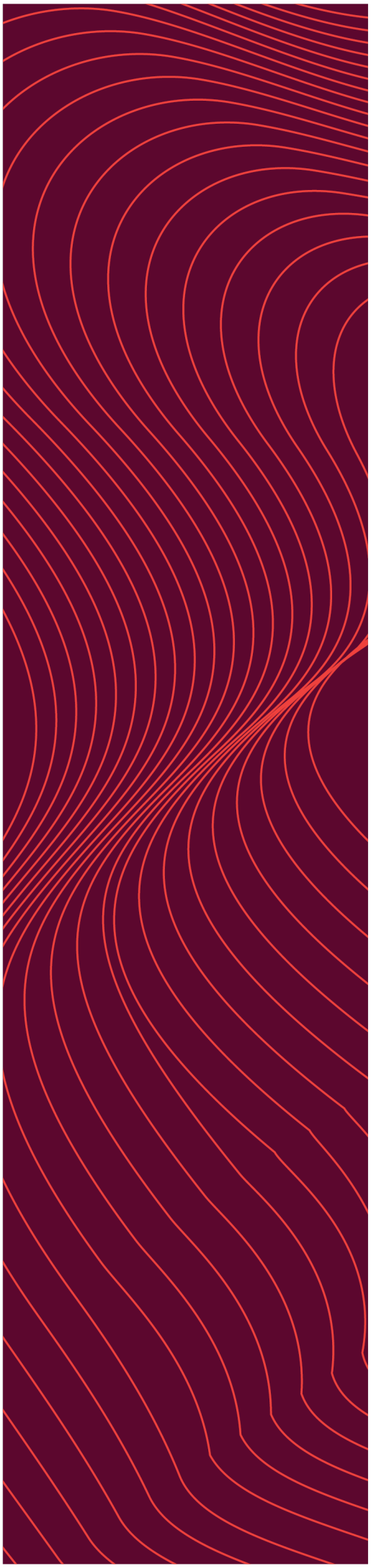
LATROBE CITY COUNCIL

Latrobe City Council's Submission to:

Engage Victoria's – Working from Home Legislation Consultation

September 2025



Introduction

Latrobe City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Victorian Government's consultation regarding working from home legislation consultation. As a major regional employer with a diverse workforce of almost 1,000 employees, including full time, part time, casual, and field-based staff, Council recognises the importance of flexible work arrangements in supporting employee wellbeing, workforce participation, and retention.

Summary of Recommendations

1. **Part Time and Casual Employees:** Provide clarity on eligibility, pro-rata arrangements, and support during the qualifying period.
2. **Equity across the workforce**: Ensuring fair access to remote work across all roles, with clear guidance on what can reasonably be performed from home.
3. **Qualifying period for new employees:** Define how remote work rights apply during the initial period of employment, allowing new employees time to become familiar with their role, systems, and team processes.
4. **Temporary suspension of arrangements for under-performance**: Provide mechanisms to temporarily adjust or suspend remote work arrangements during periods of underperformance.
5. **Trainees, apprentices, and inexperienced staff:** Ensure additional support, mentoring, and supervision are provided for less experienced employees who may not be able to fully work remotely

Submission Details

At the time of this submission, Latrobe City Council has 996 employees, with approximately 65% classified as 'in-the-field', meaning they do not occupy traditional desk jobs, and is one of Gippsland's largest regional employers, offering full time, part time, and casual roles across diverse disciplines.

Whilst Council supports in principle the right to work from home, already providing employees the opportunity to work remotely for 2 days per week and recognise the benefits of this for employees, it is unclear how this would be implemented practically with relation to certain cohorts of employees.

Detailed areas of feedback include five important considerations.

1. **Part Time and Casual Employees**
   Part time and casual employees face particular challenges under a legislated right to work from home. Council recommends consideration being given for part time and casual employees to ensure they receive equal support and clarity around eligibility for remote work, while still adhering to organisational requirements for office attendance to collaborate and build relationships. Additional clarification is required on whether the proposed two day right to work from home would be pro-rated for casual or part time employees, and how this would be practically implemented to ensure fairness and operational consistency.
2. **Equity Across the Workforce**
   Equity must be addressed when implementing a right to work from home. In organisations where some roles can be performed remotely while others cannot, there is potential for inequity and negative impacts on morale. Clear guidance is needed to define what "reasonably able to be performed from home" means across different roles, ensuring consistency and fairness. This definition should reflect the varied roles within a local government setting.

3. **Qualifying Period for New Employees**
   Consideration should be given to the qualifying period of employment before the right to work from home applies. New employees may require time to become familiar with their role, the organisation's systems, and team processes before remote work arrangements can be safely and effectively implemented. Clear guidance is needed on how remote work rights apply during this period and whether arrangements can be tailored or varied to support both employee development and organisational requirements.
4. **Performance and Temporary Suspension of Arrangements**
   The ability to temporarily suspend work form home arrangements should be considered in cases of underperformance or performance management. Where employees require additional support, mentoring, or supervision, temporary adjustments to remote work arrangements may be necessary to ensure effective guidance and maintain service delivery standards.
5. **Trainees, Apprentices, and Inexperienced Staff**
   Trainees, apprentices, and inexperienced staff may require additional support in the workplace, which can affect their ability to work remotely safely and productively. Consideration should be given to the level of supervision, access to training, and mentoring required for these employees, ensuring that any remote work arrangements support their development while maintaining operational standards and team cohesion.

Conclusion

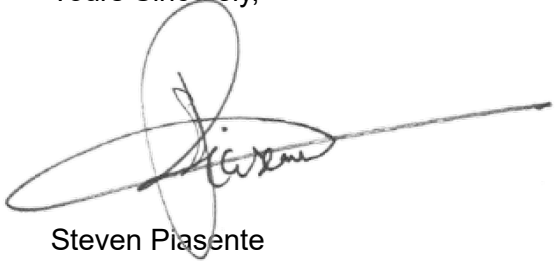
Latrobe City Council recognises the value of the Victorian Government's proposal to legislate a right to work from home and acknowledges the benefits it can bring to employees, families and organisations. Flexible arrangements are an important part of our ability to attract and retain talent in regional Victoria, while also supporting wellbeing, productivity and participation. For many office-based roles this model works well and can enhance our recruitment and retention outcomes.

However, at the same time, introducing this right presents practical challenges that require further guidance. In a workforce where many staff deliver essential field and community services, there is potential for inequity between those who can and cannot work from home and as outlined above questions also remain around the impacts for casual and part time staff, in addition to the definition, coverage and contractual considerations that need to be made.

Council therefore offers in principle support for the proposed laws, while urging the government to provide clear direction and resources to ensure the policy is implemented safely, fairly and sustainably.

Please feel free to contact Latrobe City Council's People and Culture Manager, Erin Murnane on Erin.Murnane@latrobe.vic.gov.au or 0428 138 876, should you wish to discuss any of the content outlined in this submission in greater detail.

Yours Sincerely,



Steven Piasente

Chief Executive Officer