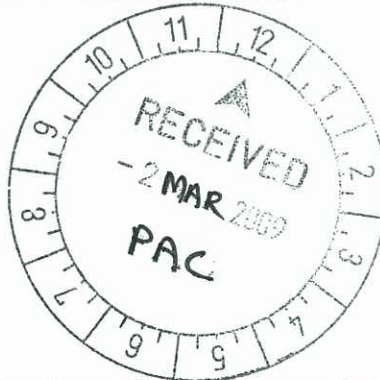




THE AUDIT OFFICE
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Mr Paul McLeay MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



26 February 2008

Dear Mr McLeay

**Examination of Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report
Police Rostering**

We have reviewed the submission provided by the NSW Police Force concerning the recommendations in the above performance audit report. Attachment 1 lists the report's recommendations.

Following tabling of the report, we were pleased that the NSW Police Force accepted our six recommendations with the qualification that the Force had to undertake further studies into officer fatigue before negotiating changes with the Police Association of New South Wales.

The NSW Police Force submission indicates that it is making substantial progress in implementing the recommendations although it has not met all of the original timeframes. The fatigue management guidelines and rosters consistent with them are to be trialled shortly.

We have not substantiated the Force's submission. Our assessment of whether the responses address the issues raised in the original report along with an assessment of progress against the original timeline is provided in attachment 2.

I plan to forward a copy of this correspondence to the Commissioner for his information.

I am happy to provide any further assistance the Committee may need in completing its examination.

Yours sincerely

Peter Achterstraat
Auditor-General

attachments

Attachment 1

Recommendations

- 1) Achieve compliance with current requirements
We recommend that the NSWPF ensure commands comply with the current roster parameters regarding the number of 12-hour shifts that officers can work (page 35).
- 2) Review current requirements
We recommend that the NSWPF review the rostering parameters and, by July 2008, develop best practice principles that are consistent with contemporary practices for managing the risks to the health and welfare of officers arising from shiftwork (pages 22 and 35).
- 3) Incorporate best roster practices
We recommend that the NSWPF require commands, as part of the best practice roster principles, to:
 - review patterns of response times, use different shift lengths and stagger start times to better meet the demand for police (pages 26 and 27)
 - provide officers sufficient opportunity to follow-up investigations, witnesses and victims at customer-friendly times (page 29)
 - review the roster's ability to support the needs of the community and victims by monitoring such indicators as complaints, community satisfaction and the timeliness of case follow-up (page 29)
 - monitor the effect of rosters on such organisational indicators as retention, injury and sick leave, overtime, shift penalties and annual leave (page 40).
- 4) Better manage fatigue
We recommend that the NSWPF by July 2008 introduce a fatigue management policy that meets best practice principles and includes:
 - training for commanders and officers in how to identify and manage fatigue (page 37)
 - a minimum amount of rest taken before resuming duty (page 37).
- 5) Help commands to improve rosters
We recommend that the NSWPF by July 2008:
 - provide commands with a methodology to assess local rosters against best practice principles and identify gaps (page 22)
 - support commands in their negotiations with officers to change rosters to meet best practice principles (page 22).
- 6) Implementation
We recommend that by July 2009, the NSWPF have rosters in place that are consistent with best practice principles (page 22).

Attachment 2

Our assessment of NSWPF progress against the audit recommendations

Recommendation	Action steps address issue?	Reported progress
1	Yes. Reported activity is consistent with the intent of recommendation to achieve compliance with the current guidelines	Complete NSWPF are ensuring that rosters comply with agreed parameters.
2	Yes. Reported activity is consistent with the intent of recommendation to review its rostering guidelines.	Complete. NSWPF have developed best practice guidelines to manage rosters and fatigue
3	Yes. Reported activity is consistent with the recommendation to incorporate best practice roster principles.	Commenced. NSWPF has developed and is rolling out tools and training to improve LACs management of staffing practices to meet organisational, community and officer needs. NSWPF is developing the ability to find out how rostered staffing levels influence the time taken by officers to respond to calls for help.
4	Yes. Reported activity is consistent with the recommendation to better manage fatigue.	Commenced NSW Police has drafted fatigue management policies that it is currently trialling. The trial is due for completion in July 2009.
5	Partly Reported activity is consistent with the recommendation to provide a methodology to review rosters, but it is unclear how NSWPF is helping LAC's negotiate changes to local rosters.	Commenced NSWPF is rolling out an electronic tool (eCMF) that requires LACs to review rosters against the rostering guidelines and operational and OH&S needs
6	Yes. Reported activity is consistent with intent of recommendation to have rosters in place that are consistent with best practice principles.	Ongoing NSWPF is about to pilot best practice rosters at Sutherland LAC. The Audit's recommendation that NSWPF have best practice rosters in place by July 2009 will not be met.