

# Job Share Guide

**Executive and  
Senior Leaders**



Works for me.

Works for NSW.

**FLEXIBLE WORKING**

A quick reference guide to the factsheets available for executive leaders. Some of these are specific to executives, while others provide a shared understanding of job share for employees, managers and HR.

---

	<b>Factsheet</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>What is job share and how does it work?</b> Awareness of the different job share models, their benefits and challenges. Useful for explaining job share to managers and employees new to the concept.	All	4
<b>2</b>	<b>The backstory – why we are supporting job share</b> The sector told us job share is hard. We want to make it easier.		6
<b>3</b>	<b>Does job share make business sense?</b> Explanation of why job share makes sense, from a diversity, productivity and flexibility perspective, for the business, the team and the individual.	All	7
<b>4</b>	<b>What misgivings exist about job share?</b> Typical misgivings shared about job share, primarily by managers, and how these can be addressed and/or resolved. Useful for coaching a manager who has received a request from an employee or joint application for a vacant role.	All	8

	<b>Factsheet</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The facts on job share in the NSW Government sector</b>  Useful data on the current state of job share in NSW, for informing discussions and promoting job share as a potential solution in your agency. Can be combined with Factsheets 1-3 to promote job share in the agency.	Executives	9
<b>6</b>	<b>How do I encourage job share throughout the employee life cycle?</b>  From attraction to separation	Executives	11
<b>7</b>	<b>What role do I have as a leader?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making it work</li><li>• Consider your leadership shadow</li><li>• Advocate for the change needed to IT and HR system challenges</li><li>• Consider it for yourself</li></ul>	Executives	13

# What is job share and how does it work?

This factsheet will help you to explain what job share is, and some of the ways it is typically structured.

Job share is a full-time role that has been divided into multiple job roles. It's typically undertaken by two or more employees, who are paid and earn leave entitlements on a pro rata basis for the part of the role each employee completes<sup>1</sup>. It's a type of flexible working more commonly seen in organisations with established flex work cultures.

From the employer's perspective, it's a full-time role that's shared, with all the advantages of continuous coverage that comes with that. From the employee's perspective, it's a part-time role that gives them genuine time off, knowing someone else has it under control the times that they're not there.

Job share roles can be designed in a number of different ways, depending on the needs of the role and the business, and the needs and capabilities of the individuals.

The two most common models are the islands model (where the job is effectively split) and the twin model (where both employees complete the same tasks but work different days). The model used can evolve as the needs and requirements of the role do.

Standard agency processes for employing job sharers apply, as do recruitment and selection procedures. Job share can be used for any employment arrangement, whether ongoing, temporary, casual or term/contractor.

## What makes a good job share pair?

Not everyone is cut out for job share; it requires specific attributes to do it well. The basic traits needed for job share are:

- **Trust**

Be able to trust another individual to do the work when it's not 'their day'.

- **Commitment**

Be committed to the arrangement, to their role, and to making it work.

- **Team player**

Be able to work as a team, appreciating the whole as more valuable than the parts, and avoid competition with each other or a clash of egos.

- **Organised**

Have great attention to detail and be able to provide clear notes and advice on the work in progress to each other (handover).

- **Respect**

Even if they disagree with their partner's decision, they can present a united front, to avoid destabilising the team around them and undermining their joint authority.

In addition to these basic traits, successful job share pairs typically have complementary skill sets and share similar values. These main attributes, combined with planning and preparation, will increase the productivity of the role.

The logistics of each arrangement can vary, but typically partners work 2.5-3 days each.

