



ACT
Government

Government Response to the Future of the Working Week Inquiry

Standing Committee on Economy and
Gender and Economic Equality

Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy
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Government Response to the Future Working Week Inquiry

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality (the “Committee”) resolved to conduct an inquiry into the future of the working week on 4 May 2021 and informed the Assembly of its intention to conduct the inquiry on 13 May 2021.
2. Submissions to the inquiry closed at 5pm on 16 December 2022 with 34 submissions received, including the ACT Government.
3. Public Hearings were held in April and May 2023 with appearances from many of those that provided a submission. The final report was released dated 8 September 2023 and three recommendations were made by the Committee.

Overarching ACT Government Comments

4. The ACT Government has a long history of innovative industrial relations and workforce initiatives to the benefit of workers and is mindful of the clear benefits a four-day working week would provide. This would reflect the ACT’s innovative approach to many issues, not limited to employment.
5. However, a four-day working week poses challenges. Whilst productivity may increase, it may not increase sufficiently or with enough longevity to fund the model in the longer term. Further, staffing in many frontline areas will most likely have to increase to ensure adequate roster cover and ensure service delivery is maintained.

Government Response to the Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government note the findings of the Report into the future of the working week.

Government Response – Noted

6. The Government notes this recommendation and the findings of the Report and thanks the Committee for its work.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends the ACT Government convenes a working group, including but not limited to ACTPS Executive representatives and employee representatives, to develop a roadmap to inform a future trial within the ACTPS of a reduction model of the four-day work week with no loss of pay or conditions for ACTPS employees and that trial areas incorporate administrative and frontline business units and employees on full time and non-full time employment arrangements.

Government Response – Agreed in principle

7. The Government agrees in principle to this recommendation.
8. The Government notes it will explore a future trial within the ACTPS will test the reduction model of the four-day work week where there is no loss of pay or conditions for ACTPS employees. The ACT Government will look to setting up a working group in 2024 to develop a roadmap to inform a future trial within the ACTPS.
9. The working group will consider the ACTPS areas to participate in the trial which will include administrative and frontline business units and employees on full time and non-full time employment arrangements.
10. The working group will consider the most appropriate mechanism to implement the trial via industrial instrument(s). This will require comprehensive consultation with employees, unions, and other relevant representatives.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends the ACT Government develop a pilot program with any necessary support structures for private sector employers who would like to voluntarily trial a four-day work week, with this pilot program drawing on the UK pilot program as the preferred model.

Government Response – Agreed in principle

11. The Government agrees in principle to this recommendation.
12. The Government notes the Committee's recommendation that private sector organisations be provided the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the trial. The working group will consider the best means to engage with the private sector and what support structures are required.
13. Partnering with other organisations presents opportunities to share experiences and learn from others. The working group will consider appropriate organisations to partner with.