needed unless grading increases over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>To be noted - no action is needed unless grading increases over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade: Combined effect of Likelihood/Seriousness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change to Grade since last assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Change to Grade</th>
<th>Timeline for mitigation action(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>New risk</td>
<td>↓ Grading decreased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>No change to Grade</td>
<td>↑ Grading increased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Box 5: Example risk assessment matrix*
3.5. Action

**Implement the agreed actions allocating various tasks, roles and responsibilities while stipulating required outcomes and performance targets**

Once the options for responding to workload management issues have been developed, prioritised and incorporated into an action plan, they will need to be approved through the relevant agency approval mechanisms. Once approved, the options will need to be implemented in a planned, coordinated, effective and efficient manner. It is recommended that the implementation process contain the following elements:

- A set of tasks or procedures to implement the approved actions
- An allocation of these tasks or procedures
- Some agreed timeframes to implement these actions
- Development of strategies for the reprioritisation of services and resources where relevant
- An allocation of resources e.g. financial, human, equipment, accommodation etc
- An identification of the key stakeholders
- A set of performance measures
- Identified consultation and communication processes, both internal and external
- An approved evaluation mechanism

There are a range of other requirements that would be expected to be met in delivering the approved actions:

- Good change management practices and related communication strategies
- Meeting and maintenance of business-as-usual needs
- Minimisation of impact on clients and any other key stakeholders
- Legislative, directives, policy and probity requirements are adhered to e.g. recruitment and selection directive, procurement policy, workplace health and safety legislation etc.
- Business and operational planning documents are updated
- Individual performance plans are adjusted

The agency has discretion as to how the actions are implemented, measured and evaluated. Any existing agency approved ACC/LCC processes should be adhered to.
3.6. Review and reporting

Review and report on the success in delivering the workload actions and achieving agreed outcomes to the ACC/LCC and other key stakeholders

The review and reporting process is critical to assessing the effectiveness and success of the agreed actions that were implemented to address the workload management issue. Status reports on the progress and resolution of workload management issues should occur within an agreed/defined timeframe. A review of workload management activities and actions needs to occur to ensure that, over time, desired business outcomes continue to be achieved while safe work environments are consistently maintained.

At this stage the ACC or LCC becomes involved in the oversight of the workload management processes (refer to Section 2 of the Guide to see the distinction between ACC and LCC responsibilities). This needs to be differentiated from the agency’s formal approval processes. The ACC or LCC needs to have been informed of the approved action plan. The ACC/LCC should provide input to how the process for review and reporting is conducted and what is considered the appropriate junctures/timeframes for the review/report. These agreed timeframes will depend upon the scope of the workload management issue and the details of the action plan.

The following needs to be considered by the agency in undertaking the review and reporting process:

- Effective record keeping is vital with proper documentation of actions having been maintained
- Performance targets/measures/benchmarks need to be incorporated into the review and understood by all parties
- Accurate and relevant data needs to be utilised and it is important to include both quantitative and qualitative data
- Depending on the specific agency and work unit circumstances there are options for who will undertake the review – beyond the supervisor or unit manager it could be the ACC/LCC, a small working group within the respective work area, another manager or an external third party
- In all facets of the review, objectivity and impartiality should be applied
- Reporting on progress of the agreed actions may occur at different levels i.e. ACC/LCC, formalised departmental reporting lines and/or work unit levels

Acknowledging the ACC/LCC’s role, the agency has the discretion to determine how the review and reporting process is to occur, the timeframes or junctures for review and reporting, who performs the review, what constitutes the report i.e. the content and extent of the information/data, and at which levels within the agency the report is provided.
4. ESCALATION OF WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If a workload management issue cannot be resolved at a local level, and/or by using the process steps in this guide, it may be escalated using the formal process outlined below. A group of employees or individual employee must ensure they have genuinely and constructively attempted to address or resolve the issue, prior to escalation, and can provide evidence of doing so.

Agency consultative frameworks and dispute resolution procedures should be adhered to for the escalation of workload management issues.

If a workload management issue is escalated by a group of employees or an individual employee, it may be addressed/resolved in the following manner:

- On an informal basis with the local level supervisor/manager as a preferred first option; or
- If a concern remains i.e. where a group of employees/individual employee remains dissatisfied or a line manager recommends formalising the issue, the “Unresolved Workload Issue Identification” Form (see Appendix 2) or equivalent within an agency should be completed and submitted to the relevant consultative committee.

To effectively address or resolve the escalated issue, the ACC/LCC may recommend that:

- Action may be taken at a local work level between manager/supervisor and employee/s as a preferred first option; or
- Other relevant actions are taken to progress the issue.

It is recommended that the escalated workload management issue remain on the ACC/LCC agenda until it is resolved, and that this should dovetail into the established review/reporting process within the agency. Any escalated workload management issue should also be dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. Throughout this process the group of employees/employee must be kept apprised of developments and progress being made.

