

A Better ~~Work~~-Life

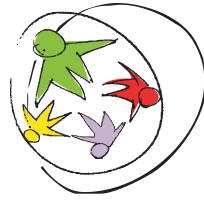
Lessons in shifting to
a four-day work week



Picture: Simon Schluter



ourcommunity.com.au
Where not-for-profits go for help



ourcommunity.com.au

MANIFESTO

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- > We believe in the power of the community sector
 - > We believe in human capital
 - > We believe in equality
- > We believe women have equal rights to leadership roles
- > We believe technology is a key to accelerating our reform agenda
 - > We believe laughter is good
- > We believe work can be a place to make friends for life
 - > We believe business is good and can do good
- > We believe treating people with respect gains respect
 - > We believe mayhem is not only healthy but critical

WHAT WE DO

- > We build stronger communities
- > We create, curate & share knowledge & experiences
 - > We listen, then we act
 - > We revolutionise markets
 - > We ignite and accelerate
 - > We convene and connect
- > We put back into the community that we work with

HOW WE WORK

- > We strive for fairness
- > We are failure tolerant
 - > We take risks
 - > We question authority
- > We use our balance sheet to create social change
- > We believe in a work environment that allows for an authentic life balance
 - > We accept increments, but strive for revolution
 - > Ethics, inspiration and innovation are at our core
- > We value our flat structure: we share the cleaning as well as the decision-making
 - > We celebrate success and learn from our mistakes
 - > We are dogmatic and passionate

OUR IDEAL ENVIRONMENT - THE EDGE OF CHAOS

**"The estuary region where rigid order and random chaos meet
and generate high levels of adaptation, complexity and creativity."**

READY, FIRE, AIM

Contents

Introduction	4
At a glance	6
How we did it	8
Hatching a plan	8
Getting started	9
Getting to work	12
Maintaining productivity	12
Transforming our workplace (and our lives)	14
Applying a gender lens	16
International results	18
What we are learning about what works	19
Lead from the top	19
Do your research (but not for too long)	19
Appoint the right team	19
Get the mechanics right	20
Don't kill all the fun stuff	20
Listen to ideas and concerns	21
Don't be a slave to the clock	21
Don't expect miracles	22
Don't let this be the only thing you do	23
Be out and proud	24
Be creative	24
Celebrate progress (the "My Week" email)	25
Bringing newbies on the ride	25
Playing a part in the movement	26
Appendix 1: 4DWW implementation timeline	27
Appendix 2: Media appearances	30
Appendix 3: Meetings & Training	34
Appendix 4: All-staff survey	35
Appendix 5: Our Community workplace policies	38
Appendix 6: Field observations: staff reflections 12 months on	40
Appendix 7: ICDA's Ten tips for doing more in less time	46
Appendix 8: Resources we found useful	50

Introduction

In his book *Four Thousand Weeks*, Oliver Burkeman points out we have a finite number of years in our life, and we best use them well.

We must focus on what's in front of us right now, Burkeman tells us, rather than wonder what we could or should be doing instead. The painful truth is we can only do one thing at a time, we are only one person, and there are only 24 hours in a day. Whether we work five days a week or four (or indeed seven) we can never construct a "perfect" work week. All the productivity hacks in the world won't save us. We can never do all the things that could or should be done.

A shift to a four-day work week (4DWW) will not fix our private lives, either. We can fill that extra day with more family time, more volunteering, more sitting on not-for-profit boards, more exercise or more cultural or artistic pursuits, but still we will have to confront the ugly reality that we will never have enough time to do it all.

And yet.

The construction of a new type of weekly schedule is the gift of a provocation as well as the gift of time itself. It offers an opportunity to rethink how we choose to work and live. At Our Community, we have embraced this opportunity. This publication is designed to document and share our lessons in the hopes that it might encourage others to follow.

My search for meaning

My search for greater meaning began in the late 1990s as I contemplated setting up a new organisation, one that I wanted to be radically different from any I'd worked in before. I was wounded, having been harshly discarded from a job that I was good at, that I had devoted my life to, that I had worked long hours in, and that I had thought was important.

This passage from Burkeman's *4000 Weeks* now resonates with me strongly:

"This struggle against the distressing constraints of reality is what some old-school psychoanalysts call 'neurosis,' and it takes countless forms, from workaholism and commitment-phobia to co-dependency and chronic shyness. Our troubled relationship with time arises largely from this same effort to avoid the painful constraints of reality. And most of our strategies for becoming more productive make things worse, because they're really just ways of furthering the avoidance..."



Our Community Founder and Group Managing Director Denis Moriarty

After all, it's painful to confront how limited your time is, because it means that tough choices are inevitable and that you won't have time for all you once dreamed you might do. It's also painful to accept your limited control over the time you do get: maybe you simply lack the stamina or talent or other resources to perform well in all the roles you feel you should.

"And so, rather than face our limitations, we engage in avoidance strategies, in an effort to carry on feeling limitless. We push ourselves harder, chasing fantasies of the perfect work-life balance; or we implement time management systems that promise to make time for everything, so that tough choices won't be required. Or we procrastinate, which is another means of maintaining the feeling of omnipotent control over life – because you needn't risk the upsetting experience of failing at an intimidating project, obviously, if you never even start it. We fill our minds with busyness and distraction to numb ourselves emotionally."

As I left that job I loved, I sensed I needed to approach the next chapter of my life differently.

I set up Our Community in 1999. For the first years of the organisation's existence, I resisted the push towards formality and structure. We didn't have policies. We didn't track leave. We trusted in the mission of the organisation ("building stronger communities through stronger community organisations") and we trusted each other to do the right thing by each other, by our customers, by our community, and by the organisation.

We didn't fit the classic mould of a business so we called ourselves a social enterprise, a new concept back then. When that term

became more closely associated with not-for-profits, we became accredited as a B Corporation. When we started to feel stifled by that structure we altered our constitution, which, alongside our mission, now states: "commercial imperatives are afforded equal priority to our social mission, our commitment to employees, and our responsibility to the environment in which we work". With the leadership and unwavering support of our amazing founding chair Carol Schwartz AO, we make a profit in pursuit of our mission, but not at any cost.

