

# Flex-connect framework

Agile and flexible working in the Queensland  
public sector



## Flex-connect framework

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## Introduction

### **The flex-connect framework outlines the Queensland public sector (sector) commitment to agile and flexible work, and the principles that support successful implementation of flexible work approaches.**

Flexible work is here to stay. Both employees and employers have experienced its benefits and it is now a common part of modern employment approaches.

Importantly, flexible work is not just about working from home and it is not just for ‘office workers’—with many options available for non-frontline and frontline employees.

Designing inclusive, outcomes-focused, flexible workplaces requires a whole-of-organisation approach.

Success is achieved when teams connect and discuss flexible work approaches that balance individual, team, customer, leader and the organisation’s needs.

The sector’s Working for Queensland annual employee opinion survey data shows wellbeing correlates with teams and managers that discuss and design appropriate flexible work approaches together.

Teams should regularly discuss flexible work approaches that will deliver better outcomes for customers and stakeholders as well as for employees, their teams and the employer.

Organisations that provide clarity, guidance and vision about their commitment to flexible work will reach fairer, more transparent outcomes. This will benefit current employees, as well potential new recruits.

Evidence shows flexible work to be a major factor in talent attraction and retention particularly in younger age groups—another benefit of being clear about how your organisation supports flexible work in a highly competitive global job market.



### **“ Agile and flexible working**

Well-designed flexible and agile work is a significant driver of workforce diversity, inclusion, wellbeing, and productivity. As more functions can be performed ‘anywhere, anytime’, we will see a rise in hybrid and geographically dispersed teams. A one-size-fits-all approach to work design is no longer appropriate in managing a diverse workforce. With the increased uptake of remote working and other flexible work types, leaders need to model flexible work to foster inclusion and build capability in managing by outcomes.

We will need to enable the sector workforce to adapt to new patterns of working and empower employees and teams to design and implement innovative approaches to flexible work that offer agency, autonomy, and choice. ”

— [3 year human capital strategic roadmap 2022](#)



