## **Guidance Note 1: Supporting Victoria’s recovery** **Default remote working position for office-based employees**

**Version 2.0 29 September 2021**

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| **What is a Guidance Note?**  A Guidance Note provides further detail to the Flexible Work Policy and supports consistent implementation across departments and relevant agencies, in alignment with the Flexible Work Policy.  As such, the primary foundation of all Guidance Notes is that information contained is to be read as in addition to compliance with the Flexible Work Policy.  **All guidance notes will be reviewed quarterly.** |

## **Purpose**

This document sets out the whole of Victorian government position on the return from remote working for Victorian Public Service (VPS) office-based employees.

## **Guidance**

The default starting position for application of the flexible work policy is three days a week in the office for full-time office-based VPS employees, **subject to relevant Chief Health Officer workplace directions.** Refer to the rationale for a description of an office.

It is then up to employees and managers to discuss and agree to individual working arrangements, based on the principle that we start from a position of flexibility. The following should be considered:

* Employee health and safety, including existing reasonable adjustments
* Public health advice, including any constraints on office capacity and work from home directions
* Operational requirements for the role and working arrangements for the team
* Employee legal rights to request flexible work
* Employee preference
* Where coming together in person would provide greater benefit for the team than a virtual interaction

The application of this guidance note should be aligned to the principles of the [flexible work policy](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/html-resources/flexible-work-policy/), and should not:

* lead to reduced service delivery to the Victorian community
* negatively impact the achievement of your team and organisation’s objectives
* materially change the work that you are doing

## **Rationale**

The VPS is both an employer and a policy delivery arm for the Government. There are nearly 50,000 employees employed by the Victorian Public Service – with approximately 60% located in the CBD, and the remainder split between metropolitan Melbourne / Suburbs and Regional Victoria.

The VPS has a dual role to play in the social and economic recovery of Victoria:

* The design and delivery of policy
* The deployment of its workforce to support that policy impact

The 3-day default position is intended to:

* set a default assumption that full time office workers return three days per week to their office. This can include office spaces (including suburban hubs) across the CBD, metropolitan Melbourne, and regional Victoria, all of which are strong contributors to the local communities and economy
  + VPS suburban hubs enhance flexible working but must not be used at the complete exclusion of primary office attendance, or compromise team or operational requirements for face-to-face interactions
* respect the extent to which remote working has supported diversity, inclusion, and a more equitable workplace, which support both social and economic development not only for the VPS but for the state as a whole
* acknowledge the intrinsic value of engaging face to face with teams and colleagues within and across organisations.