

POLICY

TITLE:	Working from Home Policy		
DIRECTORATE:	Chief Executive Officer		
ADOPTED BY:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	10.02.2026	DATE OF REVIEW:	09.02.2028
POLICY NUMBER:	220		
LEGISLATIVE REF:	<i>Fair Work Act; Section 65 (Act)</i> <i>Work Health & Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011</i> <i>Carer Recognition Act 2010</i> <i>Relevant Codes of Practice</i>		

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

Working from home (WFH) arrangements are not universally applicable and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account Council's commitment to delivering essential services to the community while ensuring operational effectiveness, granting of workplace flexibility obligations, equity considerations and fiscal responsibility.

1.2. Scope

These arrangements are not intended as a general workplace benefit or right, but as a targeted solution for specific situations. Eligibility and approval criteria for WFH will be considered on a case-by-case basis to address a specific and justified employee or organisational need.

Under the Act, eligible employees are entitled to request flexible working arrangements, including working from home. Legally, the employee must have worked at BRC for the previous 12 months and must meet one or more of the following grounds:

- a. the employee is pregnant
- b. the employee is returning to work after taking parental leave
- c. the employee is the parent with responsibility of a child who is school age or younger
- d. the employee is a carer (within the meaning of the Carer Recognition Act 2010)
- e. the employee has a disability
- f. the employee is aged fifty-five or older
- g. the employee is experiencing family and domestic violence
- h. the employee provides care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family, or a member of the employee's household who is experiencing family and domestic violence

If an employee does not meet the above criteria, they may still request a WFH arrangement if they can demonstrate a specific need which can reasonably be accommodated and their role can be done flexibly. For example, a customer service role, like lifeguard or receptionist will likely not be suitable.

1.3. Definitions

Eligible Employee: An employee who meets the criteria specified above.

Normal Circumstances: For the purposes of this policy, normal circumstances means standard operational conditions where Council services are being delivered as usual, staffing levels are stable, and there are no exceptional events or arrangements impacting service delivery. Normal circumstances exclude periods of operational disruption, peak service demand, emergencies, temporary special arrangements, approved flexible work arrangements, reasonable adjustments, or circumstances where attendance in the workplace is required to meet business, service, supervision, or community needs.

Working from Home Agreement (WFH Agreement): A signed document that details the terms and conditions under which the employee will work from home, outlining expectations, safety requirements, and performance monitoring. There is also a Review Form.

1.4. Responsibilities

Manager's Role: The direct responsibility for managing WFH arrangements lies with the employee's Manager. The Manager must ensure that the arrangement is effective, meets operational needs, and complies with WHS guidelines.

Developing a WFH Agreement: Managers will collaborate with the employee to create a detailed working-from-home plan, taking into account the individual's circumstances, work health and safety obligations and role requirements.

Consultation with HR and WHS: Managers must involve HR and WHS managers when developing the WFH Agreement to ensure that it adheres to Council policies and health and safety guidelines.

Regular Communication: The Manager is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the employee and ensuring that they remain in contact with and engaged with the team.

Reviewing the Arrangement: Managers must review WFH arrangements at least annually to assess their continued suitability and effectiveness as documented on the *Review of WFH Agreement*, providing a copy of this to the Manager, WHS.

Employee's Role: Employees granted the opportunity to work from home must:

- **Comply with the WFH Agreement:** Employees must adhere to the terms of the WFH Agreement and follow all reasonable directives issued by their Manager.
- **Health and Safety:** Employees are responsible for ensuring that their home workspace is safe and suitable for work, and that they take reasonable care to avoid accidents or injuries.
- **Notify of Changes:** Employees must immediately notify their Manager if there are any changes to their personal situation, health status, or to the home workspace.

The Manager, WHS will maintain a Register of individuals approved to work from home and will liaise with Managers as necessary to ensure arrangements are regularly reviewed and continue to be safe.

The Manager, HR must approve the draft material where a request is rejected.

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for the overall management of this Policy.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Policy

- The principles which will apply to the consideration of whether a WFH arrangement can be accommodated will include (but are not limited to) entitlement, equity, business operations, increased costs, role suitability, impact on service delivery, team members and others.

- As a local government authority, our primary responsibility is to serve the community effectively and efficiently. We must ensure that remote working arrangements do not hinder service delivery, incur unnecessary costs, create inequity or impact productivity.
- WFH will not be approved for convenience or preference. The primary purpose of granting a remote work arrangement is to accommodate a genuine need for the employee or the organisation, while ensuring minimal disruption to the delivery of services.
- Council has two avenues for employees to apply for a Working from Home (WFH) arrangement:

(i) Working from Home - Voluntary

When a flexible WFH arrangement is requested, it is the staff member's responsibility to ensure they have a safe and suitable work area, equivalent to their office workstation (e.g., dual monitors, supportive chair). Any related costs are expected to be claimed through the staff member's tax return with the ATO.

(ii) Working from Home – Compulsory

When staff are forced to WFH due to a pandemic or similar, then Council will support the establishment of a home office. This may include relocating some equipment from the office.

- The maximum approved amount a staff member may work from home in normal circumstances is 2 days per week, excluding Mondays and Fridays.
- Any leave taken during a workweek, whether planned (for example, annual leave) or unplanned (for example, personal or sick leave), will count as a day away from the office. Accordingly, such leave days will reduce the staff member's weekly Working from Home allocation.
- A refusal to a WFH request will be based on reasonable, non-discriminatory grounds, such as ineligibility, role unsuitability, service delivery requirements, operational priorities and the employer's ability to comply with relevant work health and safety obligations for remote work.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

An employee wishing to request a WFH arrangement must make their request in writing to their Manager providing sufficient information surrounding the request.

The Manager must aim to meet with the employee to ensure they have a full understanding of the request and may require the employee to provide further information or evidential documentation.

The request will be assessed by the employee's Manager based on its alignment with operational requirements, the role's suitability for remote work, and the specific employee need being addressed.

For eligible employee requests, the eligible employee's Manager is responsible for consulting with the Manager, HR prior to notifying the employee of any refusal to their request.

The Manager is responsible for providing a written response to the individual within 21 days of the written request being made in accordance with legislated requirements, and for engaging the Manager, WHS to arrange the home worksite inspection.

4. REVIEW AND MONITORING

Approved working from home arrangements will be subject to periodic review to ensure they continue to meet operational needs. The employee's Manager is responsible for carrying out a documented review of the arrangement at least annually, by completing the *Review of Working from Home Arrangement*, in consultation with the Manager, WHS.

The Council reserves the right to modify or revoke remote work arrangements as necessary based on changes in service needs, team requirements, or performance outcomes.

5. RELEVANT POLICIES

Policies and procedures to be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- Working from Home Agreement
- Review of Working from Home Agreement
- Work Health & Safety Policy
- All relevant Council Policies and Procedures

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

6.1. Implementation

Relevant personnel will be made aware of this Policy. It is not a requirement of the Act for this Policy to be published on the Barkly Regional Council website.

6.2. Review

This policy will be reviewed on or before 09/02/2028.

7. VARIATIONS, REVOCATIONS AND/OR CHANGES

Barkly Regional Council reserves the right to revoke and/or amend this policy from time to time as is considered necessary to better manage its business and/or to comply with any legislative requirements.

8. APPROVAL

This policy is approved.

Peter Harder

Chief Executive Officer



Signature

10/02/2026

Dated

END