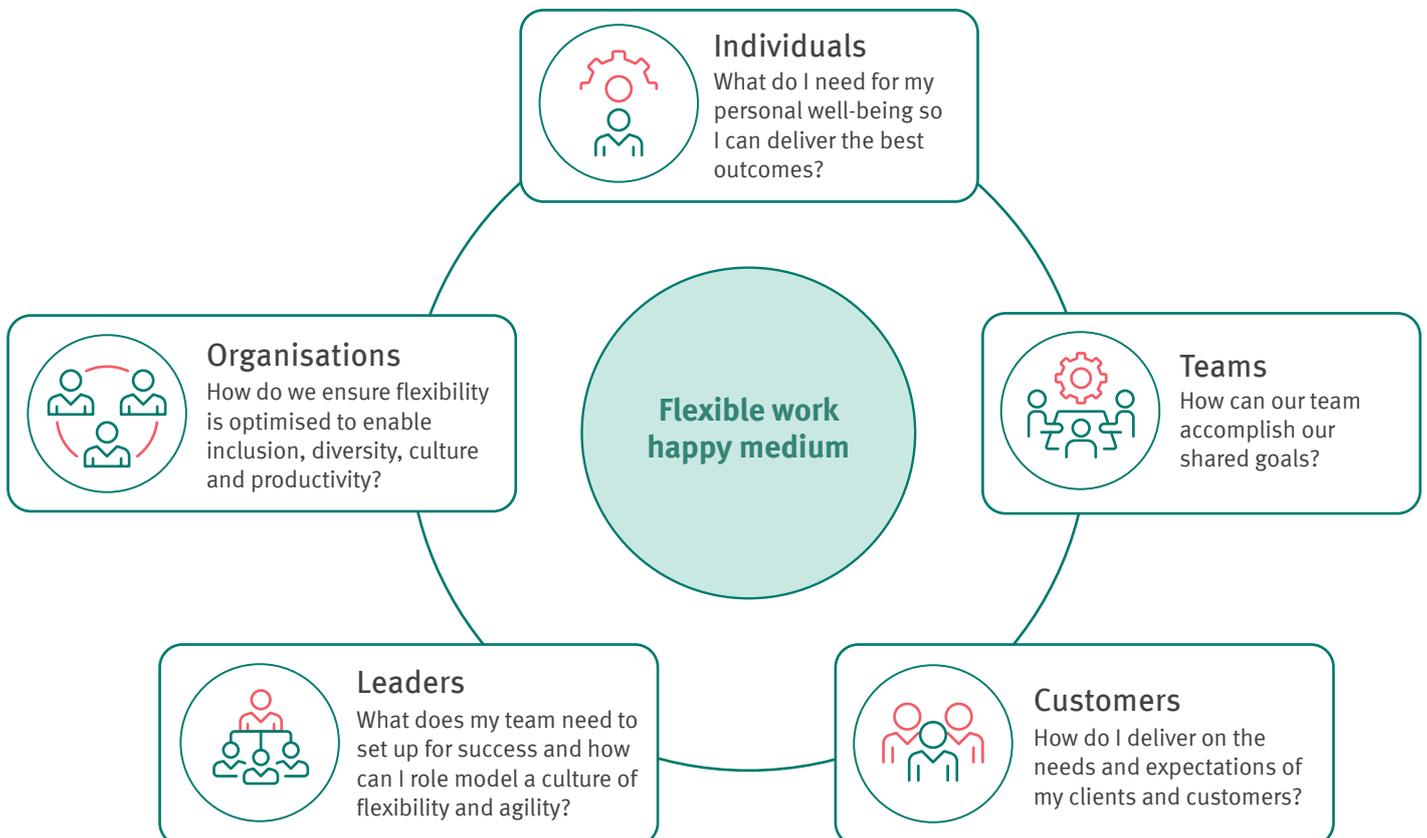
## Flex-connect principles

The six main principles that guide flexible working in the sector are:

- 1. Equity:** Flexible work supports equity and inclusion. Some level of flexibility is available to all employees. All requests are open for consideration.
- 2. Teamwork:** Teams design approaches that suit all. The best approach is where everyone in the team understands and balances their individual role and collective obligations, to deliver outcomes.
- 3. Happy medium:** Approaches are considered in the context of individual circumstances, such as obligations to culture, community and family, along with the needs of the team, customers and leaders, and organisational priorities.
- 4. Wellbeing:** Integrated, proactive approaches to health, safety and wellbeing, including psychosocial hazards and cultural safety, are prioritised.
- 5. Performance:** Employees work together to build a future-focussed, high-performing public sector that delivers.
- 6. Leadership by example:** Senior leaders role model flexible work and seek innovative and practical ways to embed access across the organisation.



**The most successful flexible working is where the needs of individuals, teams, customers, leaders, and organisations are balanced and flexible enough to create a happy medium.**



## Evolution of flexible work approaches

Given the diversity of workforces across the sector and different approaches to date, organisations will be at different stages of evolution in how they approach and embed flexible work.

The flex-connect framework provides the outcomes towards which the sector should aim.

