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MEDIA RELEASE

Flexible rostering the answer to Australia's competitiveness in a global labour market

In response to recent news on Australia's competitiveness in the labour market, Shiftwork Solutions Managing Director and rostering expert Jim Huemmer says those easy money-making years are over and, in highly negotiable and changing industries, Australia has been uncompetitive from a labour perspective.

Huemmer said he has seen clients deal with the operational pressure to maintain productivity in this globally competitive labour market, meaning they need to work smarter, look at resources, equipment and maintenance while not compromising safety.

"Issues about flexibility and costs are directly related to a business's capability to roster to match their workload; by not matching workload means higher costs, such as overtime costs and idle time costs," Huemmer said.

"To be efficient, many businesses need the flexibility to change or adjust their rosters to match workload. We are working with businesses that have workload demands changing weekly, others seasonally with as high as a five-fold increase in workload during the summer months compared to the winter months."

"The answer is designing and implementing more effective rostering practices to match workload demands and removing restrictive language in Enterprise Agreements."

Many Enterprise Agreements currently define what roster can be worked and restrict changes, which limits flexibility and increases costs. An Enterprise Agreement does not have to describe the current roster.

"In most cases, we recommend to our clients to acknowledge (in their agreement) that the business has workload requirements that include 24/7 coverage and that rosters will be worked out in each work area according to their specific needs."

"The global market in which we exist is changing and flexibility in the way we work can allow Australia to maintain this competitive edge. It's not all doom and gloom – we just need to adjust the way we think about things and streamline work practices accordingly."

Jim has developed a snapshot comparison of labour costs in Australia to his native country America in order to demonstrate that, while Australia appears uncompetitive, how the working conditions and benefits in Australia far outweigh those in more competitive countries, like the USA.

Shiftwork Solutions is a specialist company with a strong history for optimising shifts and rosters to better enable organisations to balance people, resources and safety. Shiftwork Solutions offer proven processes, tailored to organisational needs and involve employees, supervisors and managers to implement. They specialise in roster design and optimisation for organisations across all sectors, including mining, energy, transport, manufacturing and government.