



**Australian Multicultural Action Network Inc**

ABN: 40 172 914 431

Assn No: A06217

**Mr Ravi Krishnamurthy JP**

PRESIDENT

[President.AMANACT@gmail.com](mailto:President.AMANACT@gmail.com)

Mobile: 0404629700

**Submission to the Senate Committee on Education and Employment  
Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Right to Work from Home) Bill 2025**

**19/01/2026**

**Submitted by:**

**Mr Ravi Krishnamurthy JP**

President, Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN)  
Canberra, Australia

---

**Executive Summary**

The Fair Work Amendment (Right to Work from Home) Bill 2025 represents a pivotal moment in Australia's industrial relations framework. It responds not merely to the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic, but to a profound structural shift in how Australians live, work, care, and contribute to society. By introducing a statutory right for all employees to request to work from home for up to two days per week, the Bill reframes flexible work not as a privilege or exception, but as a mainstream feature of a modern, inclusive, and productive economy.

On behalf of the Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN), I strongly support the intent and architecture of this Bill. From the standpoint of multicultural inclusion, disability access, gender equity, regional participation, ageing workforce retention, and workforce wellbeing, this reform is not simply an employment matter—it is a nation-building investment in social cohesion, economic resilience, and human dignity.

This submission affirms the Bill's direction while offering forward-looking strategies to strengthen its impact. It proposes innovative implementation mechanisms, safeguards for both workers and employers, and a long-term vision that positions Australia as a global leader in equitable, future-ready employment policy.

---

**1. About AMAN and the Perspective of This Submission**

The Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN) is a grassroots national organisation committed to advancing equity, inclusion, civic participation, and social cohesion for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, seniors, people with disability, carers, and other structurally marginalised groups.

As President of AMAN, and through my work contributing to parliamentary inquiries, advisory councils, and cross-sector policy initiatives, I have seen how rigid workplace norms disproportionately exclude capable Australians from meaningful participation. Flexible work—when embedded thoughtfully and equitably—has the power to unlock talent, strengthen families, revitalise regional economies, and restore trust between workers and institutions.

This submission is grounded in three core convictions:

1. Flexible work is no longer a “benefit”—it is essential infrastructure for a modern economy.
  2. A statutory right to request remote work enhances fairness, productivity, and workforce resilience.
  3. Australia must now move from ad hoc flexibility to a principled, rights-based framework that protects dignity while supporting business viability.
- 

## 2. Overview and Significance of the Bill

The Bill amends the Fair Work Act 2009 to:

- Introduce a universal right for all employees to request to work from home for up to two days per week;
- Create a new category of request—“work from home up to 2 days request”;
- Require employers to genuinely engage with employees and explore reasonable adjustments before refusing such requests;
- Limit refusal grounds to situations where hybrid work would make the inherent requirements of the role impractical or impossible;
- Empower the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to review refusals and make binding determinations; and
- Ensure consistent procedural requirements and prospective application only.

This framework is carefully calibrated. It does not impose blanket mandates on employers, nor does it disregard operational realities. Instead, it introduces a reasoned, proportionate, and rights-based approach that balances business needs with workforce wellbeing.

---

## 3. Why This Reform Matters: A Human and Economic Imperative

### 3.1 Inclusion and Equity

For many Australians, the ability to work from home is not a convenience—it is the difference between employment and exclusion.

- **People with disability** often face inaccessible transport, sensory barriers, or fatigue-related limitations.
- **Carers and parents** struggle to reconcile rigid work hours with caregiving responsibilities.
- **Older workers** benefit from reduced physical strain and greater autonomy.
- **CALD communities** frequently face longer commutes, limited job mobility, and systemic barriers to flexibility.
- **Regional and remote Australians** gain access to metropolitan employment opportunities without relocating.

By making flexible work universally available rather than conditionally granted, the Bill removes stigma, reduces gatekeeping, and normalises adaptability across the workforce.

### **3.2 Productivity and Workforce Retention**

Evidence cited in the Explanatory Memorandum confirms that flexible work improves retention, reduces absenteeism, and increases workforce participation.

From a systems perspective:

- Hybrid work reduces burnout and turnover costs;
- It enhances employee engagement and loyalty;
- It supports continuity during climate, health, or infrastructure disruptions;
- It expands the national labour pool.

