# Barrier: A rigid structural environment

*The Commission heard that Ambulance Victoria’s rigid systems and structural environment can be a barrier to reform as they can lower workforce confidence and hold back reform progress.*

## Why is this a barrier to reform?

Strong and functional systems and processes are the foundation of reform work. During the Progress Evaluation Audit, the Commission heard from Ambulance Victoria staff and leaders alike that issues of payroll, rostering and other systems are preventing Ambulance Victoria from implementing many of the Commission’s recommended reforms. The Commission was told that structural and process issues are causing significant obstacles to certain reforms, resulting in low workforce trust in the reform process.

The Commission acknowledges that Ambulance Victoria has faced significant structural challenges that affect both employee conditions and efficiency. These include legal frameworks, enterprise agreements, policies, processes and software. These challenges are interlinked – laws and enterprise agreements set foundational rules, policies provide internal guidelines, processes ensure consistent implementation and software enables efficient execution.

We're more reactionary at the moment. I get it's the climate, the budget’s extremely poor and we've got a lot of industrial action going on.

Participant

## What are the impacts of this reform barrier for implementing the Review recommendations?

Many of these structural and system challenges, and their interactions, have become a barrier to implementing priority recommendations including:

* Recommendation 16: Embedding a victim-centred approach to processes and procedures: The Commission heard that complaint policies and processes inhibit a victim-centred approach as the workforce’s understanding of how complaints are managed and the various complaint options available is still varied.
* Recommendation 28: Removing structural barriers to career advancement: The Commission heard that Ambulance Victoria’s compliance-focused processes have prevented complete removal of managerial endorsement.
* Recommendation 31: Implementing and tailoring the Think Flex First Framework: The Commission heard that issues with Ambulance Victoria’s scheduling systems and inconsistent approach to shift management have undermined progress towards flexible work reforms.

Select the links above for further information on how this barrier is impacting recommendation implementation.

## What are the impacts of this reform barrier for Ambulance Victoria’s workforce?

### Pay structures and payroll systems undermine workforce trust in Ambulance Victoria’s commitment to workplace equality

During the Progress Evaluation Audit, the Commission heard of repeated occasions where Ambulance Victoria staff felt they could not trust they would be paid fairly, due to frequent payroll system errors.

We still can't read our pay slips and the system to do the pay is not meeting requirements. So things like if I agree to do a twelve-hour shift instead of a ten-hour shift, there's no way for that system to pick up the two hours of overtime. And I don't get paid the overtime, which is a pretty basic structural thing that happens a lot.

Participant

The Commission also heard consistently that the rolled-in rate compounded employee dissatisfaction and resistance to change.

Remove the rolled-in rate, like, that would make life so much easier … that was such a big factor because we want people to work day, arvo, night and across the whole time they're getting paid the rolled-in rate … They're like, I don't want to work at the rolled-in rate. I want to work Monday to Wednesday or Thursday because I can get child support. So just take the rolled-in rate away.

Participant

## What are the impacts of this reform barrier for Ambulance Victoria’s leadership?

### Structural rigidity is hindering leadership’s ability to implement cultural reforms and lowering workforce trust

During the Progress Evaluation Audit, the Commission heard that because foundational structural issues continually hinder implementation of the Commission’s recommended reforms, cultural transformation has been impeded. This causes diminishing morale, workforce frustration and lack of confidence in the reform process.

I think that the slowness of the change and going through the processes is where we get the frustration from people because this takes time, and it's frustrating because everyone wants change to happen overnight, but it doesn't quite work like that, and it certainly doesn't work as fast when your systems are very out of date.

Participant

### The rigid structures of the payroll system and rolled-in rate are a barrier to Ambulance Victoria’s flexible work reforms

Throughout the Progress Evaluation Audit, the Commission heard regularly from Ambulance Victoria leaders and operational staff that rostering software, roster patterns and end-of-shift management were preventing Ambulance Victoria from being able to implement the Commission’s recommended reforms on flexibility.

If we don't solve some of those system things – I mean the rostering system and the roster patterns and things like that – we can talk about supporting flexible working as much as we want to, but if we can't actually put it in place, then we're promising something that we're not able to deliver.

Participant