<sup>1</sup> WGEA, 'Employee Flexibility Toolkit', 2014

# What is job share and how does it work?



## Twin model 'Classic'



## Islands model 'Job split'



## Hybrid model 'Combination'

<b>What it is</b>	Involves 2 (or more) employees sharing a role and its workload completing the same tasks but working on different days. They are jointly responsible for all duties and act as a team to complete them. It is essentially 1 full-time role completed by 2 (or more) interchangeable partners on a part-time basis.	Involves 2 (or more) employees sharing a role, but not its workload. Duties are split up between the employees, allowing them to cover different areas of the role. Job sharers have little reliance on each other. It is essentially 2 part-time roles.	The hybrid model is a mix of both the twin and islands model, where 2 (or more) employees share a role with some shared responsibility and some divided responsibility. Role is divided to play to each other's strengths.
<b>What's shared</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One job description</li> <li>• Single set of accountabilities, responsibilities and performance objectives</li> <li>• Same level of expertise &amp; capabilities</li> <li>• Shared client/stakeholder</li> <li>• Ownership and team management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance objectives and accountabilities differ</li> <li>• One role description divided into two, although candidates still assessed against all the same capabilities, knowledge and experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One role description</li> <li>• Single set of performance objectives</li> <li>• Complementary expertise &amp; capabilities</li> <li>• Shared capabilities</li> </ul>
<b>What's divided up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time – Hours / Day(s) / Week(s) / Month(s)</li> <li>• Geography / time-zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different expertise and experience</li> <li>• Responsibilities</li> <li>• Activity/Project/Work-stream/Accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complementary capabilities &amp; expertise, with accountabilities divided along relative capability/expertise lines</li> <li>• Possibly divided client or team ownership</li> </ul>
<b>Common variations</b>	A vertical pair occurs where one partner is currently a higher grade and one partner is a lower grade (divided seniority). It can be used for succession planning and development, and the senior partner can perform a mentor/manager function. Vertical pairs work best in the Twin model, where there are dedicated cross-over periods for the pair to meet together and with team members and check-in on progress.	The Unicorn is a hybrid job share where there is a single set of accountabilities but there is some shared and some divided responsibility based on complementary skill set. While Unicorn pairs can work across the three models of job share, they're best suited to 'islands' or 'hybrid' models of job share because of the divided responsibilities and expertise of the partners.	

# The backstory - why we are supporting job share

## **The sector told us job share is hard. We want to make it easier.**

In 2016 the NSW government committed to making all roles in the NSW government sector flexible on the basis of 'if not, why not' by the end of 2019. Job sharers are more engaged and productive (see Factsheet 4) and job share can contribute to a broader talent pool, which is why the NSW Government supports it.

In the same year the PSC completed research with a range of NSW Government sector employees, managers, HR Directors and senior executives to understand the current state of flexible working in the sector, as we developed the strategic framework for flexible working implementation, [Make Flexibility Count](#).

This research indicated that although the majority (86%) of the employees, managers and HR Directors who responded nominated job share as a practice that was currently being used in their organisation, actual uptake was low. This was a result of a lack of awareness around what was required, and an unsupportive workplace environment to successfully job share, with most arrangements being self-initiated.

Respondents also reported difficulty finding a job share partner and establishing a job share arrangement. Managers reported concern about how to hire, manage, develop and handle an exit from job sharing arrangements.

To address these barriers, we decided to pilot and develop a job share platform that helps employees to:

- search for, match and connect with potential job share partners;
- find roles which are open to job share and;
- access guides and tools to make job share successful.

Use of the job share platform was discontinued in June 2022.

***"The diverse skill sets both Trina and Millia bring to the role broadened what the role can do and support. Their skill sets and knowledge complement each other and offer an effective combination of expertise.***

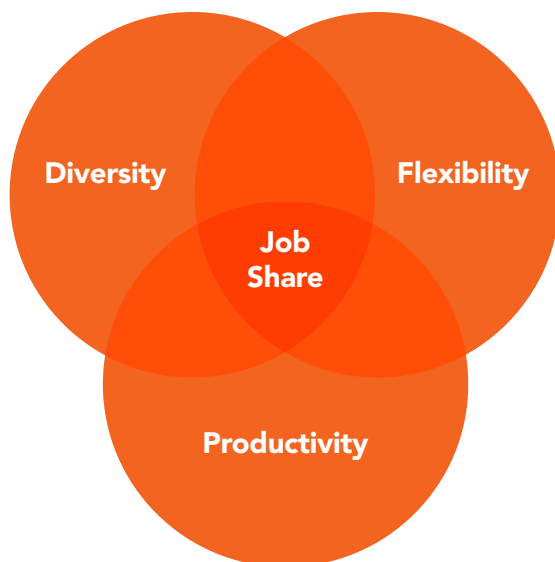
***I am lucky to have double the talent."***

*Brigitte Fairbank, Executive Director, People at Family and Community Services, whose executive assistants job share.*

# Does job share make business sense?

This factsheet can help you to explain why promoting and enabling job share can solve some common workforce challenges. It can be useful when promoting job share in the agency.