We take this principle seriously. Our shift to a four-day work week did not come out of the ether. Throughout our 24-year history we have striven to be the best and do the best for our employees, our customers and our shareholders. We have listed some of our other workplace initiatives in Appendix 5.

In starting and leading this organisation over more than two decades I have come to understand a lot about work and about human nature, and how these two things interact. I don't believe I have all the answers. Far from it. I learn new things every day. This document represents my best effort to capture what I know right now. It's not perfect, but my 4000 weeks are running down so it'll do. Ready, fire, aim.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis Moriarty', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Denis Moriarty

Founder & Group Managing Director

At a glance

Who we are: Our Community Pty Ltd

What we do: Our Community is the engine room for creating and disseminating practical, affordable training, leadership and technological solutions that allow not-for-profit organisations and funders to get on with the crucial work of building stronger communities. We do these things in pursuit of our mission: “Building stronger communities through stronger community organisations.”

Who we work with: Our key stakeholders and customers are not-for-profit organisations and government, philanthropic and corporate funders.

Longevity: Founded in 1999

Location: Melbourne, Australia (headquarters), with staff in other locations around Australia



Enterprises: Our Community is a non-siloed organisation comprising six enterprises:

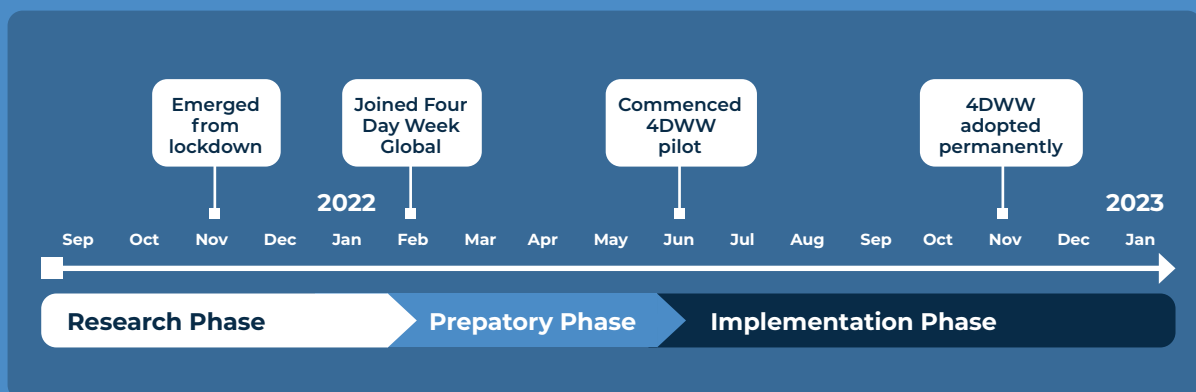
- **Institute of Community Directors Australia:** The best-practice governance network for the members of Australian not-for-profit and government boards and committees, and the senior staff who work alongside them
- **Funding Centre:** Information on grants and fundraising in Australia, including EasyGrants: Australia's best grants database
- **GiveNow:** Australia's first and best giving platform
- **SmartyGrants:** Software, data science and grantmaking intelligence for funders – accelerating outcomes and impact
- **SmartyFile:** a red tape-busting data-storage and data-sharing tool for not-for-profits
- **Our Community House:** A co-working space for the social sector, where data and creativity come together to catalyse social change

Governance: Private company led by a three-person board of directors

Workforce: 4DWW pilot commenced with 65 employees, with an additional 15 staff members having joined Our Community since the start of the pilot (as at October 2023, we have 81 employees; FTE: 77)

4DWW model: 80-100-100 model (80% time; 100% pay; 100% productivity)

4DWW Implementation timeframe:



How we did it

Hatching a plan

The idea for restructuring our workplace arose as we emerged from Melbourne's long-lockdown. For the better part of two years, ending in November 2021, our staff had worked from home while the Victorian Government battled to keep a lid on the Covid-19 pandemic. As we stumbled out of our cocoons, most Our Community staffers knew instinctively that we didn't want to go back to how things were before. We wanted our work to be different and we wanted to live different lives. We wanted to de-centre work.

As Burkeman writes in *4000 Weeks*:

"To the philosophers of the ancient world, leisure wasn't the means to some other end; on the contrary, it was the end to which everything else worth doing was a means. Aristotle argued that true leisure – by which he meant self-reflection and philosophical contemplation – was among

the very highest of virtues because it was worth choosing for its own sake, whereas other virtues, like courage in war, or noble behaviour in government, were virtuous only because they led to something else.

"The Latin word for business, negotium, translates literally as 'not-leisure,' reflecting the view that work was a deviation from the highest human calling. In this understanding of the situation, work might be an unavoidable necessity for certain people – above all, for the slaves whose toil made possible the leisure of the citizens of Athens and Rome – but it was fundamentally undignified, and certainly not the main point of being alive."

Well, we did not see our work as undignified (nor even unpleasant). Indeed, for most of us, our work at Our Community was (and is) meaningful and fulfilling. But we did not want work to become or take over or subsume our lives.



We watched as the international movement towards a four-day week edged forward, noting that a good portion of Iceland (including schools) had made the shift. We started doing some deeper research (who was doing it, how were they doing it, how was it panning out) and appointed a steering group comprising staff from different areas of the business (the Group Managing Director, the Executive Director, the Chief Financial Officer, the Human Resources Manager, and our Special Projects and Media Directors), as well as an External Culture Director.

We joined the **4 Day Week Global** movement, founded in 2019 in New Zealand by Andrew Barnes and Charlotte Lockhart that seeks to reshape the way we think about work by moving the conversation away from hours in favour of productivity and output.

We looked at the 4DWW models that were rolling out across the world. We had an instinctive unease with the notion of cramming the same hours into fewer days or reducing pay.

We decided to adopt 4 Day Week Global's preferred 4DWW 80-100-100 model (80% time; 100% pay; 100% productivity).

We recognised the value of participating in a pilot alongside other early-movers but we did not want to wait for the Australian pilot to commence in August 2022.

Instead, we set our sights on joining the United Kingdom pilot that was set to kick off on in June 2022.

Getting started

Our next step was to identify the “fat” in our processes and operations – the things we did that could be rethought, reshaped or discarded to ensure we could maintain productivity while shaving off worktime.

