

Greetings,

I facilitate the Telework Australia web site (address below), initiated by DBCDE (and DCITA and DEWR before that). The Government supported this initiative so that the benefits of telework could be realised by all Australians and Australian businesses.

I have only just been made aware of the release of the exposure draft of the proposed National Employment Standards but realise that I don't have much time to make a detailed submission. However, two issues have jumped out at me as I viewed the discussion paper and in particular the section on Flexible Working Arrangements.

First, I note that the proposed flexible working arrangements NES applies ONLY if the employee has child care responsibilities. This is too narrow and excludes many other situations where flexibility is important. There are many reasons an employee could require flexible work arrangements and I believe these should also be included. For example, disability can make flexibility important, residential location (remote or rural) can be important, issues with dependents other than children are often a reason for flexible work, and, for many, career and lifestyle choices can make enhanced work flexibility important.

I believe that this entitlement should be considerably broadened.

Second, I think that the definition of flexible work arrangements should be edited slightly to include specific mention of telework. Although 'working from home' can include teleworking, the benefits of telework (and the differences between working from home and teleworking) would make specific mention of it important.

I would recommend that 'teleworking' (or 'telecommuting') be inserted in paragraph 68.

Thank you for your consideration of these two points. If you would like further information or background on telework, or to discuss this submission in more detail, please visit the web site below or contact the undersigned.

Thank you,

Bevis England