Choosing Your Hybrid Work Model

Implications for a Mentally
Healthy Workplace

2024

▶ **Guide 1**

Contents

About these guides

This 2-part series shares new and emerging insights to support organisations to thrive using hybrid work arrangements. The guides present key principles and considerations for choosing, establishing and designing the best hybrid work arrangement.

Both guides are written for leaders, human resources professionals, senior managers and those responsible for designing organisational policy and guidelines.

With these guides, we hope to give Australian employers insights and inspiration that enable them to thrive using their chosen hybrid work arrangement.

The information in these guides is based on the integration of different data sources:

- established insights from published peer-review research

- new insights based on primary research via a survey in May 2022

- emerging insights put forward by thought leaders and subject matter experts.

For further detail, see 'More about the research', page 4.

▶ Guide 1
Choosing Your Hybrid Work Model: Implications for a Mentally Healthy Workplace

The first guide provides an overview of the different hybrid work models and the key considerations for each.

▶ Guide 2
Designing Mentally Healthy Hybrid Work: Guiding Principles for a Thriving Workplace

The second guide focuses on supporting organisations to establish and design quality hybrid work through ongoing action.

Why these guides exist

Developed by the National Mental Health Commission in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology, these guides emerged as part of the National Workplace Initiative (NWI). Early research and consultation highlighted the unintended consequences of hybrid work on the mental health of workers. We thank everyone who contributed to these guides, including the workers who shared their perspectives through the nationally representative survey conducted in 2022.

The guides aim to:

- share insights on the state of hybrid work in Australia, including the range of hybrid work models currently in place

- recognise the impact of hybrid arrangements on all facets of work

- inform workplace leaders and individuals on the impacts of hybrid work on their organisation

- support leaders and managers to address any negative impacts so that their organisation can thrive in a hybrid work environment.

A note on language

The term 'hybrid work' has become synonymous with a combination of working styles and is widespread among mainly knowledge workers in Australia. It typically involves a combination of:

- working 'on site', usually an office location on certain days and

- working remotely (that is, at home or a third place) on other days.

While the location of work is at the core of hybrid work, other flexible arrangements (mainly around work hours) are often entangled with the flexibility of the work location.

References to 'organisations' or 'workplaces' are limited to jobs and industries that can employ hybrid work models. Not all jobs can be performed remotely, so may not have the potential to be organised in a hybrid way. The most obvious examples are frontline workers, client-facing roles, production workers and trades. Therefore, while not exhaustive, the guides target industries with primarily knowledge workers and administrative workers.

About the research

The key insights, opportunities, challenges and actions outlined in these guides were based on extensive research conducted by Swinburne University of Technology in 2022. Data was integrated from a variety of sources, including:

- established insights from published peer-reviewed research

- new insights based on primary research conducted in May 2022

- emerging insights put forward by thought leaders and subject matter experts.

	Established insights	Current insights	Emerging insights
Research methods and data sources	Rapid systematic review of 25 peer-reviewed articles	Empirical data sources • Nationally representative survey of 1,000 working Australians (May 2022) • 25 stakeholder interviews (variety of industries and organisation sizes) • 2 design and feedback workshops with 10 senior strategic HR and People and Culture managers • Market scan of 49 available resources and services for mentally healthy hybrid work	Extensive search of grey literature – 129 articles from the following sources / outlets • Popular literature shared by consultancy and advisory businesses. • Harvard Business Review • MIT Sloan Management Review • The Conversation • White papers, Future of Work Institute, Curtin University • Business and Australian media (SMH, Daily Mall, New York Times, The Economist, Forbes) • Individual and business blogs
Data collection and analysis	• Systematic search of 6 scientific databases from a variety of disciplines (psychology, social sciences, business and management) • Systematic selection of studies based on inclusion criteria • In-depth content analysis of 25 articles focusing on hybrid work (2022 up to July 2022)	• Statistical analysis survey data • Content analysis stakeholder interviews (including member checking) • Observation and content analysis workshops (including member checking)	• Snowball search and retrieval of 129 articles (published up to July 2022) • Structured summaries

Introduction

Many organisations in Australia currently work under hybrid models that were established and have grown organically, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sizable increase in hybrid work provides a unique opportunity to gauge and understand its impact. This is because a substantial number of workers have fulfilled the same job role in both non-hybrid and hybrid modes.

In the nationally representative survey of 1,000 Australians that was part of the research conducted to inform this guide, 80% of respondents reported working in a hybrid arrangement and 67% said the adoption of hybrid work has increased since they started with their current employer.

This research leveraged the existing work of Hopkins and Bardoel who identified 5 hybrid work models variations (Figure 1). It compared responses on a wide range of job factors from workers operating under the different models. Access the published article here.