It was important to us that this process not be done “to” our staff but “by” them. We kicked off a comprehensive all-staff survey in March 2022. In the introduction to the survey we asked staff to think deeply about the proposed move to a 4DWW:

Moving to a four-day week is not about dropping a day of work and damn the consequences. We want to use this as an opportunity to reinvent work at Our Community. And no one knows your work better than you. Your thoughtful contribution to this survey (and to the project as a whole) is crucial to this project's success. We will step into this brave new world with care and caution, but also (we hope) a lot of excitement.

We are certain that moving to a four-day week will be better for our health and lifestyles; better for our customers; better for our business. We will need to shed some things but we do not anticipate a loss, either to our income or our impact. We all learned to work differently during the long lockdowns. We want to continue the evolution of work and be part of the revolution towards more human-friendly workplaces and lifestyles.



Our Community staff in December 2021, two months after the sixth and final Melbourne lockdown.

We addressed staff's natural curiosity about how this would all play out in *practice*.

We are applying OC's signature "ready, fire, aim" approach to the task of shifting to a four-day week; we have access to a lot of international examples of how this transition has been managed in other organisations but to a large degree we'll be feeling our way to find a process that suits our style. We're not interested in auditing every little thing everyone does and applying piles of metrics. At some points we'll guide you; other times we'll ask you to guide us. We hope you will trust us to make this exciting and liberating; not painful and stressful.

After our six-month trial we expect to see a reimagined workplace – inefficient personal practices reformed; workplace policies and systems that are mad, bad or just inefficient thrown out or rebuilt. Our client list will still be growing. Our existing clients will still consider our products and service the best in the business. You will be happier. The business will be booming.

We asked staffers to reimagine their work within the following frames:

1. Driver No. 1 – Policy changes

What policies or procedures should we reform, reimagine, or axe?

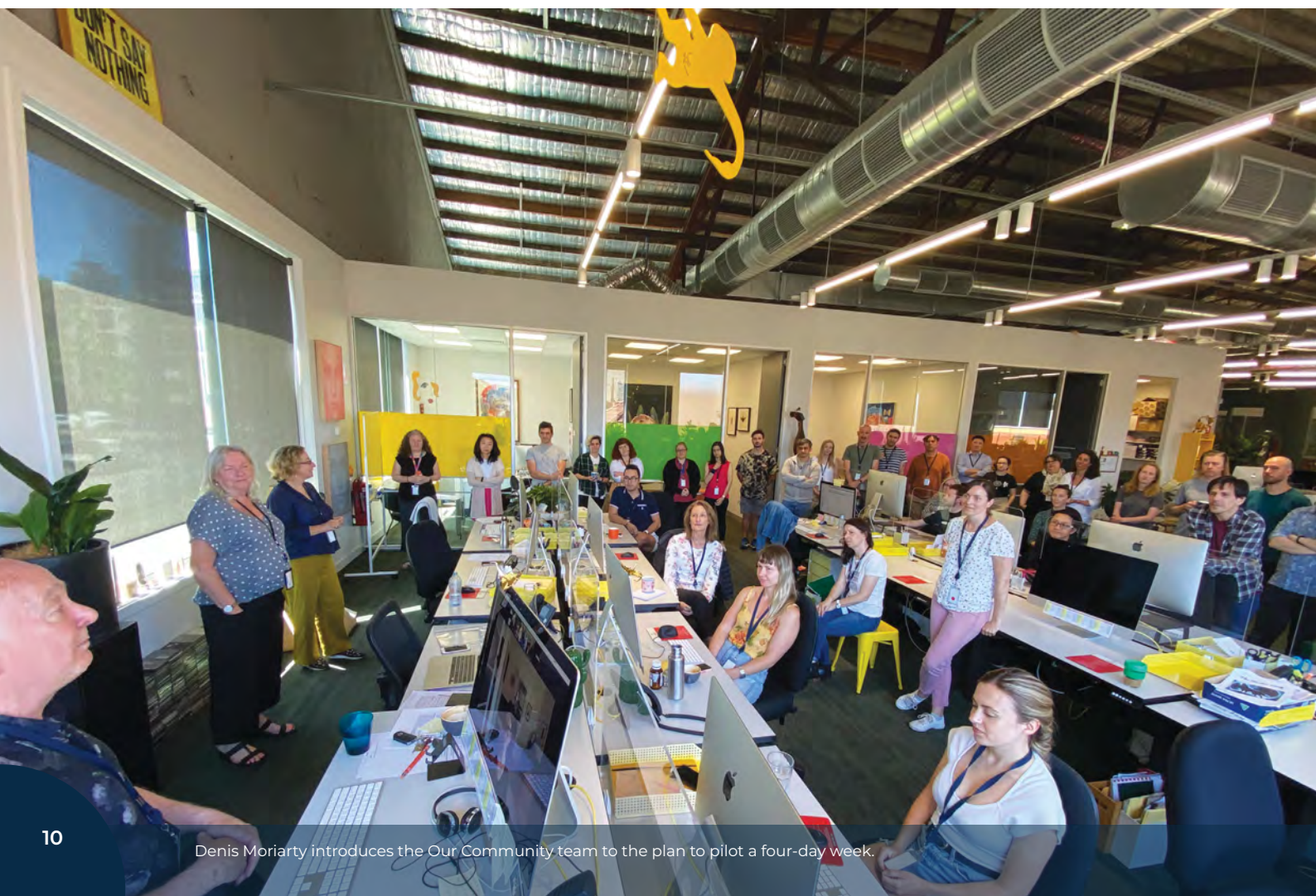
Think through any Our Community-wide or team-based policies that you think could be reformed, reimaged, or removed. We're looking for examples of things that we could do to remove bureaucracy, save us time, save us money, make us more money, make us more effective, or make us more impactful. Tell us what, why, and maybe even how.

.....

2. Driver No. 2 – Changed work practices

What personal practices could or should you or other team members alter?

Now think about the way you and others in your team or the wider group organise work and personal tasks. What practices could be altered to make room for an extra day off every week? Again, tell us what, how and why.



