



NAB Staffing Audit 2011

A comparison of how effective leave and relief is in 2011 compared to our FSU Audit of 2008

Authorised by FSU National Secretary Leon Carter



Introduction

Understaffing is one of the major concerns for employees in the finance sector. The consequences of lack of adequate relief for absences include:

- difficulty accessing leave entitlements,
- regularly working unpaid overtime,
- health and safety issues, especially stress,
- trouble achieving performance objectives, and
- difficulty in consistently providing high-level customer service.

In 2008, in an attempt to quantify the extent of the problem at NAB, FSU conducted an audit of over 350 NAB branches nationwide. That report found that staffing in the retail network had reached a crisis point.

As a consequence of that audit, NAB committed to overhaul the way they managed relief in the retail network, which included bringing on additional 100 FTE into the relief pool nationally.

In 2011, FSU Organisers went back into NAB workplaces to assess whether there had been any improvement to the situation.

The Audit

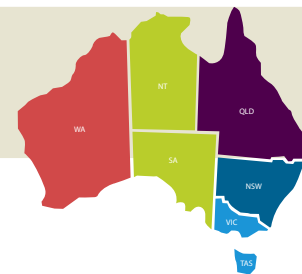
FSU visited 280 branches nationally across Australia between May and August 2011. The audit was conducted by a survey completed by one employee in each branch asking how many staff were absent in the branch that day and whether relief had been requested and/or provided.

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Results of NAB staffing audit 2011



National Data

Number of positions not covered by relief in 2011: 154 in 280 branch

No of absences	No of branches		Total position not covered	
	2008	2011	2008	2011
0	110	157		
1	146	85	146	85
2	55	23	110	46
3	29	5	87	15
4	14	2	56	8
5	1	0	5	0
6	1	0	6	0
Total	356	280*	410	154

*8 branches reported that they had extra staff on the day of the audit.

Degree of short-staffing

In 2008, 356 branches were audited and 246 (69%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 410 staff on the day of the audit.

In 2011, 280 branches were audited and 115 (41%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 154 staff on the day of the audit.

Top reasons for absences

	2008	2011
1.	Sick leave (26%)	Annual leave (26%)
2.	Annual leave (21%)	Sick leave (18%)
3.	Unfilled vacancy (14%)	Unfilled vacancy (17%)

Top role absences 2011

	2008	2011
1.	Teller	Branch manager (26%)
2.	SSA	CA1 (24%)
3.	Branch Manager	BA1 (18%)

^NB Role titles have changed

Relief requested

In 2008, 77% of branches that responded had requested relief.

In 2011, 53% of branches had requested relief. However, a further 23% did not request relief even though there was an absence in their branch.

Relief provided

In 2008, 56% of branches that had requested relief stated that no relief had been provided.

In 2011, only 19% of branches that had requested relief stated that no relief had been provided.

Entire absence covered by relief if provided

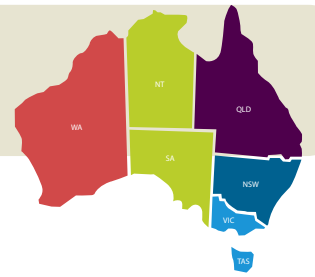
In 2008, 64% of branches who had been provided relief said it did not cover the entire vacancy.

In 2011, this figure was only 26%.

Reliever fully trained if provided

In 2008, only half of branches said that the relievers that had been provided were fully trained to perform the role they were filling.

In 2011, this had increased to 65%.



Overview of results

Overall, staffing levels have improved significantly, both in terms of the number of staff shortfall and the percentage of branches affected by the shortfall.

Branches that do suffer staff shortages are less likely to be more than one staff member down than in 2008.

Annual leave has now overtaken sick leave as the top reason for staff absences.

Unfilled vacancies continue to make up around a sixth of all vacant positions nationally. Training and unfilled vacancies remain a far more significant cause of staff shortages in WA than elsewhere.

Branch managers are now the mostly likely role to be absent without cover, compared to 2008 when tellers were the role most often not covered.

The percentage of branches who request relief has declined substantially in most states. However, around a quarter of branches did not request relief even though they reported an absence. The majority of these branches reported that this was because they knew in advance that there was no relief available.