There are many sound business reasons to create a job share culture in your organisation:



## a) Diversity

- Job share can help your organisation to achieve its diversity goals. Using it can attract talented but under-represented candidates currently unable to find part-time leadership roles, or other roles due to the travel time required or personal commitments.
- If your agency is operating in a competitive labour market, sourcing strategies that include job share can help your agency to attract applications from demographic groups currently applying at significantly lower rates — it expands your potential talent pool.
- It can also form a valuable part of your organisation's retention strategy, as job share can pave a career path for employees who currently cannot progress because their caring responsibilities, medical conditions, or community commitments make part-time their only option. This in turn can enrich your agency's talent pipeline.

## b) Flexibility

- Job share can provide true flexibility to both job sharers without compromising business outcomes. It can ensure total coverage in a full-time role
- This in turn provides flexibility for job sharers in senior or demanding roles that could not otherwise be achieved in reduced hours. It makes these roles sustainable.
- It can provide an excellent pathway to offer flexibility to employees returning from extended leave – whether parental or illness, without compromising the coverage in the role.

## c) Productivity

- Job sharers are more productive, with optimal matches increasing productivity by up to 30%<sup>2</sup>.
- Job share can be used to retain older workers as they transition to retirement, one of the most commonly cited reasons for requesting a job share arrangement. When matched with a younger worker, job share can be used for succession planning, and role re-structure used to build skills in both employees.
- Job share can improve business continuance and the retention of intellectual property by two people sharing the role.

<sup>2</sup> See BHP case study for more details on the productivity, safety and production accuracy forecasting data achieved through flexible rostering, including job sharing roster lines in mining workforces, [www.psc.nsw.gov.au/workplace-culture---diversity/flexible-working/leading-implementation-of-flexible-working/case-studies/bhp](http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/workplace-culture---diversity/flexible-working/leading-implementation-of-flexible-working/case-studies/bhp). 'Job sharing at senior level: making it work', *The Job Share Project*, pp. 43, [www.thejobshareproject.com/3434hjkv97fjb378fbv/jobsharefullreport.pdf](http://www.thejobshareproject.com/3434hjkv97fjb378fbv/jobsharefullreport.pdf)

# What misgivings exist about job share?

There are a number of misgivings about job share that result in requests being refused, or line managers less keen to consider the arrangement. Almost all can either be resolved or avoided entirely with some planning. In this factsheet, we've collected some of the most commonly expressed and provided suggested responses to address them.

Challenges	How to resolve them
<b>It costs extra because it needs 1.2 FTE</b>	1.2 FTE isn't always a necessity, although is a good idea in a twin arrangement, especially at executive level. However, it is well known that the increase of productivity (double the brain and stamina, double the connections) generally far outweighs the additional 0.2 cost. <a href="#">Research found</a> a typical productivity boost of 30%.
<b>Our clients only want to deal with one person</b>	Contrary to this common perception, job share can be highly effective in client-facing roles, because it allows 5-day coverage, holiday coverage and gives access to two resources instead of one. It just needs to be communicated well to clients. Consider the DPC case study as an example of managing complex stakeholders successfully.
<b>This role requires travel</b>	Job share can help soften the burden of travel by splitting it between two employees. Some roles can even be shared by employees in two different locations. This can cut travel costs and create strong local relationships in both locations.
<b>Our stakeholder interaction is complex</b>	Relationships and interactions with key stakeholders need to be mapped out carefully at the beginning of a job share arrangement via a workplan. Job sharers could meet most important stakeholders together, and split others depending on working days. Consider the DPC case study as an example of managing complex stakeholders successfully.
<b>Decision making around here is fast-paced</b>	Trust is one of the most important attributes of a successful job share pair, and whoever is in that day, makes the decision. It is also critical that the other partner support the decision made, even if they may have done it differently, and handle discussions privately. Consider the Industry case study as an example of how job sharers can successfully trust each other's decisions.
<b>This role requires overtime</b>	Overtime is common in senior job share roles. Monitoring the amount of overtime, and allocating even tasks/days needs to be managed by the partners. Noting how the work ebbs and flows, especially on certain days, can help.
<b>This role has direct reports</b>	<p>Direct reports can be handled by evenly splitting by numbers if there is a high number, splitting by task, or handled together, divided by days in office.</p> <p>Performance reviews can be handled individually or together partners can take turns. HR systems will need consideration, as payroll systems may need dividing as well. Consider the DPI case study as an example of managing a team as a job share partnership.</p>
<b>Pay and entitlements</b>	Pay and employee entitlements are calculated on a pro rata basis, and subject to the relevant awards.



