

Press release

7 September 2023

### **88% of Australian employers support a shortened work week**

- But only 49% would actually offer it as an arrangement.
- Top reasons employers' thoughts have changed include employee feedback (45%) and other companies' success in implementing it (41%).

**Sydney, 7 September 2023** – 88% of Australian employers support a shortened work week, up from 71% in November 2022, new independent research by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) finds.

However, despite an overwhelming majority of employers supporting the idea of a four-day work week or a nine-day fortnight, only 49% of them would actually consider offering it as an arrangement.

*“Supporting a shortened work week is a noble option for employee well-being, but the feasibility of this endeavour doesn’t always fit the agenda of a business,”* said **Nicole Gorton, Director at Robert Half**.

*“Balancing the needs of the workforce with the realities of operations and costs is the true litmus test of progressive employment practices like compressed work weeks. There are many reasons why employers support a compressed work week but are unable to implement them, spanning from prioritisation issues, headcount restraints, industry type and the lack of face-to-face time with customer and clients. So while the notion of a four-day work week or nine-day fortnight is favourable for the employee experience, it is not always a practical option.”*

SME employers are more likely to face these feasibility constraints, despite being more supportive of the shortened work week, than those in large organisations. 92% of SME employers are supportive of the shortened work week compared to 81% of large employers who are supportive. However, 47% of SMEs would actually consider offering it while 55% of large employers would consider offering.

*“Employers’ sentiments on compressed work weeks are evolving as companies consider how it can be a powerful recruitment and retention tool in a skills-short market. Prioritising employee well-being and work-life harmony has gained greater significance in companies of all sizes, and compressed work weeks are one way to simultaneously support both,”* said **Gorton**.

#### **Why four-day work weeks are gaining favour**

Employers shared various factors contributing to a new perspective on compressed work weeks:

- Employee feedback (45%)
- Findings and results from other companies that implemented a four-day workweek (41%)
- Business results (35%)
- Changes to business model/operation (28%)
- Budget (25%)
- Skills-short market (20%)

*“Workers are speaking up about what matters most to them, and having more dedicated time for family and personal activities is high on their wish list. Compressed work weeks are one way to support this desire. Offering flexible schedules, remote and hybrid work options, and extra paid time off are other strategies for giving staff greater autonomy resulting in higher engagement, productivity and retention.*

*“A four-day work week won't work for every organisation — each situation is unique and requires careful consideration and planning to set staff up for success. If providing a permanent compressed work week is off the cards for all or some employees, companies could offer flexible work schedules, a compressed work week on compressed pay, or temporary shortened weeks for employees in different life stages such as new parents or retirees re-entering the workforce. But while a shortened work week could be a fit for some, sticking to traditional work hours may be crucial for others in order to service clients and customers,”* said **Gorton**.

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## Notes to editors

### About the research

The study was developed by Robert Half and conducted online in June 2023 by an independent research company, surveying 300 hiring managers, including 100 CFOs and 100 CIOs, from companies across Australia. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management, and trends in the workplace.

### About Robert Half

Robert Half is the global, specialised talent solutions provider that helps employers find their next great hire and jobseekers uncover their next opportunity. Robert Half offers both contract and permanent placement services, and is the parent company of Protiviti, a global consulting firm. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth, and Sydney. More information on [roberthalf.com.au](https://roberthalf.com.au).

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### For more information

Courtney Fletcher

[Courtney.Fletcher@roberthalf.com.au](mailto:Courtney.Fletcher@roberthalf.com.au)

+61 421 209 304