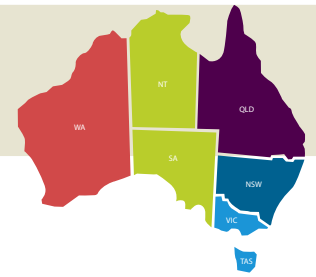
Whereas in 2008 less than half of all branches who requested relief were provided with it, the vast majority now receive cover for absences.

Relief now covers the full vacancy in most cases, in 2008 this was true in only around a third of cases. However, relief is far less likely to cover the full absence in WA than the national average.

The level of training of relievers has improved, but is still not high. This suggests relief staff are still not being given the training they require to be able to provide the right mix of skills and roles to the network.

Unlike in 2008, some branches actually reported having additional staff on the day of the audit.

Results of NAB Staffing Audit 2011



Queensland Data

*Reporting of Queensland data differs to other states ensure consistency with previous audit report.

Number of vacancies: 87 in 91 branches

No of vacancies	No of branches		Total vacancies	
	2008	2011	2008	2011
0	28	35		
1	43	33	43	33
2	19	18	38	36
3	12	3	36	6
4	8	2	32	12
5	1	0	5	0
Total	111	91	154	87

*4 branches reported that they had extra staff on the day of the audit.

Degree of short staffing

In 2008, 111 branches were audited and 83 (75%) reported vacancies. These branches were down by a total of 154 staff on the day of the audit.

In 2011, 91 branches were audited and 56 (62%) reported a vacancy. These branches were down by a total of 87 staff on the day of the audit.

Top reasons for absences

	2008	2011
1	Other^ (47.5%)	Annual leave (27%)
2	Sick leave (32.5%)	Sick leave (21%)
3	Annual leave (20%)	Unfilled vacancy (19%)

^ "Other" included training, meetings, relieving elsewhere.

Top role absences

	2008	2011
1	Service Adviser	Branch Manager (36%)
2	Personal Banker	BA1 (18%)
3	SSA/Branch Manager	CA1 (15%)

Relief requested

In 2008, 59% of branches that responded had requested relief. Relief was requested for 130 of the 154 vacancies (84%).

In 2011, 51% of branches had requested relief. Relief was requested for 68 of the 87 vacancies (78%).

Relief provided

In 2008, 55% of branches that had requested relief had it provided. Only 56 of the 130 vacancies were covered.

In 2011, 87% of branches that had requested relief stated relief had been provided. 54 of the 87 vacancies were covered.

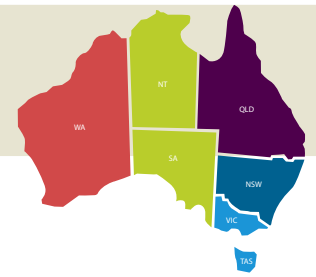
Entire absence covered by relief if provided

In 2008, 89% of branches who had been provided relief said it covered the entire vacancy.
In 2011, this figure was 83%.

Reliever fully trained if provided

In 2008, 64% of branches said that the relievers that had been provided were fully trained to perform the role they were filling.
In 2011, this figure was 63%.

Results of NAB Staffing Audit 2011



Victoria & Tasmania Data

Number of positions not covered by relief: 53 in 92 branches

No of absences	No of branches		Total positions not covered	
	2008	2011	2008	2011
0	45	48		
1	63	36	63	36
2	21	7	42	14
3	9	1	27	3
4	5	0	20	0
5	0	0	0	0
6	1	0	6	0
Total	144	92	158	53

*4 branches reported that they had extra staff on the day of the audit.

Degree of short staffing

In 2008, 144 branches were audited and 99 (69%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 158 staff on the day of the audit.

In 2011, 92 branches were audited and 44 (48%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 53 staff on the day of the audit.

Top reasons for absences

	2008	2011
1	Sick leave (31%)	Annual leave (33%)
2	Annual leave (24%)	Sick leave (16%)
3	Other [^] (19%)	RDO (12%)

[^]Other included conferences, training and meetings.

Top role absences

	2008	2011
1	Teller	Branch Manager (26%)
2	Branch Manager	CA1 (25%)
3	SSA	BA1 (23%)

Relief requested

In 2008, 51% of branches that responded had requested relief.

In 2011, 61% of branches had requested relief.

Relief provided

In 2008, 62% of branches that had requested relief received it.

In 2011, 73% of branches that had requested relief received it.