This research uncovered that workers want flexibility and involvement in decision making when it comes to when and where they work. But, most importantly, they benefit from **clear, unambiguous parameters** about when and where they are expected to work and how much flexibility they have.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' hybrid work model that suits all organisations. So, your organisation must decide on a model that reflects:

- overall organisational needs

- the types of work and roles people perform

- the unique needs of different teams

- your workers' individual needs and circumstances.

Understanding each model can:

- guide your choice of the hybrid work model best suited to your organisation

- further refine your current model

- enable you to proactively develop a plan to control and **manage the psychosocial risks** of a specific hybrid work model while benefiting from its positive aspects.
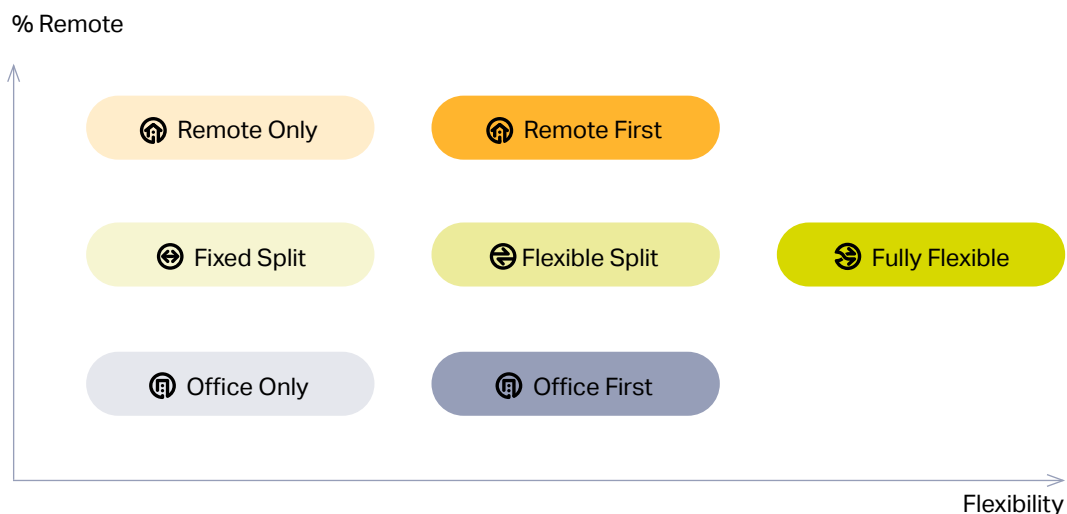

Figure 1. Hybrid work models

Principles to embed hybrid work

In general, organisations designing and introducing a hybrid work model should consider that every model can both positively and negatively affect mental health in the workplace. This is because every organisation, job role and worker have different needs and expectations.

Once you have chosen the hybrid work model best suited to your organisation, some common principles guide how to embed hybrid work into your operations and design quality hybrid work for your workers. These principles are introduced below and discussed in detail in Guide 2 - Designing Mentally Healthy Hybrid Work: Guiding Principles for a Thriving Workplace. https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/designing-mentally-healthy-hybrid-work-guiding-principles-thriving-workplace-guide-2

1 Establish clear parameters for hybrid work

Provide workers with clear, unambiguous parameters for hybrid work that reduce uncertainty and create clarity on the new way of working. The guidelines should clarify when and where individuals are expected to work and how much flexibility individuals and teams have within these parameters. These guidelines are best developed in consultation with workers and might differ across departments.

2 Implement effective communication and consultation

Workers reported that, in general, the quality of communication decreased in hybrid work, yet the quantity of communication increased. With workers potentially on different time schedules, and based in different locations, rethinking organisational communication is crucial. This includes establishing a disciplined approach to knowledge management.

3 Implement enabling technology

In a successful hybrid model, technology is vital for workers to perform their jobs optimally and will avoid technology frustration (a common occurrence reported in the research informing this guide). Technology must allow workers to move seamlessly between their primary workplaces (that is, remote and on site). Advances in digital wellbeing apps also offer new opportunities for supervisors to monitor and support worker wellbeing. However, it is crucial to critically review their validity and effectiveness and safeguard workers' privacy.

4 Design meaningful and motivating work

Work design practices significantly affect individuals, teams and organisations. This guide draws on the SMART (stimulating, mastery, agency relational and tolerable demands) model for work design. The research analysis indicated that under hybrid working arrangements, elements of work design require additional attention including facilitating workers to work in the location that best suits the tasks at hand, supporting learning and cultivating working relationships digitally, providing autonomy and clarity on the expectations of a worker's role, and actively managing job demands and boundaries.

Learn more in Guide 2 – Designing Mentally Healthy Hybrid Work

Navigating the remainder of this guide

The remainder of this guide walks through each hybrid work model and suggests ways workplaces adopting each model can mitigate risks and support worker satisfaction.

