

Good Work Design: Providing flexible work



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The way we work is changing

For many people, when, where and how we do our work has evolved.

- Flextime/time off in lieu
- Split shifts
- Variable start/finish times
- Compressed work weeks
- Part-time
- Job share
- Part-year work

- Principal workplace
- Home
- Hybrid
- Working hubs
- Remote or mobile working

- Quiet space
- Collaborative environments
- Telework
- Virtual teams
- Face to face
- Technology enabled

When people have flexible work with high [autonomy](#) it promotes motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and performance.

The cost of replacing an Australian worker is estimated between [30 - 150%](#) of the person's annual salary.

Why it matters

Our expectations of work have also changed. It's now clear that people need and expect their home and work lives to be in harmony. Great managers understand this and do what they can to provide flexible work for their teams.

Flexible work can improve psychological and physical health and wellbeing, by enabling people to manage demands and responsibilities more easily in their home and work lives.

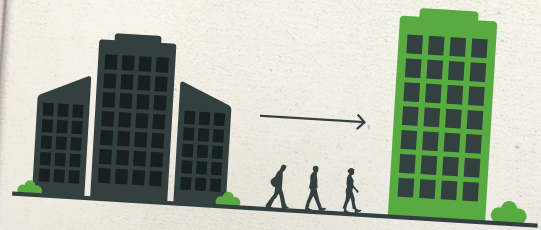
Providing flexible work has become critical to attracting and retaining staff. From this perspective, most organisations cannot afford **not** to provide flexible work options.

Certain employees can request access to [flexible working arrangements](#) under legislation such as the *Fair Work Act 2009*.



What great **managers** do

Workplaces can save **time** and **money**



How it's done

Great managers understand that flexible work arrangements need to work for all parties — the employer, the team and the worker. Flexible work is successful when workers act responsibly and when their managers and supervisors provide effective support for the arrangements.

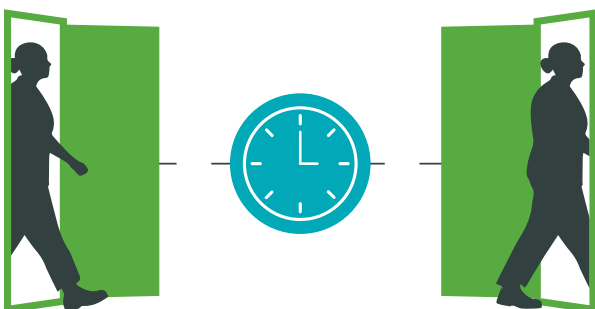
'The employers that get this right will have a more engaged workforce, greater employee retention and better ability to attract top talent.'

Brian Kropp, Gartner

1 Show leadership on flexible work

Leaders and managers can promote a supportive culture through communications and role modelling.

- Make it clear that you support access to flexible work arrangements by consistently speaking positively about the benefits of flexible work and its importance for the organisation.
- Role model accessing flexible work arrangements, where you can.



2 Understand the available flexible work options

- Know your organisation's policy on flexible work and understand the flexible work arrangements that are available for your team.
- Make sure your workers know all the flexible work options available to them. When the inherent requirements of a person's role limit access to one option, encourage them to consider what other flexible arrangements could work.

3 Consider each person's flexible work needs

- Avoid a 'one size fits all' approach to flexible work. What is right for one person may not be right for someone else. Equally, the flexible work options that suit one role may be different for another.
- Remember that there are a range of reasons why people may want flexible work, including personal commitments, caring responsibilities, managing a health condition, or transitioning to retirement.
- Have open and honest conversations about individual flexible work proposals, and find mutually beneficial solutions.
- Be transparent about flexible work decisions and ensure the reasons are clearly communicated and understood.
- Ensure equitable access to flexible work, **regardless of the reason.**

Great managers 'make flexible work available for all people, at all levels, for all reasons and in all forms.'

Dr Graeme Russell and Diversity Council Australia



One size does not fit all



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4 Discuss how to better support flexibility with your team

Changes to work design may be required to improve access to flexible work. This might be beyond your control, but many teams have opportunities to implement new ways of working that better support flexibility.

- Talk with your team about what could be changed to help people in all roles to access flexible work.
- Work collaboratively with your team to review the activities, responsibilities, locations, and timing of team tasks. What opportunities are there for a more flex-friendly work design?


5 Address work health and safety hazards

- Understand the work health and safety hazards and risks associated with different types of flexible work.
- Be aware that remote or hybrid work may increase the impact of other psychosocial risks, particularly if people are not feeling adequately supported. For example, where there is a breakdown of trust between a worker and their manager, due to poor communication or personality differences, working remotely may worsen the situation and cause more harm.
- Talk with your team about what hazards or risks they can identify and work together to implement control measures that eliminate or minimise them.

For more information see Comcare's guidance on [preventing harm and injury at work](#).



Hazards associated with remote work include ergonomic issues with workstations, blurred boundaries between work and home, work intensification, excessive working hours and feelings of isolation.



89% of managers agree that ongoing peer feedback and check-ins are key for successful outcomes

6 Provide tools and focus on outcomes

- Give your people the tools they need to do a good job — regardless of location. This includes access to technology that supports effective communication and collaboration.
- Provide clear performance expectations so that every team member knows their objectives and how they can achieve them.
- Use outcomes-based management. Keep the focus on goal setting and accomplishments, and don't focus unnecessarily on hours spent or the path taken to achieve a result.
- Have regular meaningful conversations about outcomes to help you measure worker performance.
- Remember that your role is to empower employees to deliver their work in a way that focuses on the end game, as opposed to the journey.

'If you can't trust your employees to work flexibly, why hire them in the first place?'

Adam Henderson, Millennial Mindset

7 Build trust through autonomy and respect

- Reflect on your management style: are you comfortable trusting your team members to meet their responsibilities in a way that is most productive for them? Enabling autonomy means letting people make their own choices as much as possible, such as deciding where, when and how they want to work.
- Set up regular check-in points with your team members to:
 - stay connected
 - enable flow of communication and
 - manage the delivery of outcomes.
- Give people autonomy to drive engagement. Your people will be more motivated to perform and do their best to earn your trust.

8 Monitor and evaluate flexible work arrangements

- Make sure arrangements continue to work for the organisation, the team and the individual.
- Monitor flexible work arrangements through a work health and safety lens and review control measures to ensure they are effective.
- Check-in with your team members and provide additional support or make adjustments, as needed.



Laptops



Connection



Times