

AEAV welcomes the opportunity to advocate for recommendations to the ESTA Staffing Review.

The ESTA staffing review provides an opportunity for our ESTA members to speak out and advocate for the changes they consider necessary to improve employee health, safety and welfare as a result of long-term insufficient staffing. The proposed recommendations would allow ESTA staff to better perform in their roles, while also improving the mental and physical health of the workforce.

Increasing minimum staffing levels is the greatest priority, however recommendations around breaks, training opportunities and improvements to other support mechanisms would also improve staff morale.

The AEAU recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1

ESTA to model staffing levels according to numbers of staff logged into the system and actively taking calls.

Recommendation 2

ESTA to request an urgent review of IGEM standards.

Recommendation 3

ESTA to shorten their call answer performance review period by implementing shorter reporting timeframes (30 mins or less)

Recommendation 4

- a) ESTA to consult with employees and conduct a review into potential hazards and impacts of the Urgent Disconnect/Surge Workflow
- b) Suspension of the Urgent Disconnect/Surge Workflow until the review is completed

Recommendation 5

ESTA to increase the number of call-taking terminals within the THO operations space. This requires bolstering the number of “dormant” call-taking terminals (over and above the forecast requirements) to allow for quick uptake of staff during surge events.

Recommendation 6

ESTA to urgently increase the number of baseline staff across all services to mitigate the risk of service interruptions.

Recommendation 7

ESTA to roster an additional Ambulance Emergency Dispatcher on every shift to keep the manual boards up to date at all times.

Recommendation 8

ESTA to prioritise multi-skilling opportunities for Ambulance Call-Takers into SES so they can assist during storm surges.

Recommendation 9

- a) ESTA to deploy an additional Ambulance Emergency Dispatcher (over and above those referred to in Recommendation #7) across all shifts to conscientiously manage unexpected demand and unpredictable surge events. Note: This may be considered jointly with Recommendation #27 which specifically relates to workload peaks and surges.
- b) ESTA to provide two extra 'dormant' dispatch terminals in each service (over and above forecast requirements) to allow for quick uptake of staff during surge events.
- c) ESTA to create a log of all times that an extra dispatch channel (including an ARO channel) is required. The log should include site, service, reason, duration, a description of which employees were utilised and whether employees break times were affected. This data should then be reported on a monthly basis to the UCC for review as per clause 61 of the ESTA Agreement

Recommendation 10

ESTA to position a dedicated SES dispatch terminal at Tally Ho.

Recommendation 11

ESTA to prioritise completion of the "Third Screen" roll out to all operators

Recommendation 12

ESTA to investigate the use of computer technology to develop a stable and enduring system for use during manual operations.

Recommendation 13

ESTA to defer projects pertaining to AI and reallocate those resources to more pressing and fundamental requirements.

Recommendation 14

Support office to be moved to an alternate site to allow for THO operations expansion and/or ESTA should open a fourth centre in central or eastern Melbourne to allow for future growth, demand and redundancy.

Recommendation 15

ESTA to review operations capacity annually and match recruitment accordingly. Analysis should include:

- Overall capacity for the SECCs
- Comparisons of capacity between each of the SECCs
- Comparative uptake of suitable candidates at each SECC
- Victorian population growth & call-demand
- Growth of local population (with respect to each of the SECCs)
- Call demand of local population (with respect to each of the SECCs).

Recommendation 16

ESTA to improve leave access and availability and to implement a more transparent and fair system of accessing leave for all employees. This must include:

ESTA to commence a six-month trial of increasing the amount of advance planned leave available to staff; this should include a follow-up assessment of the impacts of the trial on staff morale, unplanned absences and ESTA's overall leave liability.

ESTA to provide increased access to short notice leave, including an objective process for the granting of short notice leave.

ESTA to provide part-time employees and those on FWA's the same access to the leave availability calendar as a full-time employee.

Recommendation 17

- a) ESTA to ensure that e-learning will not occur while employees are logged in to take live 000 calls, or whilst dispatching during shift.
- b) ESTA to introduce dedicated training days.
- c) ESTA to reduce the number of Communication Bulletins and re-instate more face to face learning

Recommendation 18

ESTA to introduce additional multi-skilling opportunities for Ambulance call takers and dispatchers. Such opportunities should be over and above those pertaining to "Recommendation 8" and should be initiated with a focus on promoting equitable access to professional development for all employees, including those on part-time and flexible work arrangements.

Recommendation 19

ESTA to improve the staff member to Team Leader ratio in order to strengthen span of control, and to specifically allow Team Leaders to be available to adequately support operations staff.

Recommendation 20

- a) All Ambulance induction training courses to have no more than 6 participants on each course and a higher trainer to trainee ratio to ensure that new recruits receive adequate one on one assistance.
- b) ESTA to lengthen the training course for new employees.

Recommendation 21

ESTA to incorporate the following additional components into the Ambulance Induction Training Schedule:

Alternative call management training

Ambulance specific resilience training

Training to assist inductees to recognise their personal "trigger" events.

Recommendation 22

ESTA to reduce reliance on overtime by increasing the number of base line staff.

Recommendation 23

ESTA to revise their overtime policy to ensure employees take adequate time away from the workforce and ensure fatigue is minimised.

Recommendation 24

- a) ESTA to ensure they are not hindering employees from using their on-shift breaks for rest and recuperation.
- b) ESTA to ensure staff are not using their on-shift breaks for auxiliary tasks such as delivering audit feedback, seeing an ACM about leave approval or checking emails.

Recommendation 25

ESTA to log each time staff in each service are recalled from breaks. This data to be reported on a monthly basis to the UCC for review.

Recommendation 26

ESTA to use data from Recommendation 25 to establish a baseline increase in crew numbers to deal with everyday demand and to ensure employees receive adequate rest breaks.

Recommendation 27

ESTA to staff for peaks and to cope with surge events by deploying an additional Ambulance Emergency Dispatcher and two additional Ambulance Call-Takers at both Tally-Ho and Ballarat.

Recommendation 28

ESTA to ensure that all staff have access to time for completion of ancillary workload, rather than just staffing for ESTA's performance targets.

Recommendation 29

- a) ESTA to limit the number of overtime requests that can be sent to individual employees in a day.
- b) ESTA to introduce the voluntary option of "no-overtime request" days to allow employees to completely disconnect from work.

Recommendation 30

ESTA to provide a more well-rounded system of reward and recognition and ensure that feedback strikes a balance between positive and constructive elements.

Recommendation 31

ESTA to urgently request a funding review, including an assessment of the number of core staff required to responsibly meet ongoing demand. Contained within this request, ESTA to advocate for future budget increases to be in line with both CPI and population growth.