In an economy facing skills shortages, ageing demographics, and structural transitions, this Bill strengthens Australia’s economic resilience.

---

## **4. Analysis of Key Provisions**

### **4.1 Universal Right to Request**

The Bill removes existing eligibility limits and extends the right to request flexible work to all employees.

This is a transformative shift. It:

- Eliminates discriminatory thresholds;
- Reduces reliance on personal disclosure (e.g., disability, domestic violence);
- Normalises flexibility as a workforce standard rather than an exception.

#### **Recommendation:**

Embed a public education campaign explaining this right, targeted particularly at small businesses and vulnerable worker cohorts, to ensure equitable uptake and consistent interpretation.

---

### **4.2 Higher Threshold for Refusal**

For work-from-home requests of up to two days per week, employers must demonstrate that hybrid work would make the inherent requirements of the role impractical or impossible.

This moves beyond the vague “reasonable business grounds” test and introduces a more rigorous, evidence-based standard.

#### **Recommendation:**

Develop FWC-endorsed guidance clarifying “inherent requirements” with sector-specific examples to minimise disputes and enhance legal certainty.

---

### **4.3 Duty to Explore Reasonable Adjustments**

Employers must consider adjustments such as digital tools, IT access, modified meetings, and reporting mechanisms before refusing a request.

This provision operationalises good faith engagement.

**Innovative proposal:**

Create a *National Flexible Work Toolkit* co-designed by government, unions, employers, and disability advocates, offering templates, case studies, and digital solutions.

---

#### **4.4 Binding Powers of the Fair Work Commission**

The Bill empowers the FWC to review refusals and make binding determinations.

This strengthens accountability and ensures the right to request has practical enforceability.

**Recommendation:**

Establish a specialised FWC hybrid work stream with expedited resolution pathways and trained conciliators.

---

### **5. Forward-Thinking Strategies to Maximise Impact**

#### **5.1 Flexible Work as National Capability**

Australia should treat hybrid work as strategic infrastructure.

**Proposal:**

Create a *Future of Work National Compact* aligning workplace reform, digital inclusion, skills policy, disability employment, and regional development.

---

#### **5.2 Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**

SMEs may face transitional challenges.

**Proposal:**

Introduce a time-limited *Flexible Work Transition Fund* to subsidise digital tools, cybersecurity upgrades, and training for SMEs.

---

#### **5.3 Measuring What Matters**

Traditional productivity metrics fail to capture wellbeing and retention.

**Proposal:**

Mandate hybrid work impact reporting: retention rates, engagement, absenteeism, and inclusion outcomes.

---

#### **5.4 Preventing a Two-Tier Workforce**

Hybrid work must not entrench inequities.

**Proposal:**

Require employers to publish transparent hybrid work policies and ensure promotion, training, and leadership opportunities remain equitable.

---

**6. Human Rights and Social Justice Dimensions**

Although the Explanatory Memorandum states that the Bill does not engage applicable human rights, its practical effect significantly advances:

- The right to work;
- The right to non-discrimination;
- The right to family life;
- The right to health and wellbeing.

From AMAN’s perspective, this Bill is a quiet but powerful equity reform—one that reshapes opportunity structures for millions of Australians.

---

**7. Conclusion: A Vision for a More Humane Economy**

The Fair Work Amendment (Right to Work from Home) Bill 2025 is not merely a procedural amendment—it is a moral and strategic statement about the future Australia chooses to build.

It recognises that:

- Productivity and compassion are not opposites;
- Flexibility strengthens, rather than weakens, institutions;
- Inclusion is an economic multiplier;
- Trust is the foundation of a resilient workforce.

As President of the Australian Multicultural Action Network, and as a lifelong advocate for inclusive policy design, I commend Senator Barbara Pocock and the Parliament for advancing this reform. I urge the Committee to adopt the Bill and to strengthen its implementation through the forward-looking strategies outlined above.

This is an opportunity to reposition Australia as a global leader in humane, future-ready employment policy—one that reflects the lived realities of its people and the evolving nature of work itself.

---

**Submitted by:**

**Mr Ravi Krishnamurthy JP**

President, Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN)

Canberra, Australia