Entire absence covered by relief if provided

In 2008, 42% of branches who had been provided relief said it covered the entire vacancy.

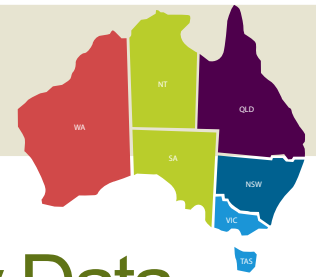
In 2011, this figure was 73%.

Reliever fully trained if provided

In 2008, 62% of branches said that the relievers provided were fully trained to perform the role they were filling.

In 2011, this figure was 68%.

Results of NAB Staffing Audit 2011



South Australia & Northern Territory Data

Number of positions not covered by relief: 11 in 20 branches

No of absences	No of branches		Total positions not covered	
	2008	2011	2008	2011
0	12	11		
1	8	3	8	3
2	4	4	8	8
3	2	0	6	0
Total	26	20*	22	11

* 2 branches reported that they had extra staff on the day of the audit.

Degree of short staffing

In 2008, 26 branches were audited and 14 branches (54%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 22 staff on the day of the audit.

In 2011, 20 branches were audited and 7 (35%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 11 staff on the day of the audit.

Top reasons for absences 2011

	2008	2011
1	Sick leave	Sick leave (29%)
2	Annual leave	Other^ (24%)
3	Unfilled vacancy/other	Annual leave (18%) RDO (18%)

^Other included conferences, training and meetings.

Top role absences 2011

- 1 Branch manager (31%) & CA2 (31%)
- 2 CA1 (15%) & BA1 (15%)

N.B. No relevant comparative data from 2008.

Relief requested

In 2008, 11 of the 26 branches that responded had requested relief.

In 2011, 10 of the 20 branches had requested relief.

Relief provided

In 2008, 8 of the 11 branches that had requested relief received it.

In 2011, 8 of the 10 branches that had requested relief stated relief had been provided.

Entire absence covered by relief if provided

In 2008, all the branches who had been provided relief said it covered the entire vacancy.

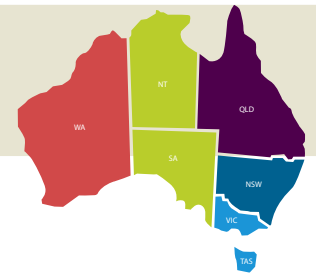
In 2011, only 5 of the 8 branches who were provided with relief said it covered the entire vacancy.

Reliever fully trained if provided

In 2008, 7 of the 8 branches said that the relievers that had been provided were fully trained to perform the role they were filling.

In 2011, only half of the 8 branches said that relief was fully trained.

Results of NAB Staffing Audit 2011



New South Wales

Number of positions not covered by relief: 21 in 24 branches

No of absences	No of branches		Total positions not covered	
	2008	2011	2008	2011
0	23	11		
1	27	7	27	7
2	6	2	12	4
3	5	2	15	6
4	1	1	4	4
Total	62	24*	58	21

*1 branch reported that they had extra staff on the day of the audit.

Degree of short staffing

In 2008, 62 branches were audited and 39 (63%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 58 staff on the day of the audit.

In 2011, 24 branches were audited and 12 (50%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 21 staff on the day of the audit.

Top reasons for absences

	2008	2011
1	Unfilled vacancy (26%)	Annual leave (29%)
2	Annual leave (24%)	Unfilled vacancy (24%)
3	Other^ (19%)	Sick leave (18%) Other^ 18%

^Other included conferences, training and meetings.

Top role absences 2011

- 3 CA1 (27%)
- 4 Branch Manager (21%)
- 5 BA2 (18%)

N.B. No relevant comparative data from 2008

Relief requested

In 2008, 58% of branches that responded had requested relief.

In 2011, 60% of branches had requested relief.

Relief provided

In 2008, 58% of branches that had requested relief had received it.

In 2011, 93% of branches that had requested relief stated relief had been provided.

Entire absence covered by relief if provided

In 2008, 57% of branches who had been provided relief said it covered the entire vacancy.

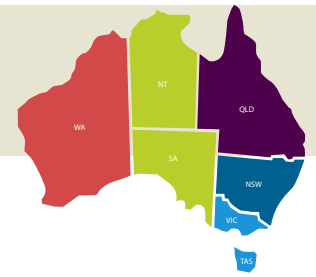
In 2011, this figure was 71%.

