



UNITED
WORKERS UNION

11 August 2023

Dave Livingstone
Senior Manager Workplace Relations
Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority
33 Lakeside Dve
East Burwood VIC 3151

BY EMAIL dave.livingstone@esta.vic.gov.au

Dear Dave,

RE: United Workers Union response to ESTA's proposal to move 16-25 events from ERTcomm Call takers to Netcomm call-takers

We write to you regarding ESTA's presentation (attached) we received last Friday 4 August 2023 at the Unions Consultative Committee (UCC) meeting, where ESTA offered a revised scope of NETcomm call-taking.

At the meeting, our delegate Sharyne Doensen on behalf of our members, communicated that the UWU could not support ESTA's proposal in its current form as it puts members of the public at risk and unfairly puts pressure on NETcomm call takers who are not trained or paid to deal with ERTcomm calls.

Having now had more time to review the UCC Pack PowerPoint, the UWU makes the following points:

- It is noted in the Consultation Pack that *NET CTs are currently permitted to handle calls greater than 26 minutes. Although, there is low adoption of the transfer process by ERT CT.*

Whilst the UWU agrees with ESTA that bookings with timeframes between 25-90 minutes can currently be managed by NET Call takers. Currently, this does not occur (or occurs very rarely) for two very pivotal reasons:

1. Div 1 Nurses, DRs and Hospitals DO NOT routinely call the Non-emergency line for timeframes of 25-90 minutes. (It has become widely accepted by medical professionals that calls to the NETcomm queue are predominantly for timeframes >90mins)

@aeavunion

Website: www.aeavic.org.au

Email: aea.vic@unitedworkers.org.au

Phone: 03 9287 1713

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2. When a call is received on the 000 line for timeframes of greater than 25minutes (including timeframes up to 90 minutes) the TTF pathway does not instruct an ERTCOMM call-taker to transfer the caller through to the Non-Emergency line. Furthermore, it is worth noting that recent conversations with ERT-trained Operations staff have revealed that Team Leaders regularly advise ERT call takers NOT TO transfer calls of 25–90-minute timeframes through to NET Call takers - even when the queue is open. Team Leaders are known to endorse this and will remind ERTcomm CT to NOT transfer these calls.
- The above issues could easily be rectified by ESTA through:
 1. advice to medical facilities to always call the Non-emergency line for bookings >25minutes, and
 2. a very minor adjustment to the TTF lead-in card, in concert with a direction to Team Leaders to support this initiative.

These changes alone would result in a large number of calls per month diverted from 000 to the Non-Emergency queue, with virtually no impact on employee workflows and no additional training.

- Recent conversations with ERT/NET trained call takers continue to highlight serious concerns for ESTA's proposal. ERT/NET trained employees have reiterated that processing calls from medical professionals who seek a 16-25minute booking timeframe require a broader understanding of ProQA and the nuances that underpin the resulting Ambulance responses.
- The training and experience of an ERTCOMM call-taker, and their understanding of clinical gradation, ensure appropriate patient care and indemnifies both ESTA and AV through the mitigation of both under-reaction and over-reaction to individual case circumstances.
- As such, these 16-25 minute timeframes can only be processed by call-takers trained in ERTCOMM. Many staff have also commented that these jobs are very quick for an ERTCOMM call-taker to process and often provide a welcome mental micro-break from what is an incredibly demanding job.
- Essentially, ESTA need to provide full training in ERTcomm Call-taking, including ProQA if they wish for NETcomm call-takers to take live ERTcomm calls.

@aeavunion

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- Once an individual is successfully trained and mentored in ERTcomm Call-taking, ESTA will be required to remunerate those call-takers with an additional Classification segment for ERTcomm call-taking, in accordance with the *ESTA Operational Employees Enterprise Agreement 2019*. This remuneration package applies in all circumstances where ESTA trains, upskill, or multi-skill employees to perform any skillset outlined in the current Classification Structure and it is not agreed that individuals can be 'part'-trained in any skillset.
- The UWU does not support this proposal. However, we hope that some of the information provided assists with the intention of the initiative.

In order to honour ESTA & the Unions' commitment to effective consultation, the UWU request that any feedback by the Unions to these documents - whether or not ESTA agrees - be confirmed in writing such that further discussions take place if necessary.

Regards,

Julien Gibson (she/her)
Organiser
Ambulance Employees Australia – Victoria (AEAV)
United Workers Union

@aeavunion

Website: www.aeavic.org.au

Email: aea.vic@unitedworkers.org.au

Phone: 03 9287 1713

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