



Fact Sheet

Return to Workplace Strategy Series – Part 1 – What is Happening and What is Next?

For the webinar associated with this fact sheet, visit <https://youtu.be/2-B7kP-Hvs4>

Our Return to Workplace Strategy Series is looking in detail at a topic that is only going to grow in the minds of business owners, managers and employees – how do we get back to the workplace after a pandemic, what does that look like, and how can the situation be managed for maximum benefit to everyone involved, as well as dealt with lawfully and compassionately.

In Part 1, we're thinking about **what is happening and what is next** – what has changed over the last 9 months? How are our employees, managers, government and all other stakeholders feeling about getting back into the workplace? What are the consequences of the various options both for individual businesses and for the economy and society at large?

What has happened so far this year?

- In March, 66% of NSW employees worked only from home.
- Restrictions eased in June, but in September 40% of days of work still only at home.
- Recently, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Attorney-General Christian Porter have said that they want offices to bring people back, particularly in CBDs and towns due to flow-on effect to other businesses (cleaners, food, retail, transport, etc)
- Public service employees (NSW and federal) are now transitioning back to offices with flexible working arrangements and in accordance with public health orders.
- A myriad of articles/opinions in the media with different views –
 - o Workers want to continue working from home (81% want to carry on in some capacity)
 - o Workers are enjoying not having to commute! (massive reduction in people feeling pressed for time, particularly families)
 - o Workers have been more productive at home – turns out we can trust them to do work without having someone looking over their shoulder (and what does this mean for the future of middle management as a profession?)
 - o Workers are sick of working from home (WFH makes it harder to collaborate and have spontaneous ideas and connections)
 - o Workers are struggling to separate work life from home life, and mental health is suffering! (50% of work from home report increased stress, depression and self-harm)
 - o Workers won't want to wear "office attire" anymore (leisurewear clothing retail sector profits are UP 3.3% this year so far)
 - o Working from home with kids is really hard!
 - o Women have been particularly badly affected with higher levels of insecure work (casual, fixed term contract, independent contractor) plus increase in amount of household labour (men also did more, but not as much).
 - o Workers at home put in more hours without getting paid more (ACTU survey found 40% working more than usual, and almost none being paid for it)

What do I need to consider?

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.



PINNACLE

PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

- What does my business need to do to operate at maximum efficiency? Do I have the right employees doing the right jobs?
- What has the pandemic exposed about my business? What are the weaknesses and strengths? What do I need to do to build on the strengths and manage or eliminate the weaknesses?
- What costs have been saved or spent this year having employees working remotely?
- How does my business feed into my local economy? Will having employees back on site support the businesses around us including landlords/property managers?
- What do my employees want?
- What are my employees entitled to? (i.e. flexible working requests under Awards)
- What are my WHS obligations, either in the office or at home? Am I meeting these?

Next big question is – how do employers and employees bring all of this information and potentially competing desires together to make a plan for the future?

Need help? Contact Pinnacle People Solutions for tailored advice and support for your business by email to admin@pinnaclepeoplesolutions.com.au or call 1300 856 231

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.

Last updated 11 November 2020.