# The facts on job share in the NSW government sector

Understanding the current state of job share explain why it needs additional support, as current uptake is so low, despite its benefits. Here is a snapshot of job share in the NSW Government in 2018.

Currently, only a small percentage of the total workforce uses job share in the NSW government sector, with 3,669 reporting using job share in the 2018 People Matter Employee Survey (with a total survey response rate of 170,832). The vast majority are women. The current full-time equivalent workforce is 329,005 employees.

Gender	Number of job sharers	Job share by gender	Number employees using flex arrangements	Job sharers as % of total flex users
Female	3,218	88%	101,554	3.2%
Male	417	11%	53,003	0.8%
Other	34	1%	2,513	1.4%
Total	3,669	100%	157,070	2.34%

Figure 1: Job share user profile

When examined by age, the vast majority of the current job sharers are in the 30-44 age bracket, with an average age in 2018 of 43 years, as Figure 2 shows.

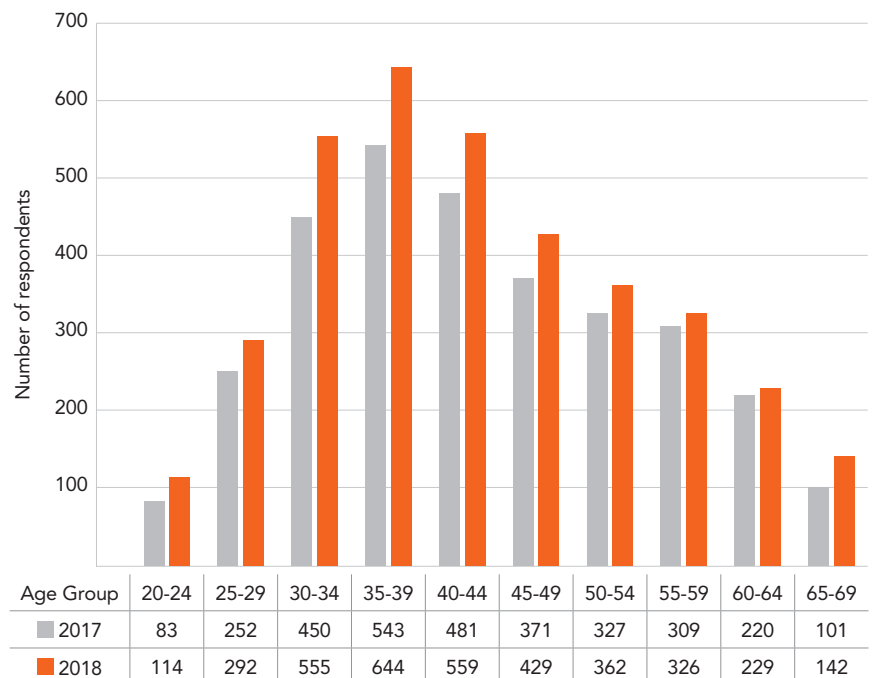


Figure 2: job share by age

Source: People Matter Employee Survey 2018

# The facts on job share in the NSW government sector

The majority of job sharers in the NSW public sector worked in the Education and Health clusters, as shown in Figure 3.