Within the workload management issue escalation process, an agency has discretion over how the process is to be conducted through the operation of the ACC/LCC.

**Note:** The escalation process is not an employee complaints procedure or mechanism for the purposes of Public Service Commission *Directive 8/10 Managing employee complaints*. Individual employees retain the right to make an employee complaint where the requirements of an agency’s Employee Complaints Management policy are met.
## Identification of Workload Issues

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<th>Workload Indicator</th>
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### Analysis of Workload Issues

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<tr>
<th>Key Issues</th>
<th>Extent of Impact</th>
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<td>(what are the contributing factors?)</td>
<td>(if temporary, how long, or ongoing?)</td>
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<td>Id</td>
<td>Key Issues (including any identified ‘triggers’)</td>
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## OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING WORKLOAD ISSUES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ISSUES</th>
<th>SOLUTION</th>
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# RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR RESOLVING WORKLOAD ISSUES

## SHORT TERM/IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
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## MEDIUM to LONG-TERM ACTIONS

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<th>Action</th>
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<td>KEY ISSUES</td>
<td>AGREED ACTION</td>
<td>REVIEW PERIOD</td>
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<td>KEY ISSUES</td>
<td>AGREED ACTION</td>
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APPENDIX 2

UNRESOLVED WORKLOAD ISSUE IDENTIFICATION FORM - FOR EMPLOYEES

An employee, or a group of employees, who are experiencing workload issues, AND have not been able to resolve the issues at the local level should complete this form and forward it to their supervisor or to the relevant Consultative Committee.

Employee's or Employees' Name(s):

________________________________________________________

Work unit/Department: ____________________________________________

Classification Level: ___________ If multiple employees, attach a list

Employment Type:   Permanent ☐   Temporary ☐   Casual ☐

Employment Status: Part-time ☐   Full-time ☐

How long have you been working in this role? _________________

Have you raised this workload issue before with your line manager/supervisor?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, what actions were previously taken by you and your line manager/supervisor to rectify, resolve or address the issue?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
If previous actions have been taken, how successful were they?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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What are the timeframes during which workload has been a concern?

______ / ______ / ______ to ______ / ______ / ______

Indicate below what you understand to be the cause/s and contributing factors of the workload issue:

(Please tick all that apply)

☐ Positions not filled
☐ Capability of staff
☐ Increased volume of work
☐ Equipment not available
☐ Involved in training of new staff
☐ Change of duties, procedure or policy
☐ Correct procedures not followed
☐ Non availability of casual staff
☐ Other (please specify): _____________________________________________
                                                                 ______________________________________
                                                                 ______________________________________
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Please provide details, and attach (if applicable) any supporting data, of the workload issue you have identified.  *(This section must be completed)*

________________________________________________________________________

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Please provide details on how you think this workload issue could be rectified:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

All workload issues identified will be considered and feedback provided
Supervisor’s Signature (optional)

___ / ___ / ___

I acknowledge that reasonable attempts have been made to address this workload management issue at a local level.

Employee’s Signature

___ / ___ / ___
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is the purpose of the Workload Management Guide?**

   The purpose of the Workload Management Guide is to assist managers and employees better plan for, and develop strategies to, proactively manage and effectively address any workload issues that arise within a workplace or business unit. This guide has been developed as a resource for managers, employees and other staff to complement business planning functions in state government departments. Proper workload management is an essential component to maintaining a safe work environment while achieving desired business outcomes.

2. **How do you determine what is a ‘reasonable’ workload?**

   Workload management is an important element of managers’ roles, and is a process that can be influenced by a wide variety of factors. As business units vary in what influences their workloads, there is no “one size fits all” approach. Similarly, there is no definition of what prescribes a “reasonable” workload – this can vary from agency to agency and work unit to work unit. The workload management guide assists managers to identify and better manage the various factors that affect workload, and determine what constitutes a “reasonable” workload within their respective work areas.

   Examples of what can influence workloads and their degree of “reasonableness” include (but are not limited to) the following: availability of appropriately skilled staff, workforce capability, workforce profile, staff differences in performance, changes to client demands, resources, internal and external influences and changes to systems/processes. A locally tailored approach is therefore necessary when identifying and addressing workload management issues.

3. **How will the workload management guide measure workloads?**

   It is important that in identifying current or prospective workload management issues, managers and employees determine some key indicators or measures. These can be lead indicators i.e. prospective indicators or what is expected to happen, for example a work unit’s financial budget or lag indicators i.e. retrospective indicators or what has already happened, for example the number of workplace injuries. Both lead and lag indicators, directly relevant to the work unit and the type of work it performs, should be used to gain an effective measure of workload and its impact on the capability and capacity of that work unit to perform its core functions.

