



City of **HOBART**

Memorandum: **Acting Lord Mayor**
 Elected Members

Response to Question Without Notice

COVID-19 - WORKING FROM HOME ANALYSIS

Meeting: Finance and Governance Committee Meeting date: 16 June 2020

Raised by: Alderman Behrakis

Question:

During this time there has been the need for staff members to work from home. There have also been suggestions by some commentators that this should potentially be extended in the interest of promoting flexibility for our workforce.

Has there been any impacts, either positive or negative to the productivity of staff?

Is there any way to measure said productivity of workers that are working remotely?

If so, what have those metrics shown?

Response:

In alignment with daily directions provided by the State Government more than 300 staff were approved to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For all employees working from home, the area manager completed an individual work plan in consultation with the affected employee, setting out tasks to be undertaken. The employee also completed a workplace health and safety checklist to ensure arrangements at home were appropriate and safe.

Managers regularly checked in with employees at home, including through extensive use of the Teams platform and monitored completion of the work plans.

The City Innovation Division utilised a number of technologies to provide staff with access to all Council systems in a way that replicated their office environment experience.

When combined, these technologies now enable staff to continue to perform office duties using for example, email, video conferencing, internet telephony, financial processing, records management, network drives and regulatory planning as well as self-service leave requests and payroll management.

In order to ensure that the Council could continue to meet its service delivery requirements and manage the operational efficacy of the workforce, existing technology was also enhanced to ensure security and compliance against Council's regulatory systems, and monitor general activity against critical business applications in a work-from-home environment.

New productivity management metrics first implemented during this period included:

- Total number of remote access connections per day (how many at home).
- Total number of individual Microsoft 365 users per day.
- Total active remote access connections
- Business applications utilised (for example Jarvis for e-planning).
- Total meetings per day and by type (calls, meetings).
- Total network data utilised by user.
- Log-in locations (network access) for work-from-home staff.

The metrics continue to indicate, at an aggregate level, no degradation in the overall productivity amongst work-from-home employees, and may even support improved communication, collaboration and engagement in the majority of cases.

The necessity of quickly operationalising a work-from-home environment during the pandemic, while not universally accepted or functionally appropriate for all roles, has created potential advantages to both individual employees and to the Council.

An all employee opinion survey is currently underway to gain an understanding of how we performed managing the effects of COVID-19, covering issues such as productivity, communications, system support and employee wellbeing. The survey is open until 30 July.

The outcomes will help us plan for future emergencies, as well as inform reviews of the City's current flexible working arrangements policies and *Travel to Work Plan*.

As signatory to this report, I certify that, pursuant to Section 55(1) of the Local Government Act 1993, I hold no interest, as referred to in Section 49 of the Local Government Act 1993, in matters contained in this report.



N D Heath
GENERAL MANAGER

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