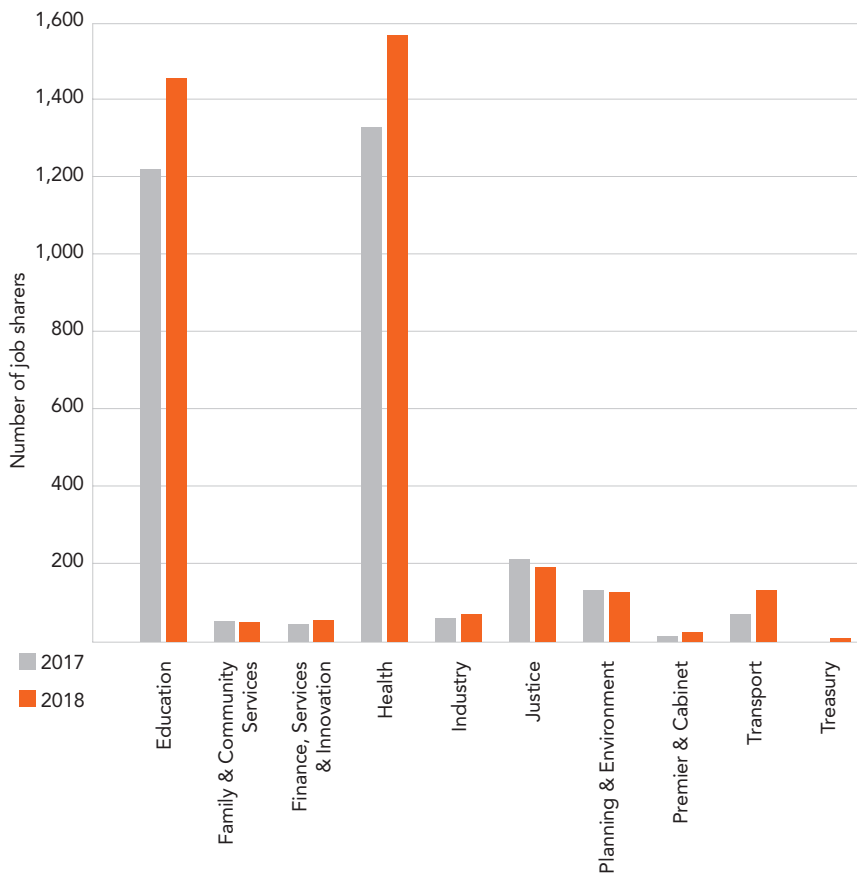


Figure 3: Job share by cluster  
Source: People Matter Employee Survey 2018

The average salary for a job sharer in the NSW public sector in 2018 was \$74,800.46<sup>3</sup>, compared to average salary of \$90,215.99 for the sector overall in this survey.

In 2018, the majority of job sharers in the NSW public sector worked in roles where they engaged in 'service delivery involving direct contact with the general public' (64% or 2,316), and most were employed on an 'ongoing or permanent (other than senior executive)' basis (65.5% or 2,382).

Engagement scores and satisfaction with flexible working options were slightly higher for job sharers compared to employees not using job share but using other flexible working options, and significantly higher than the sector overall. This shows the potential of flexible working, given its correlation with engagement scores, as engagement across the sector has remained steady overall for the past three years.

	Engagement with organisation	Satisfaction with access to flexible working	Perceives manager as supporting flexible working
Using job share	70%	74%	75%
Not using job share but using a different flexible work options	67%	72%	75%
Overall sector scores	65%	59%	63%

Source: People Matter Employee Survey 2018

<sup>3</sup> Note the PMES question asks people to quote their full-time equivalent salary band.

# How do I encourage jobshare throughout the employee life cycle?

Agencies will need to adjust their workforce management approaches at each stage of the employee management life-cycle to attract and retain employees seeking any form of flexible working. Job share requires a few small adjustments which agency leaders can advocate for and encourage progress in making.



## Attraction

Are roles assessed by HR and/or hiring managers to consider whether they could be done as a job share arrangement (or preferably, all roles can job share as a default, on an 'if not, why not' basis)? Have roles been redesigned to actively promote job share as a solution to issues such as risk of overload in part-time roles with increasing responsibilities, or roles that may benefit from having two people share the role and bring their own differing experience and skills to the one role? Can roles be resourced as 1.2 FTE instead of just 1 FTE?

## Is job share considered as a sourcing strategy for future capability and capacity for roles, particularly at executive levels for diverse demographics?

