

19 December 2022

Dr Jane Thomson
Secretary
Select Committee on Work and Care
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: workandcare.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Dr Thomson

Questions on Notice

On 8 December Coles received a request from the Committee to respond to a series of Questions on Notice. Please find our responses below.

Coles employs 14,350 team members in full time roles, 44,180 in part time roles and 44,884 casual team members in its stores.

Female team members represent 53% of this workforce, 45% are male and 2% identify as other. Approximately 10% of team members are in management positions.

The age breakdown of team members in stores is: 57% under 30 years of age; 15% aged 30-39 years; 12% aged 40-49 years and 16% aged over 50 years.

Team members can be rostered to work on average, shifts from three to eight/nine hours in duration in alignment with rostering requirements set out in the applicable industrial instruments.

Coles is committed to providing flexibility to its workforce to manage work and personal circumstances by promoting and supporting flexible working opportunities for our team.

Our Flexible Working Policy applies to all team members, across all operations and activities. This Policy operates in conjunction with the provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), in particular section 65 which deals with requests for flexible working arrangements.

Team members can request formal flexible working arrangements, which is a formal change to how work is performed. These arrangements are agreed in writing between team members and their line managers. Examples of formal flexible working arrangements include permanent changes to start and/or finish times or days of work, job sharing and changes to location of work.

Where agreed, formal flexible working arrangements may result in changes to a team member's terms and conditions of employment, for example, changing from full-time to part-time employment.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how some of our team members work and as a result Coles also supports informal flexibility, which is an informal agreement between team members and their line managers about how work is performed, which may change from time to time. Examples of informal flexibility include hybrid working arrangements such as working from home for part of the week and ad hoc changes to start or finish times.

In addition to these arrangements, all salaried managers in Coles Supermarkets (who hold full time or part time roles) are provided rostering principles and instructions on the maximum number of hours that can be worked, tailored by role. Where the operational needs at a store, or the personal needs of an individual team member are not aligned with the rostering principles provided by Coles for a role, salaried managers can also seek approval for non-standard rostering.

In September FY23 we expanded the support available for current and new team members preparing for parenthood or adjusting to being a new parent. This initiative removed the 12-month service eligibility requirement, meaning team members can access paid primary and secondary carers parental leave without having to be employed for a continuous period of 12-months.

For secondary carers, Coles has increased paid parental leave from two weeks to four weeks paid leave. Further, secondary carers leave can now be taken up to 24 months after the birth, adoption, or surrogacy birth of a child, instead of the previous 12 month limit. In addition, Coles offers flexibility in how the leave is taken, for example one day, multiple days, or in blocks of days.

To improve outcomes for primary carers receiving government parental leave pay (PLP), superannuation contributions are made on PLP, based on the minimum wage, following paid primary carers parental leave.

Further, for those team members whose pregnancies sadly don't go to plan, primary carers who experience stillbirth, whether it be through birth, adoption or surrogacy, can access paid primary carers parental leave.

These enhancements build on Coles' existing entitlement of up to 12 weeks paid parental leave for primary carers.

Team member safety and wellbeing has always been of paramount importance and more than 1,000 of our store leaders participated in mental health training this year to help them identify and respond appropriately to mental health situations in the workplace.

Coles has introduced a range of initiatives to support team member wellbeing including the 'Mind Your Health Program' which provides programs for personal support and developing strategies for personal mental health. We partner with The Resilience Project and this year launched a free mental wellbeing app. and our Employee Assistance Program provides team members and their families with free, confidential tailored support.

Additionally, Coles has an extensive risk assessment database that is regularly reviewed, updated and consulted on with its team members. This includes managing psychological risks associated with the tasks and duties team members are required to complete as part of their roles.

We understand the benefit flexible working provides to both team members and to Coles; it enables team members to balance personal and work circumstances and for Coles it improves our ability to attract and retain an engaged workforce.

We will continue to promote and encourage flexible working, recognising this is something team members value.

Yours sincerely