Each model follows the same structure consisting of:

1. Summary of the model

2. Strengths and benefits of this model relative to other hybrid models

3. Key risks to watch out for when using this model

4. Recommended actions to take to address the key issues.

If you already have a model in place, jump to the section most relevant to you:

Comparing Hybrid
Work Models

Overview of main strengths and risks of each model

Model	⊕ Strengths	⊙ Watch out for
⊚ Office First The worker **predominantly works in the office** (or on site) but occasionally works remotely.	• Better visibility with managers and peers • Relationship building opportunities • Career development	• Little autonomy for workers • Lower self-perceived job performance (in part, due to a reduced ability to work undisturbed) • Higher incidence of work–life interference • Reduced work satisfaction
⊛ Fixed Split The worker is office-based for a **specified number of days per week** which are **decided by the employer.**	• Reduced burden of coordinating work across different locations and team members • Better opportunity to work undisturbed	• Greater monitoring by managers • Lower worker satisfaction • Reduced flexibility • Higher incidence of work–life interference
⊜ Flexible Split The worker works in the office for a **specified number of days** (e.g. 3 days), but the **worker decides which days**.	• Less negative impact of work on home life • Improved opportunities to provide role clarity versus other hybrid work models.	• Less visibility with managers and peers • Reduced use of worker's skills • Fewer opportunities to build professional networks • Fewer opportunities to receive high-quality feedback
⊛ Fully Flexible The worker is free to choose their **work location every** day.	• High worker satisfaction • High worker autonomy • Better skill use • Better self-perceived job performance • Better opportunity to work undisturbed	• Potentially less visibility with managers and peers • Potentially fewer opportunities to receive high-quality feedback • Increased likelihood of poor role clarity • Implicit support for 'always on' culture
⊛ Remote First The worker **predominantly works remotely** but works in the office (or on site) occasionally.	• High worker autonomy • Better opportunity to work undisturbed • Better self-perceived job performance • Work–life boundaries tend to be blurred, but to a lesser extent than other models	• Less visibility with managers and peers • Fewer opportunities to build professional networks • Fewer opportunities to receive high-quality feedback

1

Office First

Summary

The worker predominantly works in the office (or on site) but occasionally works remotely. The research informing this guide indicated that this is the most prevalent hybrid work model in Australia (35%). However, on average, workers are the least satisfied with this model because it is the least flexible. Workers also self-report lower job performance compared with workers in other hybrid work models.

▶ Key considerations	Job tasks: Where is the best place to conduct specific tasks: at home or in the office?	Work–life boundaries: How can you support a variety of work–life dynamics?	Worker autonomy: How can you give workers more control over when and where they do their work?

⊕ Great for

- **Visibility with managers:** Enhances worker visibility, because they are more often physically present in the workplace.

- **Relationship building:** Helps build relationships at work, supporting workers' career development.

- **Career development:** Suitable for workers who need direct supervision, guidance or support (for example, workers who are just beginning their careers or learning new skills).

⚠ Watch out for

- **Lower levels of worker satisfaction:** Greater need to foster autonomy of workers so they have more control over how they complete their job tasks.

- **Difficulties for workers to work undisturbed:** The ability to engage in deep concentration work is hampered. So, if a large proportion of the work requires deep concentration and undisturbed work, consider if an Office First model is the best fit. A model allowing more remote work may be more suitable.

- **Poor work–life boundaries:** Hybrid work can contribute to a better work–life balance (see Guide 2 principle 4, research insight 17). Workers in Office First models report greater interference of work on their home life compared with other hybrid models.

Suggested actions for workplaces adopting Office First:

Action 1
Collaborate and communicate with workers to understand their work space needs and mitigate potential resistance to time on site

- **Collaborate with workers to understand where tasks are best completed** – Identify the roles that involve deep concentration work and adjust your model accordingly.

- **Adapt your office space to provide a better work experience** – Not all office environments cater to the different tasks of different jobs. Provide sufficient quiet spaces for workers to conduct deep concentration work.

- **Understand and mitigate potential resistance to time on site** – Some workers will be reluctant to work in the office even if it makes sense to complete tasks. Explain why an Office First model is preferred, for example, by highlighting efficiencies of this model, and appealing to their sense of teamwork and workplace visibility.

Action 2
Support work–life boundaries

- **Establish policies and practices that help workers manage work–life boundaries** – Hybrid work can blur the boundaries between work and life. Better delineate the boundaries by establishing policies around when and where meetings occur so that workers can plan the best working location and timeframes for managing personal responsibilities (such as caring responsibilities).

- **Evaluate services in place to support work–life dynamics** – Balancing family and work responsibilities is not unique to hybrid work. But some support services (for specific examples, see the *Career Transitions Series* https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/projects/mentally-healthy-work/national-workplace-initiative/career-transition-series) might not be as effective as they used to be, so critically evaluate which support makes a difference.

Action 3
Create autonomy

- **Co-create with workers what autonomy looks like in practice** – An Office First model reduces the control workers have over where they work. So, work with your workers to optimise their decision making over how and when they complete tasks.