   Therefore, when determining the workload indicators to be measured, it is recommended that an appropriate number of relevant indicators be used, and that consideration be given to the resources required to collect information for each indicator. The collection of data does not need to be exhaustive in order to provide sufficient evidence that an issue or workload influence is having an
impact on performance. Once identified, each issue can be assessed for priority and level of risk, followed by a ranking allocation that will determine what needs the most urgent attention.

The guide provides examples of lead and lag indicators that can be used to measure workloads (refer to page 8).

4. **How will the workload management guide integrate with my own department’s workforce planning framework?**

One of the key principles of workload management is that it supports the pursuit of strategic priorities, and is to be linked to business planning, operational planning, project planning, workforce planning and individual performance management processes. How this is to be achieved in process terms is at the discretion of each government agency however the recommended/generic process steps in this document can assist in how this integration occurs.

When used as an adjunct to the workforce planning process, workload influences can be monitored and issues quickly addressed. If used to review workload issues on a regular basis, the workload management guide can aid the business unit to keep abreast of any changes and focus the workforce to deliver the best service possible. The two complement each other because while the workforce planning process identifies critical resources that are needed, the workload management guide aids in managing factors that may detract from achieving team goals.

5. **How will unforeseen or additional workload be managed if my workload has already been assessed?**

If workload issues are reviewed on a regular basis (the period of time for review is at the discretion of the agency), the workload management guide can aid the business unit to keep abreast of any changes or additional workloads and allow options and appropriate actions to occur that meet business needs. By integrating workload management into business and operational planning processes, local level workload issues will be addressed on a periodic basis. Similarly, through ACC and LCC processes it is expected that reporting on workload management issues will occur on a regular basis. This should allow unforeseen or additional workload issues to continue to be identified and positively addressed.

6. **Will the workload management guide be used to manage additional workloads that may result from major organisational change or workplace reform processes?**

The guide can be used to manage additional workloads during any time of machinery of government, whole of government or agency-specific organisational change or workplace reform. The purpose of the guide is to assist managers and employees within work units to better plan for and more effectively address any workload management issues. It is not meant to be used as a substitute to normal change management processes within agencies. If organisational change or workplace reform result in additional workloads at a work unit level, managers and employees would be expected to determine options and implement actions to resolve these workload issues. The workload management guide is therefore an ideal mechanism for this purpose.
7. **Will it be mandatory for agencies to use the Workload Management guide?**

The effective management of workloads within departments is an essential component to achieving desired business outcomes, while maintaining a safe work environment. Discretion rests with agencies as to how they do this and what tool or process they utilise, ensuring that this is aligned to and supportive of their business needs/outcomes. It is not mandatory to use this guide developed in response to the requirements of Part 16, clause (4) of the *State Government Departments’ Certified Agreement 2009* (‘Core EB’).

This guide provides a framework to assist managers to identify workload issues that impact on the achievement of business goals. The objective of the guide is to provide a framework that informs, but does not prescribe, decision making and the development of appropriate solutions. The “Core” Agreement stipulates that:

“Agencies are obliged to consider the impacts on workloads when organisational change occurs, particularly those impacts arising from the introduction of new programs and from machinery of government changes. Management at the local level should undertake appropriate consultation with affected employees when implementing organisational initiatives including machinery of government changes that may have an impact on the workloads of affected employees.”

The only other obligation for agencies as stipulated in the “Core” agreement is that in each agency the Consultative Committee (CC) will deal with the issue of workload management.

8. **What are some ways that my workload issues will be addressed by the Workload Management guide?**

A number of options may be available to address or resolve a workload management issue at a local work level. Once a workload issue is identified and analysed, and an assessment is undertaken of the various risks associated with each potential option, agreed actions can be taken at the work unit level by managers and employees. These potential options/actions which need to be tailored to suit agency needs could include:

- Review work processes and identify efficiencies/areas for improvement
- Review the existing services/functions and reprioritise these where necessary and feasible
- Undertake job redesign and/or restructuring
- Identify if former staff are interested in working part-time or as a mentor to less skilled staff
- Consider spreading out staff start and finish times to cover peak periods and/or extend client contact times
- Consider flexible work arrangements, e.g. compressed working hours
- Arrange for casual staff to be on call to provide additional resources, e.g. when permanent staff are sick
- Cross train staff in the critical skills that have the most impact on producing outcomes
Other options that may be considered are listed earlier in this document.

9. What if I disagree with the review of my workload undertaken by my manager?

If a concern about a workload issue remains i.e. where an individual employee/group of employees is dissatisfied with the outcome of a previous request to review a workload management issue, the matter can be escalated for consideration/potential resolution. Specifically, an “Unresolved Workload Issue Identification Form - For Employees” (refer to Appendix 2), or equivalent within an agency, should be completed and submitted to the relevant consultative committee (ACC/LCC).

To effectively address or resolve the escalated issue the ACC/LCC may recommend that:
- Action may be taken at a local work level between manager/supervisor and employee/s as a preferred first option; or
- Other relevant actions are taken to progress the issue.