Do role descriptions, role advertisements and role requisitions reflect their capacity to be job shared when they are advertised? ` "Job sharers are welcome to apply jointly".



## Recruitment

Are recruitment processes able to support the screening and interview of a job share pair, or do they contain subtle biases in favour of one role equals one person? While both applicants will need to go through the process, are hiring managers familiar with the concept of two applicants for one role?



## Onboarding and role performance

How will the agency support job share partners to access the workplace by way of a workspace, equipment, IT access, induction and training? How can HR systems support job share partners to understand what is required of them in terms of performance and participation in a team? Do your administrative systems have workarounds to allow two people to share tasks, if that is a challenge?

# How do I encourage jobshare throughout the employee life cycle?



**Retention:**

How will each job share partner be offered opportunities for improvement and a career pathway of their own?



**Separation:**

How will the agency respond if and when one job share partner decides to exit the role, ensuring adequate handover and a replacement process that takes into account the capabilities and ways of working of the remaining job share partner?

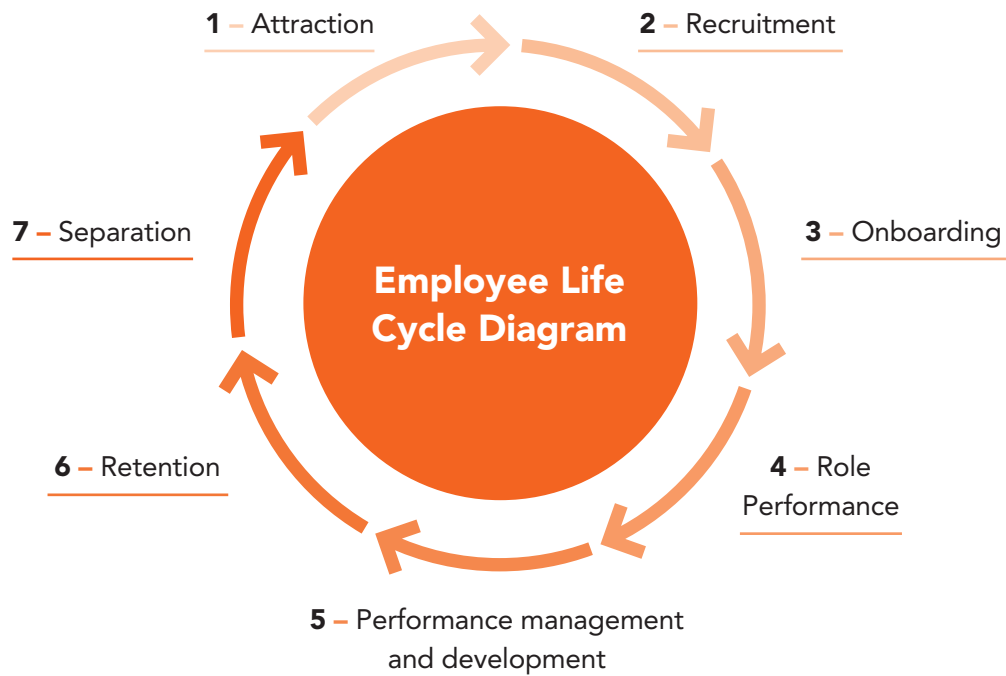


Figure 4: Consider each stage of the employment life-cycle and if subtle biases against job share exist.

# What role do I have as a leader?

## Making it work

Your role as a leader in supporting job share in your agency is to be proactively advocating, through policy and practice, the uptake of job share. You can also do this by openly communicating in a positive way about flexible working through staff communications, telling success stories, and celebrating wins achieved by people working flexibly. By articulating an expectation that the HR leaders and hiring managers in your agency will revise workforce management processes to offer and support job share at each stage of the workforce cycle, job sharers will be able to explore and take up opportunities as they present.

By understanding and promoting the benefits of job share and how job share has been implemented successfully in a range of workplaces, you can assist your agency to boost productivity and meet D&I targets. This may require you to advocate to overcome any resistance from your agency's managers by respectfully challenging and working through the barriers, perceived or actual, to making job share work within your agency.