2

Fixed Split

Summary

The worker is office-based for a specified number of days per week which are decided by the employer.

▶ Key considerations	Worker autonomy: How can you give workers more control over when and where they do their work?	Work–life boundaries: How can you support a variety of work–life dynamics?	Hybrid working guidelines: Work with your team to decide on matters such as when and where to conduct team meetings.

⊕ Great for

- **Working undisturbed:** Allows workers to work undisturbed on a task requiring deep concentration. The model builds in time for a worker to work remotely from their colleagues.

- **Coordinating work location:** Provides structure for workers and reduces the burden for managers of coordinating work and staff across multiple, dynamic work locations.

⚠ Watch out for

- **Micro-managing:** Workers report greater monitoring by their supervisor. This likely relates to the requirement for the worker to be physically present in the office on specific days. Worker monitoring is not inherently good or bad. However, the research informing this guide showed a higher risk of managers reverting to micro-managing behaviours (including excessive contact and reporting requirements) under the Fixed Split model.

- **Poor work–life boundaries:** Greater negative impact and interference on workers' home life, which may be because they have less flexibility and less control over the days they must be in the office.

- **Less satisfaction:** Workers' satisfaction with the Fixed Split model is moderate and lower than most other hybrid work models (only the Office First model scores lower).

Suggested actions for workplaces adopting Fixed Split:

Action 1
Create autonomy

- **Help managers take a step back and be aware of possible micro-management behaviours** – Consider:

    - What is driving micro-management behaviours from your people managers?
    - Are a manager's concerns about output, productivity and worker performance valid?
    - What productive and healthy leadership approaches can managers take?

Action 2
Establish clear parameters

- **Guide managers on the discretion they have to choose the right hybrid work model** – Give managers adequate autonomy to set the hybrid working rhythm for their team. Establish this authority at a team or departmental level. Do not merely push down the responsibility.

- **Consult workers when designing and implementing a hybrid work model** – Workers want a voice in how and where they work. Discuss with your workers how many and which set days are best for them to work on site. Be transparent that there will be competing demands and communicate clearly how individual and organisational needs will be balanced.

- **Continuously review your hybrid work model** – Given this model's reduced flexibility, monitor if the current approach is fair and equitable (not to be confused with equal) across the organisation and be willing to pivot.

Action 3
Manage work–life boundaries

- **Establish policies and practices that help workers manage work–life boundaries** – This model facilitates face-to-face meetings and collaboration on complex tasks. So, it is relatively easy to establish a structured meeting schedule. However, it is important to maintain the agreed meeting frequency, and not schedule additional meetings on days when workers are off site.

3

Flexible Split
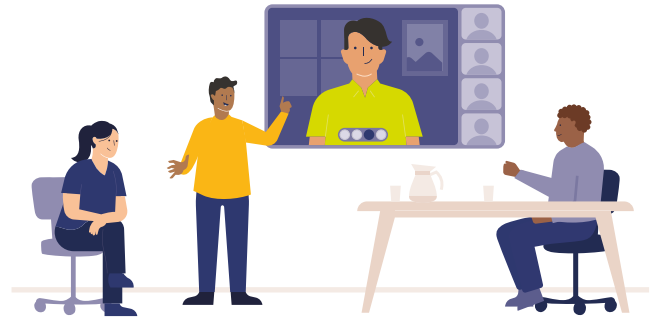
Summary

The worker is office-based for a specified number of days which are decided by the worker (for example, 3 days per week, 12 days per month).

▶ **Key considerations**

Workplace relationships: How can you foster connections between team members and across teams?

Opportunities for learning and development: How can you support each worker's career development? How will you know what training and development they need?

Good job design: What is the best location for various job tasks?

⊕ **Great for**

- **Working undisturbed:** Reduces the negative impacts of work–life interferences because workers choose which days they attend the office.

- **Opportunity to provide role clarity:** Role clarity is hampered, a consistent impact across all hybrid work models (see Guide 2, principle 4, research insight 4). However, the office days mandated in the flexible split model increase opportunities to provide role clarity compared with other hybrid models. The impact is less severe compared with other hybrid work models.

⚠ **Watch out for**

- **Proximity bias:** Workers report less visibility and therefore fewer opportunities to raise their profile. This reduced visibility may be due to the difficulty in coordinating face-to-face meetings with colleagues if most workers operate under a flexible schedule.

- **Underdeveloped working relationships:** Workers may find it difficult to establish professional working relationships with colleagues, especially those at a senior level. They report finding it difficult to receive high-quality feedback.

- **Less utilisation of skills:** Less visibility can mean that workers are not given tasks that are stimulating and challenge them in a positive way. There may also be poor distribution of work among teams.

- **Fewer learning and development opportunities:** An uncoordinated approach to office days can mean fewer secondary learnings which would be gained from observing work being completed.