Reliever fully trained if provided

In 2008, 71% of branches said that the relievers that had been provided were fully trained to perform the role they were filling.

In 2011, this figure was 79%.

Results of NAB Staffing Audit 2011



Western Australia Data

Number of positions not covered by relief: 29 in 52 branches

No of absences	No of branches		Total positions not covered	
	2008	2011	2008	2011
0	2	27		
1	3	18	3	18
2	5	4	10	8
3	0	1	0	3
Total	10	52*	13	29

*2 branches reported that they had extra staff on the day of the audit.

Degree of short staffing

In 2008, 10 branches were audited and 8 (80%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 13 staff on the day of the audit.

In 2011, 52 branches were audited and 23 (44%) reported short-staffing. These branches were down by a total of 29 staff on the day of the audit.

Top reasons for absences 2011

	2008	2011
1	Unfilled vacancy (50%)	Training (26%)
2	Sick leave (20%)	Unfilled vacancy (23%)
3	Carer's leave (20%)	Other^ (17%)

^Other included conference and relieving elsewhere.

Top role absences 2011

- 6 CA1 (32%)
- 7 BA2 (19%)
- 8 Branch Manager (18%)

N.B. No relevant comparative data from 2008.

Relief requested

In 2008, 5 of the 10 of branches that responded had requested relief.

In 2011, 42% of branches had requested relief.

Relief provided

In 2008, 2 of the 5 branches that had requested relief received it.

In 2011, 82% of branches that had requested relief stated relief had been provided.

Entire absence covered by relief if provided

In 2008, 1 of 2 branches who had been provided relief said it covered the entire vacancy.

In 2011, half of the branches who were provided relief said it covered the entire vacancy.

Reliever fully trained if provided

In 2008, 1 of the 2 branches said that the relievers that had been provided were fully trained to perform the role they were filling.

In 2011, 61% of branches said their relief was fully trained.

From the front line

During the audit visits FSU asked staff for their views on staffing and relief at NAB. In particular we wanted to know how they felt it had changed since the last audit in 2008. The response was generally positive:

We finally seemed to have improvements in relief coverage - **SA**

Under the current relief model the quality and training of our relief team has improved significantly – Victoria

This system has been a huge improvement on what has gone before - **Qld**

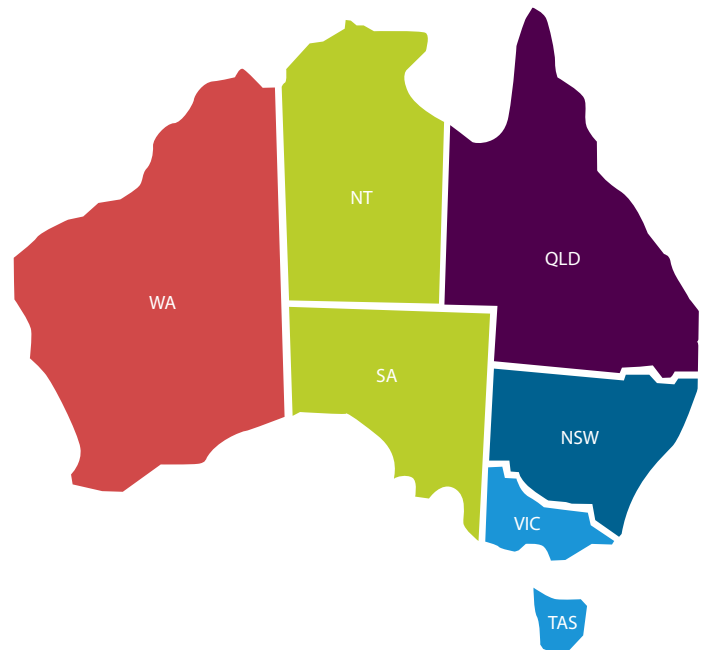
We have had little-to-no difficulty in finding someone to work while we are on holidays - **NSW**

We are generally getting relief for approved leave- **WA**

However, problems persist and in some areas lack of relief is still a serious problem, particularly in regard to training.