3. Driver No. 3 – Reimagining our products and services

What products or services would you like to see introduced or axed?

What should we do more of? What should we do less of? What are your burning ideas for new products or services we could introduce that could generate income or increase our impact? What could we let go of in order to create space for new things?

.....

4. Driver No. 4 – Business Process Improvements

What business process improvements could we make?

Our Community is now over 20 years old. We have entered the territory of “doing things that way because that’s the way we’ve always done it.” It’s time to shake things up.

What business processes should be reformed? What would we gain by doing so? Be as broad-stroke or as specific as you like or as you can. No idea is too hard or too wild or too minor – let’s get it all on the table.

We left space in the survey for staff to “colour outside the lines” – to tell us what they wished we’d asked, and what else they wanted to say. We invited them to document what troubled or stressed them out about the move, as well as what interested or excited them.

We invited them to submit their comments anonymously if they wished (no one did).

We were honest about our belief that the pilot would only succeed “if staff approach it with an open mind, and are prepared to give up some things so that we can all gain a lot”.

On launching the all-staff survey, the Group Managing Director confirmed we would commence a six-month pilot (in line with the UK pilot that was being coordinated by Four Day Week Global) from Monday, June 6, and that:

- It would be mandatory for all staff, including new and probationary staff, to participate in the six-month pilot.
- We would not be spreading a full-time workload over four days, or spreading fewer hours over a five-day week. Full-timers would have one extra day off per week. We would be maintaining Our Community’s business hours but the days each of us worked would change.
- This would not be about cutting wages. No one would receive less pay. A tailored approach would be applied to those already working part-time hours.
- Flexibility would need to go both ways. At times, during work emergencies, staff may be required to pitch in as required.

The full text of our survey is provided as Appendix 4.



Greg Peyton with some members of the SmartyGrants team.

Getting to work

The March 2022 all-staff survey produced 193 pages of ideas about how staff members wanted to reimagine their workplace. Suggestions generally fell into one of three buckets:

1. Simple fixes that could be done immediately. These included changes to procedures (like removing the annual three days of volunteering leave and Christmas shopping day), and changes to staff practices (like booking non-urgent health, pet and family appointments on days off, where possible).
2. Things that would take a few months. These included transitioning to different meeting and communication practices and shutting down some non-core or non-performing services and products.
3. Dramatic changes that would be hard and slow but would deliver big paybacks. These included transitioning to a more efficient accounting system and an automated subscriptions renewal system, and implementing a new online HR management system.

Staff said loudly in their survey responses that they wanted less tech bloat (fewer systems for communications, project management and so on), more delegated authority (resulting in less 'reply all'/FYI emails), and fewer and shorter meetings.

Our survey also unearthed a variety of questions and concerns about the shift to a 4DWW:

- *What about our customers and partners? The world won't stop working just because we do.*
- *We've just moved to hybrid work – will moving to a four-day week mean I won't get enough face time with my team?*
- *Will I have less flexibility to juggle my work-life than I do now?*
- *Can I do shorter hours spread over five days, rather than a four-day week?*
- *Will I feel obliged to work on my day off?*
- *What will be done about people who don't "follow the rules", who work on their*

day off and make others feel bad (or less productive) as a result?

- *Won't the four days that we do work be horrible? There'll be no time for down time or pleasantries.*
- *We've just been through a once-in-a-generation pandemic. Is now the best time to make this huge change?*
- *What's the deal for people who are already working part time?*
- *How will we get all the work done? More about this below.*

We have documented how we dealt with these issues (and more) in the 'What worked' section of this report.

Maintaining productivity

The most common concern we detected in our staff survey was a feeling that most people were already working at capacity, and there was no way we could maintain our current levels of productivity if we reduced hundreds of working hours per week. It seemed like an impossible equation.

Again, Burkeman's writings proved instructional: We had to rethink the very concept of productivity.

"This dream of somehow one day getting the upper hand in our relationship with time is the most forgivable of human delusions because the alternative is so unsettling. But unfortunately, it's the alternative that's true: the struggle is doomed to fail.

"Because your quantity of time is so limited, you'll never reach the commanding position of being able to handle every demand that might be thrown at you or pursue every ambition that feels important; you'll be obliged to make tough choices instead.

"And because you can't dictate, or even accurately predict, so much of what happens with the finite portion of time you do get, you'll never feel that you're securely in charge of events, immune from suffering, primed and ready for whatever comes down the pike."

Burkeman is not arguing against long-term endeavours like marriage or parenting, building organisations, reforming political systems or tackling the climate crisis.

“These are among the things that matter most,” he writes. “But it’s an argument that even those things can only ever matter now, in each moment of the work involved, whether or not they’ve yet reached what the rest of the world defines as fruition. Because now is all you ever get.”

We acknowledged staff concerns. We acknowledged that removing work requires work. But we refused to be knocked off course. We set about categorising the lists of productivity improvements that had been identified in the staff survey, and ticking off some easy wins.

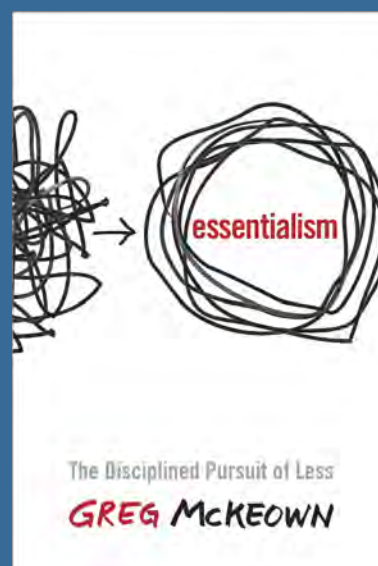
We also began tackling the key concerns about meetings and over-communication. Our HR Manager identified and scheduled *Diary Detox* training for all staff with UK productivity disruptor Paul Holbrook and *Finding your Focus* training with Sash D’Arcy (Inventium). We purchased and provided to each staff member (in hard copy and audio) *Essentialism* by Greg McKeown, which emphasizes the importance of discerning between what is essential and what is non-essential, enabling individuals to prioritise their energy and resources for maximum impact. We encouraged staff to think how McKeown’s lessons could be applied to the next phase of our transition to a 4DWW.