Suggested actions for workplaces adopting Flexible Split:

Action 1
Cultivate workplace relationships

- **Create awareness and provide guidelines on proximity bias** – Whether consciously or unconsciously, workers in close proximity to senior managers tend to be afforded greater inclusion (for example, in meetings and discussions), influence and opportunities for career advancement than remote workers. Create awareness of potential bias with people managers to reduce the influence of chance on workers' visibility.

- **Create opportunities for people to build social relationships** – Hybrid work emphasises instrumental or technical relationships, to the detriment of social relationships. So, invest in opportunities for workers to connect with each other socially.

Action 2
Promote learning and development

- **Purposely create opportunities for workers to learn from each other** – Encourage workers to seek advice and help from each other, but also consider appointing workers in more formal roles such as mentors, coaches or internal subject matter experts. Reduce the impact of chance by offering more structured opportunities for colleagues to connect.

- **Create interpersonal learning opportunities** – Be aware of how interpersonal dynamics and human interactions can differ virtually and face to face. So, actively create an environment of mutual interactivity and psychological safety where learning and development can thrive, irrespective of the worker's location.

Action 3
Optimise job tasks

- **Establish routines and practices for workers to perform tasks matched to certain locations** – Managers need to help workers strike the right balance, so workers feel their skills are utilised to the best of their ability. Generally, the following tasks are best performed remotely:

  - tasks requiring deep concentration
 - routine tasks
  - tasks involving information exchange.

  Conversely, the following tasks are better suited to be performed in the office:

  - tasks requiring collaboration (such as, problem solving, brainstorming, sharing feedback).

- **Coordinate work locations based on the level of flexibility available to the team** – Encourage workers to schedule their in-office times when their colleagues will also be on site. This will reap the greatest productivity and engagement. Workers will not necessarily sync their in-office time (because every worker chooses which days they are on site), so establishing practices and procedures can help. However, avoid over-engineering or bureaucratising hybrid work.

4

Fully Flexible
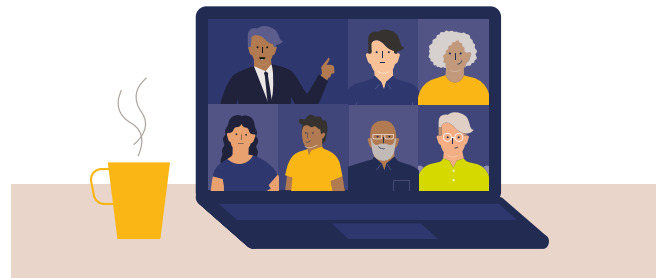
Summary

The worker is free to choose their work location every day. However, circumstances will arise, calling for them to be either in the office or working remotely (for example, attendance at meetings or in-office workspace capacity constraints).

▶ **Key considerations**

Role clarity: Give workers and managers clarity about their roles and monitor how their roles change over time.

Work–life boundaries: How can you support a variety of work–life dynamics?

Workplace relationships: How can you foster connections between team members and across teams?

Good job design: What is the best location for various job tasks?

Hybrid working guidelines: Work with your team to decide on matters such as when and where to conduct team meetings.

⊕ **Great for**

- **High worker autonomy:** Flexibility, autonomy, skill utilisation and the ability to work undisturbed.

- **Worker satisfaction:** Highest overall self-perceived job performance. Most positive worker experience and highest levels of satisfaction reported by workers.

⊘ **Watch out for**

- **Those who require support:** Suitable for self-motivated workers, and those capable of working independently. This model may be inappropriate for workers who require close supervision, guidance or support from their supervisor or colleagues.

- **Increase in stressors:** Role clarity is most reduced in the Fully Flexible model compared with other hybrid models. It demands high levels of self-regulation and requires processes that foster effective collaboration with colleagues and timely delivery of work.

- **Exacerbates work–life interference:** This model is especially prone to fostering an 'always on' culture. The lack of structure can mean that workers feel they need to be available all the time.

- **Suitability for your organisation:** The least prevalent flexible model (9.5% of our representative sample). It may not be possible for many job roles.

Suggested actions for workplaces adopting Fully Flexible:

Action 1
Establish role clarity

- **Reassess roles to improve role clarity** – As flexibility increases, so can uncertainty. So, provide workers with clarity about what is expected of them in their role.

- **Review managers' roles** – Coordinating work across multiple dispersed locations is a difficult task for managers. In fact, many report it has made their role increasingly unclear and complex. The key is to understand how managers' roles expand and analyse whether their tasks remain compatible and feasible.

Action 2
Create hybrid working guidelines

- **Establish and continuously review your hybrid work model** – When offering high levels of flexibility, it is important to have guidelines that cut through any ambiguity or confusion for both your workers and managers. Also, monitor if the hybrid work model increases worker stress and pivot to a different hybrid model if needed.

Action 3
Cultivate workplace relationships

- **Create awareness and provide guidelines on how to tackle proximity bias** – While reduced visibility in the workplace was not reported in the research informing this guide for this model, it is still important to be mindful of proximity bias. Where possible, try to limit the role of chance in proximity by providing sufficient levels of team coordination.

