

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Public Sector

Christmas Close-Down: Understanding Your Entitlements

With Christmas and the New Year approaching, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has received questions from members about the Christmas close-down arrangements, particularly the difference in entitlements for day workers and shift workers.

There are understandable questions about why some employees receive additional paid time off over the Christmas period, while others continue working through Christmas and New Year, including weekends and public holidays.

We want to clarify how the arrangements operate and address some of the concerns members have raised.

What are the Christmas Close-Down Arrangements?

The Christmas close-down arrangements provide eligible day workers with up to three additional paid days off where their workplace or service is formally closed over the Christmas/New Year period.

These days are separate from an employee's annual leave entitlement. They are not simply an additional annual leave benefit available to all employees.

Where an employee is required to work during a period when their workplace is otherwise closed, alternative time off may be arranged by agreement, generally to be taken before 30 June.



Importantly, the arrangements depend on the relevant workplace closure and the applicable employment provisions. They should not be assumed to apply automatically to every day worker or every workplace.

Why Are Shift Workers Treated Differently?

Shift workers are generally excluded from the close-down arrangements because their services continue operating over the Christmas and New Year period.

Instead, their work is governed by the applicable provisions relating to public holidays, weekend work and shift penalties.

However, this distinction has raised understandable questions from members.

Shift workers can be required to work Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, often making considerable personal and family sacrifices to maintain essential services. Members have questioned why day workers may receive up to three additional paid days off, while shift workers who work through this period do not receive an equivalent benefit.

Some members have also pointed to the relatively modest additional penalties applying to certain shifts, particularly where work falls on days such as New Year's Eve rather than a public holiday.

Is This Fair?

We recognise that the difference in arrangements can create a perception of inequity, particularly for employees who regularly work weekends, public holidays and other unsociable hours.

The close-down provisions and shift penalties serve different purposes. The former relates to a workplace being formally closed, while the latter compensates employees for working at particular times.

That distinction explains why the entitlements are different, but it does not mean members' questions about fairness are unreasonable.



There is a broader question about whether the existing arrangements adequately recognise the additional personal and family sacrifices made by employees who keep health services operating throughout the holiday period.

What if I am Unsure About my Entitlement?

The application of the close-down arrangements can depend on your employment circumstances, workplace arrangements and roster.

In particular, members should not assume that an entitlement applies simply because they are a day worker, or that a workplace closure automatically means every employee receives the same benefit.

If you are unsure about your circumstances, check with your manager or Human Resources about:

- Whether your workplace or service has been formally declared closed over the Christmas/New Year period.
- Whether you are eligible for the additional paid close-down days.
- What arrangements apply if you are directed to work during the closure.
- Whether alternative time off has been agreed and when it must be taken.

The ANMF will continue to seek clarity around the consistent application of these arrangements and the concerns members have raised about the different treatment of day workers and shift workers.

Our members provide essential care throughout the year, including over Christmas and New Year. Their contribution deserves recognition, and members are entitled to clear, consistent information about their employment entitlements.

The ANMF Tasmanian Branch is 8000 plus members strong! Supporting nurses, midwives, and care workers as the only union in Tasmania employing nurses, midwives and care workers to represent members. This is why our Organisers and Member Support Team are uniquely positioned to understand your experiences, represent you in your workplace, and offer industrial advice that's relevant to you.



Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation Tasmania

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