We asked staff to approach their work, and the transition to a new way of working and living, with curiosity and creativity, and to take advantage of the coaching on offer from managers, colleagues, our HR Manager and External Culture Director, and from other sources.

We emphasised that productivity activities and measures would need to be individualised. We asked staff to take ownership of their own domains and work through what they needed to do in their own contexts to make these new arrangements work.

Importantly, we did not want to lose the social and unstructured activities that make work engaging and fulfilling – collaboration, social interactions, chance encounters with people from other parts of the business: these things are not “fat”; they are essential to making us succeed in our lives and our work. We made it clear the Fun Police were not coming on board.

We took a different approach to tracking progress than is typical of organisations moving to a 4DWW. We did not want our staff to waste time tracking metrics. Instead, we asked them to take steps to ensure core tasks were being covered with characteristic excellence, and allow other non-essential tasks to fall away organically.



Two of the books we provided to staff to help them prepare for a new working paradigm.

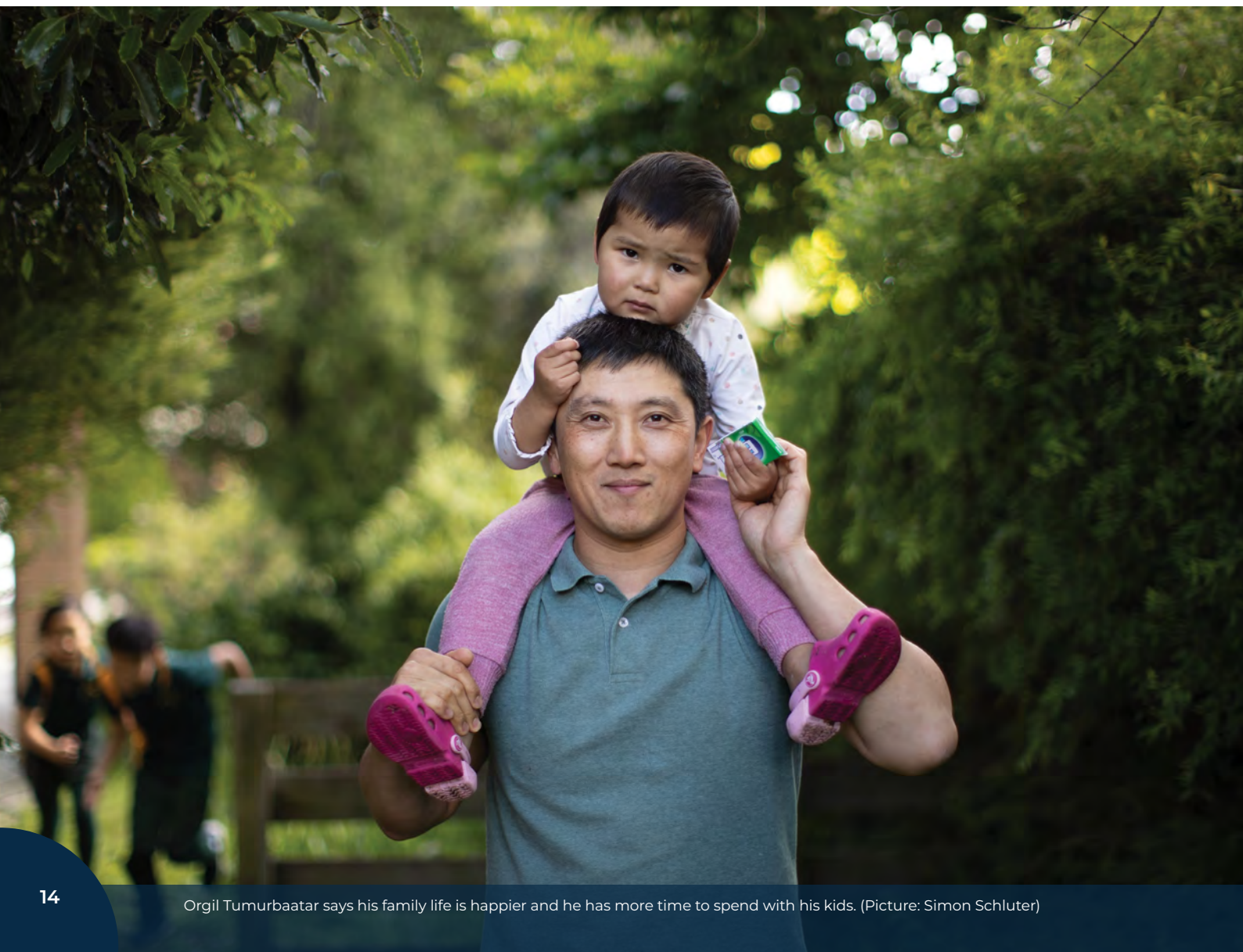
Transforming our workplace (and our lives)

On November 10, 2022, we hosted 4 Day Week Global programs director Alex Soojung-Kim Pang at our North Melbourne headquarters. During this visit, our Group Managing Director announced an early end to the Our Community 4DWW pilot. We were not waiting another month for the pilot to end, Denis told staff. It was working, and we were making it permanent.

Work was still *working* – income was up by 15%; sick leave was down by 32%; staff turnover was extremely low. One productivity fix (integration of our payments system with our training system) had saved one staff member up to seven hours a week.

And people's lives had changed. A series of interviews conducted by our External Culture Director Sheena Boughen just over a year after our pilot commenced confirmed what senior staff had been sensing; staff members' lives had changed:

- ***“My private life has oxygen now”.***
- ***“I was missing out on life before.”***
- ***“Now I can think about self-empowerment and decision making – the agency it has given me cannot be overestimated.”***



The positive flow-on effect for families, friends and communities was also evident:

- ***“It has given me a gift, the gift of time with my grandmother.”***
- ***“Gives me time and a chance to be a good son.”***
- ***“My partner loves Denis!”***
- ***“Family relations are so much better.”***
- ***“Relationship with my parents is very different now. Not angry or anxious with them now.”***

Many felt better about work too:

- ***“(Things are) so so different now. Coming to work is like going to yoga.”***
- ***“People are much happier and the workplace feels better now.”***
- ***“I was so much sharper and more productive. Incredible experience.”***
- ***“Now we talk about culture. It’s so different and so powerful.”***

- ***“We have a language now to talk about how we work.”***
- ***“I know I am more focused, more enthusiastic, and feel sharper.”***
- ***“I say ‘no’ more often or ‘not just now’. Am empowered.”***
- ***“Sundays I can’t wait to get back to work!”***

Staff also expressed pride at being part of a worldwide movement to reshape our workplaces.