Action 4
Optimise job tasks

- **Establish mechanisms which support the coordination of work location within and between staff and teams** – Despite plans, workers can find it difficult to regulate where they perform key tasks. This model calls for greater effort in coordinating workers to be in the office at the same time, to avoid workers showing up to empty office or missing out on connecting with colleagues.

Action 5
Manage work–life boundaries

- **Establish policies and norms that guide workers in managing work–life boundaries** – This model is especially prone to fostering an 'always on' culture. Establish norms about using communications technology outside standard working hours. Your organisation may need a more structured approach to when, where and how meetings occur to support workers to regulate their hours and improve time management.

5

Remote First

Summary

The worker works predominantly off site but occasionally works in the office.

▶ Key considerations

Workplace relationships: How can you foster connections between team members and across teams?

Opportunities for learning and development: How can you support each worker's career development? How will you know what training and development they need?

⊕ **Great for**

- **Self-motivated workers:** Offers workers a great deal of autonomy over their work, making it suitable for workers who possess the capability and willingness to work independently (that is, workers who are good at self-regulation and do not need supervision).

- **Undisturbed work:** Allows workers to work undisturbed on tasks requiring deep concentration.

- **Workers' satisfaction:** Workers report a high level of self-reported job satisfaction.

⚠ **Watch out for**

- **Worker wellbeing:** Workers report reduced connection to their supervisors, which can make it harder to identify issues related to wellbeing and respond appropriately.

- **Disengagement:** There are fewer opportunities for the worker to establish professional networks and relationships.

- **Proximity bias:** Workers experience lower visibility in the workplace compared with any other hybrid work model. This can compromise or slow down the worker's internal career development.

Comparing Hybrid Work Models

Suggested actions for workplaces adopting Remote First:

↗ Action 1
Cultivate workplace relationships

- **Create opportunities for workers to build social relationships with colleagues** – Remote work is very efficient for instrumental or technical interactions between colleagues. However, it is less conducive to building social relationships and long-lasting professional networks. So, organise informal gatherings within and across teams. Talk to workers about their preferred activities and timings that also fit the organisation's culture. This approach ensures your well-intended efforts are genuinely enjoyed and appreciated.

- **Be aware of potential isolation and loneliness** – Support managers to recognise signs of worker isolation and loneliness. Do not assume that bringing workers back on site from time to time will solve these issues. Consider the role social rituals and habits can play in establishing community and connection across workers, beyond just physical gatherings.

- **Train managers in human-centred leadership behaviours** – Without the visual cues of face-to-face interactions, remote work needs a more human-centred approach for relationships to thrive. Behaviours such as empathy, listening and demonstrating trust are more important when workers are remote.

↗ Action 2
Promote learning and development

- **Purposefully create opportunities for workers to learn from each other** – Proximity, which is largely missing in this model, drives social learning. So, social learning must be stimulated more intentionally. Consider appointing workers in more formal roles such as mentors, coaches or internal subject matter experts. Through these formal roles they can regularly provide feedback to workers, stimulate them and foster advice-seeking behaviours. Foster a culture where workers proactively reach out to each other.

- **Exert behaviours to create optimal learning conditions** – Dynamics and interactions can be different virtually compared with face to face. Consider how your organisation can create psychological safety in an online environment. For example, make sure all workers have a voice and weigh in during online meetings. Do not tolerate dismissive or overbearing behaviour and respond to it immediately in a respectful manner.

Glossary

Our approach to language adheres to the conventions outlined in the Life in Mind National Communications Charter, where applicable.

Terms	Description
Hybrid work	A combination of working on site usually at an office location on certain days and remotely (that is, home or a third place) on other days within a given time period, normally a week.
Knowledge worker	A worker whose job involves developing and using knowledge rather than producing goods or services.
Manager	The person in the organisation responsible for managing an individual or group of workers. The manager is also known as team lead, direct supervisor, line manager or middle manager.
Mental health	A positive concept and more than just the absence of illness. In this guide, it refers to a state of wellbeing where a person can realise their own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully and contribute to their community.
Mental ill-health	A term that encompasses both mental illness and changes in emotion or behaviour that can impact a person's cognitive, emotional or social abilities but not to the extent that it meets the criteria for a mental illness diagnosis. These changes can result from life stressors and often resolve with time or when the individual's situation changes. They may develop into a mental illness if they persist or increase in severity.
Mentally healthy workplace	In line with the *Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces*, this guide uses the term mentally healthy workplace to broadly describe workplace experiences that protect, respond to and promote mental health.
Psychosocial hazard	Hazards that arise from aspects of work such as the design or management of work, the work environment, equipment or behaviours and interactions in the workplace that may cause psychological distress or harm.
Remote work	Work performed at a location other than the workplace (typically an office or work site) provided by the employers. This can entail working from home or a third place (that is, café, holiday home, co-working space).
Top management	An organisation's senior leadership team, usually consisting of a CEO or managing director, other executives or department heads, and the board of directors.
Wellbeing	A combination of feeling good and functioning well that has both physical and psychological aspects; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one's potential and having a sense of purpose.
Work design	The process through which an organisation optimises work health and safety, human performance, job satisfaction and business success. See Safe Work Australia's *Principles of Good Work Design*.