	Traditional	Developing	Flex-connect framework
<b>Employees</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiated by employees and addressed in private.</li> <li>Priority is given to parents/carers.</li> <li>Limited autonomy in how, when or where work is done.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requests accommodated to achieve work-life balance.</li> <li>Limited development opportunities for employees working flexibly.</li> <li>The benefits of workplace presence are ambiguous.</li> <li>Limited leadership participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone can request flexible work approaches. It is the norm.</li> <li>Employees show personal agility and resilience to adapt to changing contexts.</li> <li>Cultural safety is understood and recognised in flexible work agreements.</li> <li>Collaboration is optimised and positive culture is prioritised and built.</li> </ul>
<b>Teams</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distrust.</li> <li>Excessive hours seen as a badge of honour.</li> <li>Limits development opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams pick up the load left by employees working flexibly.</li> <li>Team discussions are brief and limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams are proactive and engaged in providing input into the design of flexible work approaches.</li> <li>Outcomes address the principles of equity, teamwork, happy medium, wellbeing, performance and leadership.</li> <li>Solutions require culture, capability, policies and systems as enablers.</li> <li>Improved ways of managing flexibility are factored into team practices (e.g. meeting protocols and planned social engagement.)</li> </ul>
<b>Managers</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal and static approaches.</li> <li>Risk averse and bureaucratic approval processes.</li> <li>Health, safety, and wellbeing is not prioritised.</li> <li>Outdated performance measures.</li> <li>Low participation by managers or senior leaders.</li> <li>Limited role modelling.</li> <li>Inconsistent decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements convenient to individuals and their manager.</li> <li>Manager's responsible for managing risks.</li> <li>Flexible working used as a benefit or reward for high performance.</li> <li>Health, safety, and wellbeing an organisational priority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers are confident that the team will thrive and deliver quality outcomes.</li> <li>There is some flexibility for all roles, including frontline.</li> <li>Managers and leaders actively model flexible working.</li> <li>Performance is managed and assessed on the outcomes and quality of the work.</li> </ul>
<b>Organisations</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulated approach.</li> <li>Technology hampers progress.</li> <li>Recruitment offers designated workplace location.</li> <li>Workspaces designed for 9-5 worker with limited collaboration spaces and technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplaces designed with collaborative spaces.</li> <li>Technology and infrastructure available.</li> <li>Access to diversity and latent talent pools improved.</li> <li>Promoted during recruitment and as a business and employee benefit.</li> <li>Some use of distributed work centres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approaches are mutually beneficial and aligned with service delivery requirements.</li> <li>Workplaces are designed for collaboration and optimal workplace presence.</li> <li>Strategic workforce planning enables mixed modes of flexible work.</li> <li>Information about options available is promoted to job seekers and discussed with job applicants.</li> <li>Storytelling is regularly used to reinforce the benefits of flexible work</li> <li>Distributed work centres thrive and offer cross-agency collaboration.</li> <li>Technology eliminates bias and enables effective remote work.</li> </ul>

## Enablers of flexible work



### Culture

- Support – is demonstrated at all levels to successfully embed flexible work practices.
- Trust – is the default and all parties agree to a shared responsibility.
- Role-modelling – flexible working is visibly led by senior leaders and managers.
- Balance – harmony between work and life is a key goal.
- Communication – is frequent, open and honest between individuals, teams and managers.
- Exploration – pilot approaches, and challenge assumptions so you can continually adapt and improve.
- Engagement and team contribution – the best outcomes come from teams working together to design work approaches that find the happy medium.



### Capabilities

- Collaboration – co-design and sharing of expertise will achieve better outcomes.
- Information sharing – innovation and networking across the organisation and the sector will improve practice.
- Cultural capability – flexible work can support the cultural needs and obligations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Digital literacy – is fundamental, requiring focus on reskilling and upskilling employees.



### Systems

- Technology – hardware and software investment necessary to enable flexibility.
- Workplace design – allows for creativity, connection, technology access, safety and convenience.
- Job design – provides role clarity, accountability, and appropriate authority and autonomy and a sense of contribution and accomplishment.
- Quality data – a system to capture information from entering and exiting employees about the value of flexible work.
- Evaluation and review – is embedded as practice for consistency, equity and capturing the realised benefits of flexible work practices.



### Guidelines

- Employment frameworks – provide the relevant legislation and industrial instruments.
- Flexible work guidelines – are clear and available to employees.
- Positive performance management – elevates high performance as a business priority.
- Health, safety, and wellbeing frameworks – focus on creating healthy and safe workplaces, where people can thrive and achieve their best.
- Workforce planning – supports workforce stability and the ability to deliver services.
- Recruitment – information is available to jobseekers and employees about the availability of flexible work.

## Flex-connect in practice

The Flex-connect framework encourages teams to take shared responsibility, collaborate and seek fair solutions that balance work and personal needs. It provides the principles to guide flexible work practice that will enable the management of business imperatives, team and individual performance.

Embedding the framework into practice will require a shift in approach for many.

The [For Government website](#) provides further information and resources for employees and managers to help guide the development of flexible work agreements, and to embed practices that will help organisations and teams create a flexible, collaborative work culture.





Developed by the Public Sector Commission

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