- ***“We are change makers in the world.”***
- ***“Didn’t really trust or believe it was real. Shift in how we work now is amazing.”***
- ***“So proud to work at OC.”***

A more comprehensive list of comments provided during these interviews is provided as Appendix 6.

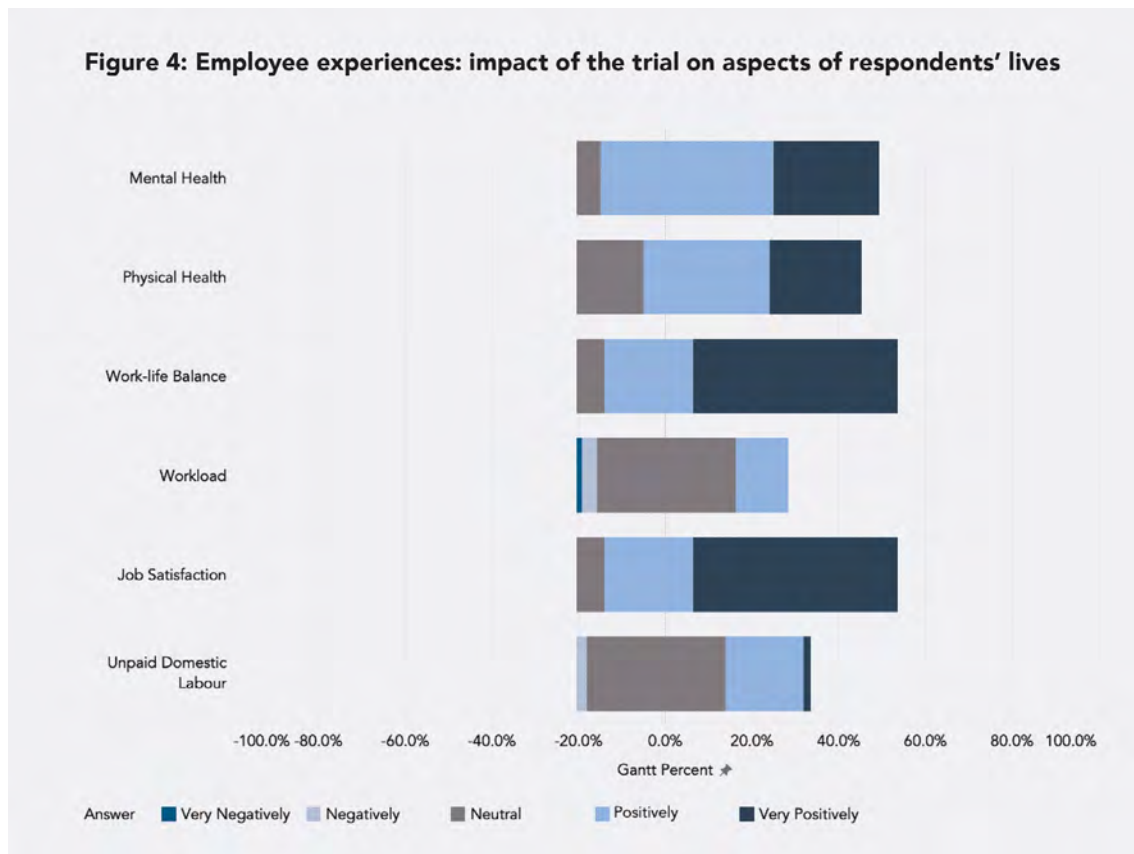


Group Managing Director Denis Moriarty announces the four-day week trial will be permanent in November 2022

Applying a gender lens

The observations of staff about the positive effects being realised echo the findings of a study by the independent progressive think tank Per Capita, which Our Community engaged to examine its experience.

The Our Community pilot was successful, Per Capita concluded. “Workers took on fewer hours, enjoyed greater wellbeing, experienced improved work-life balance, and reported a better cooperative spirit in the workplace; all while maintaining existing standards of performance and productivity.”



Extract from Per Capita report on Our Community's 4DWW trial, *Sharing the Spoils* (April 2022).

Our Community has been fortunate to have been led throughout our 23-year history by Carol Schwartz AO, who is a leading advocate for women's leadership equality in Australia. Carol's leadership and advocacy has helped embed gender equality in our organisation's DNA and has concentrated our minds on ensuring equality runs through our veins and is evident in the face we show to the public. As such, we asked Per Capita to place a “gender lens” over our experience of transitioning to a four-day work week.

Per Capital analysed results of the Our Community survey according to the respondent's gender, and whether or not they had children.



These findings are significant, providing an evidence base for adoption of the 4DWW as a means of improving gender equality.

A shift to a four-day working week had the potential to make a real impact on the “wicked problem” of social and economic gender inequality, Per Capita wrote in their April 2023 report.

“If the standard working week were 20% shorter, with no loss of earnings, then it stands to reason that both men and women would have 20% more time to attend to the unpaid labour, including childcare, that is the cause of so much of the gender gap in wealth and income,” they wrote. “Working women themselves provide the evidence that such a shift need not reduce productivity. A 2015 report by Ernst and Young found that women working part-time are the most productive in the workforce. This aligns with the productivity findings of the trials of the four-day week around the world.”

Interestingly, males involved in the Our Community pilot generally reported more positive results than their female workmates – for example, 92% of males reported the pilot had a positive impact on their overall health, compared with 61% of females; 96.15% of males reported a positive impact on overall wellbeing, compared with 75% of females; 92% of males reported being happier as a result of the trial, versus 89% of females;

38% of males reported more positive job satisfaction, versus 18% for females.