Choosing Your Hybrid Work Model

Further recommended reading

Hopkins J, Bardoel A. *The Future Is Hybrid: How Organisations Are Designing and Supporting Sustainable Hybrid Work Models in Post-Pandemic Australia*. Sustainability [Internet]. 2023;15(4):3086. Available from: https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/4/3086

Hopkins, J., & Bardoel, A. *Flexibility makes us happier, with 3 clear trends emerging in post-pandemic hybrid work*. The Conversation, 2022. Available from: https://theconversation.com/flexibility-makes-us-happier-with-3-clear-trends-emerging-in-post-pandemic-hybrid-work-180310

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Parker, K., Parker, S. K., & Jorritsma, K., *How to make my flexible work SMART: A guide for workers*. 2020. Future of Work Institute: Perth. Available from: https://www.thriveatwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/How-to-Make-My-Flexible-Work-SMART-A-Guide-for-Workers-2022.pdf

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Technical appendix: survey research

Sample characteristics

Target population: Australian workers employed in a paid role with potential for hybrid work (that is, at least part of their role could be performed remotely).

Sample size: 1,000 Australian workers, executed in partnership with the panel provider: Octopus Group.

Date: May 2022

Representativeness   The survey was representative of the Australian working population in terms of state, gender and age.

The interlocking quota was based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' labour force statistics.

Final analysis size: 997 participants.

3 participants completed the survey in less than half of the median time and so were identified as 'speeders' and removed from the analysis.

Sample demographics

States

NT 1.8%
QLD 19.4%
WA 10.8%
SA 6.7%
NSW 29.5%
VIC 26.3%
ACT 2.6%
TAS 2.9%
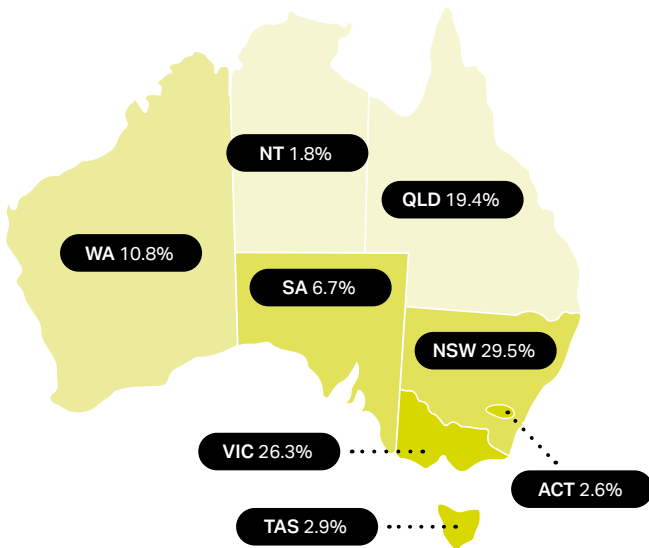
Sector

- Not-for-profit
- Private
- Public

8%
28%
64%
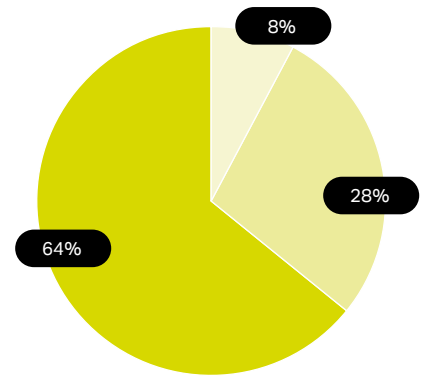
Organisation Size

Number of employees:

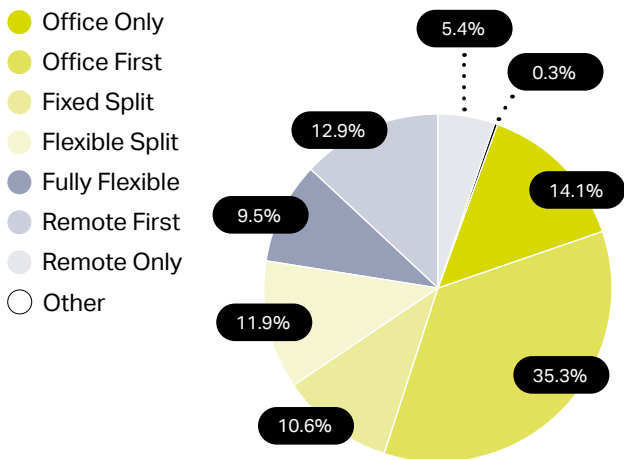- 5 to 19
- 20 to 199
- 200-1999
- 2000+

17%
35%
24%
24%
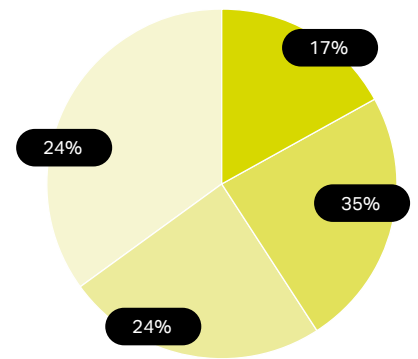
Industry in %

Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
Arts and Recreation Services
Accommodation and Food Services
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
Wholesale Trade
Mining
Transport, Postal and Warehousing
Administrative and Support Services
Public Administration and Safety
Manufacturing
Information Media, Telecommunications
Construction Retail Trade
Financial and Insurance Services
Education and Training
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
Health Care and Social Assistance

0   2   4   6   8   10   12

Choosing Your Hybrid Work Model
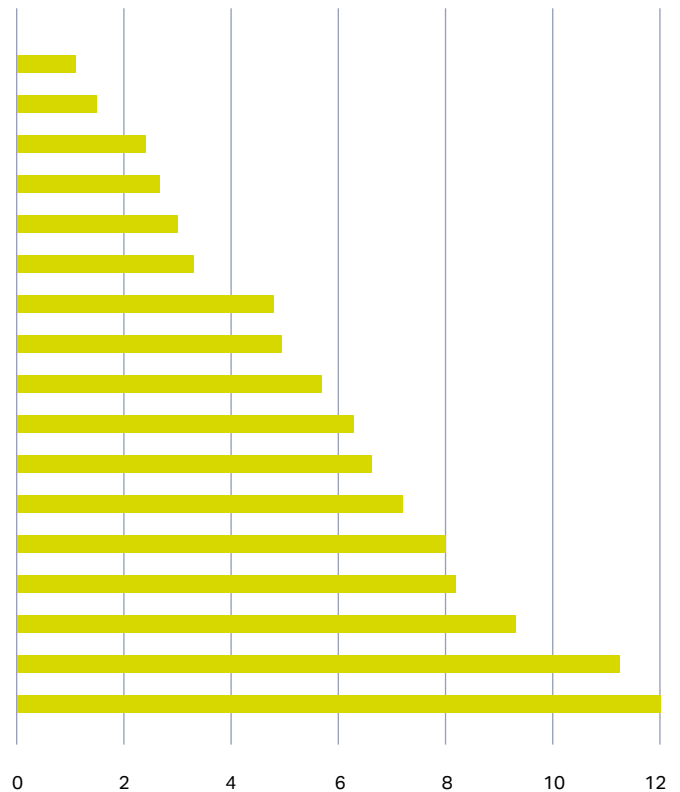
Prevalence of hybrid work models

Prevalence of hybrid work models

Office Only
Office First
Fixed Split
Flexible Split
Fully Flexible
Remote First
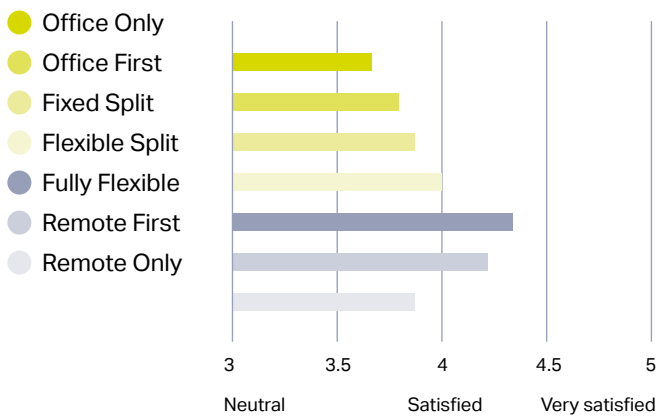Remote Only
Other

Ranking from most to least common

Hybrid work models only

1. Office First
2. Remote First
3. Flexible Split
4. Fixed Split
5. Fully Flexible

Hybrid and Non-hybrid work models

1. Office First
2. Remote First
3. **Office Only**
4. Flexible Split
5. Fixed Split
6. Fully Flexible
7. **Remote Only**

Satisfaction with hybrid work models

Office Only
Office First
Fixed Split
Flexible Split
Fully Flexible
Remote First
Remote Only

Ranking from most to least common

Hybrid work models only

1. Fully Flexible
2. Remote First
3. Flexible Split
4. Fixed Split
5. Office First

Hybrid and Non-hybrid work models

1. Fully Flexible
2. Remote First
3. Flexible Split
4. **Remote Only**
5. Fixed Split
6. Office First
7. **Office Only**

Choosing Your Hybrid Work Model