Although relief has improved, we still don't seem to receive relief with similar qualifications as the person they are relieving - **Qld**

Although it seems that there has been improvement in my area with relief in recent times, I believe we need to continue to make more relief available...also making sure that there is a suitable variety of different skills within the relief team for all types of job types from management to tellers - **Qld**



Improved but still could have more staff in the pool - **WA**

Staffing and relief nowhere near it needs to be but it has got better – **WA**

More often than not, we don't receive any relief to cover sick days. Often the relief for annual leave are not in line with the role of [the] person on leave i.e.: a CA (non sales) relief for a BA role on leave... branches have a queue to the door all day & all staff work unpaid overtime to finish the day's work – **Qld**

We have had numerous unplanned and planned staff absences over the last 12 months and have struggled with lack of trained relief – **SA**

Fixing the problem

While the overall picture has improved, some branches and regions continue to have significant relief issues which have a serious impact on staff and their workloads.

When visiting branches to conduct the audit, FSU Organisers also discussed with employees working in branches where staffing and relief remained a serious problem how to go about solving the issue.

Your rights to a fully staffed workplace

The NAB Enterprise Agreement 2011 (clause 37) contains a number of provisions relating to staffing. These have been agreed between NAB and the FSU to protect the interests of the employees and the bank. Staffing commitments under the Enterprise Agreement are legally enforceable rights.

Fully staffed workplaces

- When determining staffing levels for a workplace, NAB must take into account all relevant local factors, including employee experience, market demographics, business opportunities and training.
- Staffing levels can only be reduced where there is a corresponding reduction in workloads at your workplace.

Workloads and overtime

- Workloads must be capable of being completed within ordinary hours.
- All overtime should be accurately recorded and paid.
- Branch Managers have the authority to approve up to an hour's overtime per day for each employee. Additional overtime requires RER approval.

Vacancies

- Staff vacancies must be filled promptly.

Relieving Staffing Pressure

- NAB are required to address any significant impact on its employees caused by absences, which may include the provision of relief staff, the deferral of work and the approval of overtime.

Training

- Relief staff must be adequately trained.

Leave

- You are supposed to take 4 weeks of annual leave each year. Generally speaking, you should be able to take your annual leave in accordance with your personal preferences and circumstances.

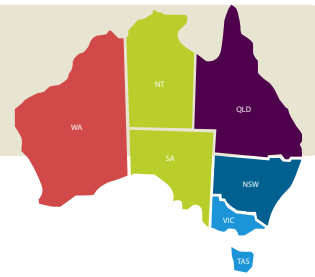
Resolving Staffing Problems

Where employees have a concern regarding staffing and relief levels they should raise it with their People Leader. If this does not resolve the problem it should be raised with the RER. If necessary the concern can be referred to an independent umpire for conciliation and arbitration.

If the above commitments have not been met you should advise your People Leader and the FSU.



Conclusion and further developments



The results of the 2011 audit and the responses from FSU members show clearly that staffing and relief has improved significantly since the last audit in 2008. FSU members should be congratulated for their persistence in ensuring their rights to a fully staffed workplace are recognised.

While the overall picture is positive, the audit has highlighted that there are areas of concerns that still need to be addressed. In particular:

- regional variance in relief provision, pockets of severe staff shortages remain nationally.
- significant numbers of branches where staff are not requesting relief. There is still a level of belief that requesting relief is a futile exercise.
- training of relief staff, and a mix of roles within the relief pool.

NAB's announcement

Between the audit being completed and this report being compiled, NAB has announced a return to a decentralised model for managing leave and relief that puts the onus on branch managers to organise relief for each LAM.

FSU members provided significant feedback throughout the consultation process and overwhelmingly couldn't understand why NAB would change something that wasn't broken. NAB has decided to push forward with the restructure but as a result of the consultation FSU has received the following commitments from NAB.

- There will be no reduction to the number of relief staff. The number of permanent, casuals and temps will remain and NAB have shared this national figure with FSU and committed to meet with us quarterly to monitor the allocation of relief resources nationally.
- The current rules and guidelines for allocation of relief resources which were established as part of the centralised model will remain in place.
- No additional costs will be put on branches where relief are allocated. The current leave and relief budgets will be spread across the allocated branches.
- Each LAM will manage a budget for the use of casuals for relief purposes.
- FSU members must remain vigilant and report any decline in relief that may occur immediately to enable FSU to raise the issue with NAB. We must work together to ensure your improvements to the relief situation don't diminish over time.

Not a member? Join now

If you are not already an FSU member join now by calling 1300 366 378 or join online: www.fsunion.org.au