It also means that as a leader, you will have a flexible understanding of workforce and business model design (e.g. 1 FTE does not necessarily equal 1 person) and can use this to develop workforce solutions. As a leader of an agency that encourages job share, you will also need to discern when particular job share arrangements might not be feasible (for operational or other reasons) and be able to address these with employees in a supportive and open way.

## Consider your leadership shadow

Creating the right environment for job share take up includes proactively adapting your own leadership style and approach to account for employees' job share arrangements, across all levels of the workforce, to model an openness and acceptance of job share. To increase the uptake of job share arrangements across the public sector, leaders will need to network with other leaders in the sector, trouble shoot the existing barriers and develop innovations so that eventually job share becomes commonplace and all employees are adept at working collaboratively with those who are job sharing.

***Similarly, when you support managers and your HR team to become confident in their knowledge and skills to manage job share arrangements, you can build a reputation as being an employer of choice, more able to innovate and adapt to the needs of a future way of working.***

Whether or not you decide to try a job share for yourself, as a leader responsible for the advocacy of flexible working in your agency, it will be important for you to consider any unconscious bias you may have about flexible working: any misgivings you may be carrying that would hinder your support of others to work flexibly. Be mindful for any 'jokes' about work marriages or 'how long are you doing this' that subtly convey it isn't taken seriously.

Lastly, by measuring the uptake of job share and establishing a process for collecting feedback from anyone in a job share arrangement within your agency, you can foster a culture of continuous improvement.

## Advocate for the change needed in IT and HR systems

Some of the job share partners interviewed by the PSC as part of the job share pilot reported issues that can hinder their ability to fully perform their role. Those who have been job sharing for decades said that, for many years, they have had to challenge preconceived notions or bias from leaders in their agencies, needing to justify why they should be allowed to work as job sharers, each time they moved to a new workplace.

Others raised difficulties with IT systems, payroll systems, travel expense approvals, opportunities for higher duties or participation in training courses, and even the use of Human Capital Management (HCM) in managing the performance and development plans of their team. Many of these systems are designed for individual employees only.

Over time, it will be important for leaders to influence a redesign or change of provider through the procurement process so that the systems can allow for a job share arrangement. In the meantime, advocate within corporate services to find effective ways to work within the existing IT and HR systems.

***“The view from the HR side seems to be that this is something novel and different, the systems aren’t really set up to adapt to it. One of the frustrating things is the inability to fiddle with your days when you need to, and the system doesn’t really accommodate that very effectively. Another frustrating thing is the inability to elevate and act people up in half a job. Some people may not want to allow that because its only for a limited time.”***

Liz Moore, Executive Director, and job sharer.

Allowing job share partners to set up their own simple protocols about how they will work, how they will communicate with their team(s), how they will operate in the partnership, and how they will resolve issues that arise, will likely lead to the best outcomes in the workplace. This approach is one which models a team-based collaboration and a focus on outcomes, not presenteeism.

Recommended operating principles might be to:

- Have a weekly team “roster” that includes:
  - Work objectives and allocation
  - Team meetings
  - Who is where, when
- Procedures for hand-overs and back-up:
  - Establish communication protocols (i.e. when is communication necessary, and how – e.g. phone, SMS, email);
  - Have transparent conversations with stakeholders about flexibility, including team working patterns and how quality outcomes will be ensured;
  - Develop a plan for responding to peaks and troughs (and be transparent in communicating potential shifts in work demands);
  - Include anyone working remotely in meetings, or to at least be advised of the discussions and decisions that affect their work, if meetings have to be held on their days off;
  - Decide how and when to provide feedback on team working relationships and the operation of the job share.

# What role do I have as a leader?

## Consider it for yourself

There are already numerous examples of job sharers who successfully fulfil executive level roles as job share partners, and are job sharing whilst at the same time managing employees who job share.

***Job sharing can provide you with the opportunity to fulfil a rewarding and responsible role within the public sector, and at the same time pursue other interests or responsibilities you may have outside of work, for example hobbies, a carer role or community engagement.***

A diversity of perspectives and experiences earned outside the office, make for a little more skilled workforce overall. These perspectives contribute to more informed problem solving and solution design, and better overall service.

As more leaders take up job share arrangements, the shared understanding and innovations developed will inform and refine the public sector's uptake of job share more broadly.