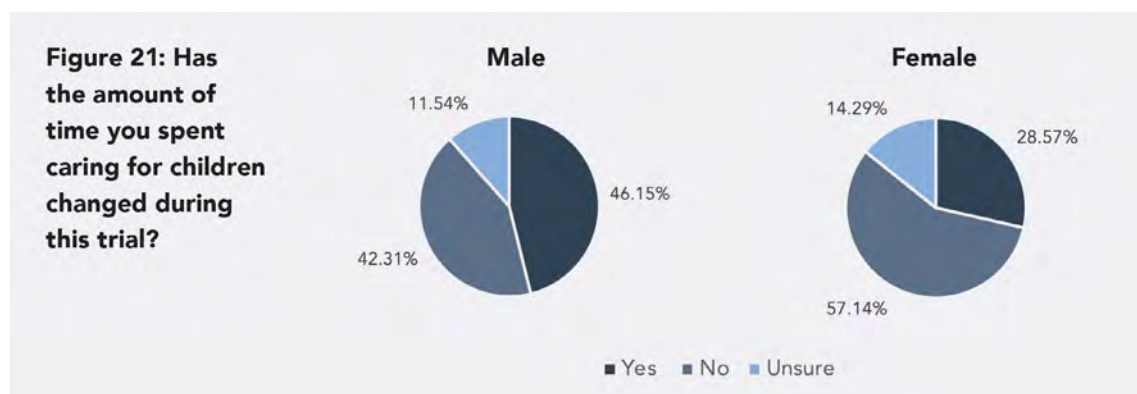
However, the results also indicated that the move to a 4DWW was chipping away at an entrenched gender disparity issue: unpaid household labour. While the study found that females were still doing three-quarters of the housework and childcare, there were some positive signs.

“When we asked how the time spent caring for children had changed, the results point to a clear gender difference: two-thirds of men said they were spending more time on childcare, and none said they were spending less,” Per Capita wrote.

“Just over one-third of women said they were spending more time caring for children, while 15% reported spending less time caring for children, even as they enjoyed reduced hours in paid work.

“We conclude that shorter standard workweeks will generate improved work-life balance, stronger social stability, and improved environmental performance without undermining productivity and material outcomes.

“We also believe that the capacity of reduced paid working hours to distribute unpaid domestic labour more evenly between men and women is clearly demonstrated from these results.”



Extract from Per Capita report on Our Community's 4DWW trial, Sharing the Spoils (April 2022).

The Per Capita report is available here: https://percapita.org.au/blog/our_work/sharing-the-spoils-a-gender-lens-analysis-of-the-four-day-week-trial-at-our-community/

Per Capita's gender lens methodology has been developed for wider application to future trials of the four-day week, in Australia and internationally, with the support of Our Community and The Victorian Office for Women.

International results

As mentioned previously, Our Community conducted its pilot alongside around 30 other mostly British companies (though we finished our pilot early). The joint pilot program was coordinated by 4 Day Week Global in partnership with researchers at Cambridge University and Boston College.

The post-pilot report proclaimed “a resounding success on virtually every dimension”.

“Companies are extremely pleased with their performance, productivity and overall experience, with almost all of them already committing or planning to continue with the four-day week schedule.

“Revenue has risen over the course of the trial. Sick days and absenteeism are down. Companies are hiring. Resignations fell slightly, a striking finding during the ‘Great Resignation’.” (Our Community experienced very few resignations during the pilot, and has had only one in the more than 12 months since.)

Of the 27 companies who filled out the post-pilot survey:

- On a scale of 0-10 from very negative to very positive, the companies’ average rating for the pilot was 9.0.
- 18 were definitely continuing, seven were planning to continue but hadn’t made a final decision yet, one was leaning toward continuing and one was not yet

sure. None was leaning against or not planning on continuing.

- When asked about how their overall company performance was affected by the pilot, the average score was 7.6.
- Asked specifically about productivity, the companies reported a score of 7.7.

Employees who participated in the pilots were similarly enthusiastic.

- On a scale of 0-10, from very bad to very good, the average overall experience of the trial was 9.1.
- Virtually all (96.9%) of the employees want to continue the trial.
- When asked to rate their current work performance compared to their lifetime best, the average score rose from 7.17 at baseline to 7.83 at the end of the trial.
- A wide range of wellbeing metrics showed significant improvement from the beginning to the end of the trial. Stress, burnout, fatigue, work-family conflict all declined, while physical and mental health, positive affect, work-family and work-life balance, and satisfaction across multiple domains of life increased. Employees used their day off for hobbies, household work and personal grooming.

The full report, and information on upcoming pilots, can be found here:

www.4dayweek.com/us-ireland-results



What we are learning about what works

Below we have documented some of what we have learned about what has worked to make our transition to a 4DWW a success, as well as issuing some notes of caution for others heading down this path. This is by no means a definitive list. New lessons emerge every day.

Lead from the top

Our experience confirms the global consensus that executive buy-in – and, in particular, a drive from the organisation's head person – is crucial to success.

Moving to a 4DWW is not for wimps. There are many ways you can find to make an experiment like this fail. You have to be bold. You need to announce your intention and then declare that it's going to work – make it clear that failure is not an option. That message has to come strongly and consistently from the top.

Do your research (but not for too long)

The research is clear that a shift to a 4DWW is good for companies, good for employees and good for society. It's important for leaders in your organisation to be across the research so they support the experiment.

However, we caution against getting bogged down in doing too much research. One of our company's mottos is "ready, fire, aim" and we employed this strategy in our 4DWW experiment. That is, do your research but then act.

In *4000 Weeks*, Burkeman writes about how he slowly came to realise that the people running the world weren't any more competent than anyone else.

"I got to know a few people ... who would admit, after a couple of drinks, that their jobs involved staggering from crisis to

crisis, inventing plausible sounding policies in the backs of cars enroute to the press conferences at which those policies had to be announced. Even then, I found myself assuming that this might all be explained as a manifestation of the perverse pride that British people sometimes take in being shamblingly mediocre. Then I moved to America – where, it turns out, everyone is winging it, too. Political developments in the years since have only made it clearer that the people 'in charge' have no more command over world events than the rest of us do.

