



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY  
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## **Submission Cover sheet**

**Inquiry into the future of the working week**

Submission number: 11

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 2 February 2022 5:52 PM  
**To:** LA Committee - EGEE <[LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: Inquiry into the future of the working week

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I strongly support the idea of a four day working week. In particular, for four days of 8 or fewer hours. It would be important for hourly wages to accommodate and for salaries to not be reduced. Failing to account for this could lead to the week remaining 5, 6 or 7 days for many people who need the hours to manage their financial situation.

My understanding is that this has been attempted in other areas of the world, and that the increased rest time results in increased productivity. This is what allows for a similar amount of output over fewer working hours. More time outside work allows for people to contribute to their communities, spend time with family, work on their own opportunities for learning and otherwise caring for their mental health.

The main disadvantages would be if the wages were not adjusted sufficiently. In this situation, it is easy to imagine some people essentially still working long hours or many days in a week in order to make ends meet, or to secure promotions and bonuses.

Notably there would be an important consideration with how this would affect the school week. Whether four days of schooling would be effective, or whether an alternative (such as 5 shorter days) for schools would be better supported by evidence and teaching groups. Transitioning to a four day work week outside the education sector could pose challenges with smaller businesses that may not have effective financial management struggling with the idea and pressuring workers into a different working arrangement.

Having a territory-wide goal of a four-day working week could provide guidance for enterprise agreements to be adjusted with this in mind. Complications may arise from this transition process that can be sorted out in collaboration with key stakeholders in each case.

By adjusting the working week's hours, flexible options may be more manageable. People who prefer the structure of five days can be offered the option to have fewer hours across the days they want to come into work. As mentioned, this may be the case for the education sector if the current school week is preferred. Many teachers mention the challenge of obtaining meaningful instruction in the final period of a school day and shortening the day may help address teacher workloads and student information overload at the same time.

When assessing best practices from other jurisdictions, I think it will be important to consider multiple viewpoints and stakeholders, to avoid having a model that benefits one group at the expense of another. That said, benefits to the large base of working people may necessarily come with some complaints from owners of businesses that are unable to run without overworking their employees.

Overall I am glad to hear this is being discussed, and I am confident that the challenges can be managed with effective planning. No model is going to be perfect, and I think we should be aiming for improvement on the current system rather than perfection.

Kind regards,

