



Piper Rodd
Deakin Branch NTEU

Andrew Stapleton
President DPSN Leader

23 March 2023

Dear Piper and Andrew,

I am writing in response to your 16 March 2023 letter expressing concerns regarding return to campus working arrangements.

The actions taken by Deakin to enable home working on a large scale during the pandemic were essential to comply with government-imposed mandatory regulations and to enable our staff to work from home during a time of high uncertainty and risk. Deakin managed to navigate work arrangements through the pandemic well and has taken a steady and considered approach to returning our staff safely to campus, including enhancing our workspaces to maximise the effectiveness of time in the office.

The Vice Chancellor remains committed to enabling our staff to have a blended approach to ways of working, where possible. We recognise the benefits that a blended approach can have to productivity and engagement and understand that many people feel more productive at home, with a better work life balance on those days.

Consequently, management teams have been asked to consider and implement the optimum ways of working for their own area with consideration given to role requirements, team and interpersonal connections and operational factors. There is no uniform approach that will work effectively across the University. For example, student facing roles may require 100% on campus attendance, while other roles may work from home effectively and only require minimal team connection points throughout the week. These arrangements must therefore be determined on an individual level based on the needs of the role and an assessment of the other factors identified above.

Ongoing working from home arrangements will be considered from both an individual and University perspective, but it is important to remember that staff are contracted to work at a specific campus location. It remains reasonable for employees to be directed to attend work on campus as required by their role. Working from home is not an employee right and on campus working remains a critical part to the way that we work. It generates broader team connections and collaboration opportunities, creates incidental conversation, and enables greater relationship building and knowledge sharing. Online meetings cannot replace the human interaction to the same degree and all staff are encouraged to schedule time on campus, whether their role requires it on a regular basis or not. Collectively, this contributes to our campuses being a vibrant and engaging place of study and work.

The University is strongly committed to promoting and supporting the wellbeing of staff in the workplace. In addition, the Employee Wellbeing Support service enables staff to have regular opportunities to engage in free sessions that offer personal development and strategies to improve their mental and physical health. Furthermore, we remain open to exploring individual circumstances, should employees have medical/health concerns about working on campus or their specific workstation. We have processes in place for individuals to request reasonable adjustments or an ergonomic workstation assessment if they have concerns about their physical work environment.

I hope you appreciate that it is not appropriate to comment on the specific Enterprise Agreement bargaining discussions in this response.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey Walton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a long, sweeping tail.

Stacey Walton
Chief People and Culture Officer