"It's alarming to face the prospect that you might never truly feel as though you know what you're doing, in work, marriage, parenting, or anything else. But it's liberating, too, because it removes a central reason for feeling self-conscious or inhibited about your performance in those domains in the present moment: if the feeling of total authority is never going to arrive, you might as well not wait any longer to give such activities your all – to put bold plans into practice, to stop erring on the side of caution. It is even more liberating to reflect that everyone else is in the same boat, whether they're aware of it or not."

Don't wait for the perfect piece of research. No one knows everything. Nothing is risk free. Just get on with it.

Appoint the right team

How you structure your steering group is up to you, but we are confident you will need one.

Our 4DWW steering group comprised the Group Managing Director, Denis Moriarty, our Human Resources Manager, Linda O'Halloran, our Executive Director/Chaos Controller, Kathy Richardson, our Chief Financial Officer, Michelle Eddy, our Journalist and Media Manager Matthew Schulz, and our Director Special Projects Eden Rose.

In addition, we appointed an External Culture Director, Sheena Boughen, to provide ongoing advice to the management team and steering group, and to ensure the availability of an independent person for staff to talk to about any emerging concerns. Sheena and Linda also worked to provide coaching and other support to staff as they adjusted to their new workplace arrangements.

Get the mechanics right

The shift to a 4DWW is largely psychological/philosophical, but there are some mechanics to consider. For example, how are you going to cover all the shifts; how will you ensure the phone is answered when a client needs help?

We put these problems back to staff to solve. They know their business better than any centralised team and we believed they would know what would work, and what would not. (Of course, we did also need to listen to their suggestions and facilitate what they needed to enact the solutions they came up with.)

Other issues have emerged over time. Some have noted a “graveyard effect” in the office on Wednesdays (when many people are working from home, and some are off work) and Fridays (when many have begun their weekends). Some note that the fun and energetic “back to work” atmosphere on a

Monday is not enjoyed by those who work Tuesday-Friday instead of Monday-Thursday. Over time, as we recruit more people, we are adding more people to the Tuesday-Friday shift. We anticipate this will make these peaks and troughs in office energy less noticeable over time.

Don’t kill all the fun stuff

While most staff were keen for an extra day off, there was a concern that our workdays might become unbearably busy and bleak. This has not been the case.

Yes, some things fell away as we focused on keeping all of the balls in the air. Our dearly beloved and long-standing daily quiz (which had carried into the online space when we went into lockdown, and then back out into real life again once the lockdowns finished) is now more like a monthly treat than a daily one. People are now conscious about shutting down idle chit-chat during meetings (well, some of it at least). But we do still chit-chat. We still do footy tipping, we still participate in social gatherings, we enjoy the quiz when we do it.

Such changes are inevitable, and not altogether unwelcome (sometimes less is more!). And in any case, the trade-off is worth it.



Extending the benefits to part-time staff

Chances are you already have a bunch of 4DWW experts in your organisation – the people (often women with caring responsibilities) who already work part time. When we started our pilot, this applied to around one-third of our staff. We found these staff members' insights helpful as we shifted to new organisation-wide work-life arrangements.

Our pre-pilot survey revealed that some staff were worried the new arrangements would disadvantage part-timers. Our Community at the outset felt increasing wages by 20% was not the ideal option for all staff. Our shift was about creating space for a better life; it was not about better pay.

This issue had to be handled methodically and sensitively. Our Group Managing Director took the lead, and each part-time or casual worker was consulted individually to determine an approach most suitable for them. Some staff were adamant about receiving a 20% pay increase; some wanted extra leave; others received a combination of benefits. In hindsight, it may have been easier and more logical to increase wages commensurate with a 20% increase in hours being paid.

Even without adjustments to pay and conditions, it's worth noting that despite predictions to the contrary, our part-time staff members also benefited from the switch to a 4DWW. As some told our External Culture Director:

- ***“Part-time is not a problem now. I am not a bit player anymore. Am bone fide.”***
- ***“As three-day person, I am not always catching up now. Magnificent.”***
- ***“As part-timer I am not saying sorry all the time now for what I missed. Am an equal. First time ever.”***

Listen to ideas and concerns

No, really. You have to do deep listening. Our External Culture Director and Human Resources Manager took a front seat during

the preparation phase, throughout the pilot from June 6, 2022 to November 7, 2022, and beyond.

The External Culture Director undertook one-on-one meetings with managers, with teams, and with individual staff members several times during this period, providing feedback to the management team and steering group about progress. Discussions took account of culture as well as the practical considerations of how we work, uncovering useful time-saving strategies and tools.

The HR Manager sourced and coordinated workshops designed to identify our challenges and improve each staff member's overall contribution to Our Community.

Don't be a slave to the clock

The Per Capita research into the Our Community pilot found that in the first months of the transition to a 4DWW work time declined from 38 hours per week on average to 34. “While this is not a full reduction to 32 hours, this can be attributed to acclimating to the new schedule,” their report suggested.

It's possible that we will never get down to a 32-hour average: we have a big agenda and we're excited about pursuing it. What's clear is that we are working fewer hours than we were, and that's a good thing.

In truth, Our Community has never been a slave to the clock. People start late, finish early, maybe log in after hours if they need to make some time up or if they have a particular work itch they want to scratch. That's OK by us. We like give and take. Here's what our staff manual says about it.

Hours of work

Standard office hours are 9am to 5pm, with half an hour for lunch, but we don't want a team of rabid clock watchers leaving dead on five and panicking if they're not here at nine on the dot (unless you actually do need to be there at nine on the dot – in which case, yes, panic, or at least let your manager know you're running late).

(In fact, 9am-5pm with half an hour for lunch works out to 7.5 hours a day, though you'll be paid at 7.6 hours a day; we presume it will all even out in the end if you're on board with the give-and-take vibe we encourage at OC.)

Some people have negotiated different working hours and we are generally very accommodating (we know you have a life as well as a job). However, we do need to ensure there are sufficient staff to cover customer enquiries, especially given we work across time zones, and full-timers work a four-day week, so if you're going to be late (or need to leave early) let your manager know. Likewise, if you want to alter your hours for a period or permanently, please discuss this with your manager.

Flexibility does extend both ways and there may be times when we ask employees to stay later, start earlier or work on a weekend. We find that if everyone chips in and takes a turn no one is overly inconvenienced, and the job gets done faster.

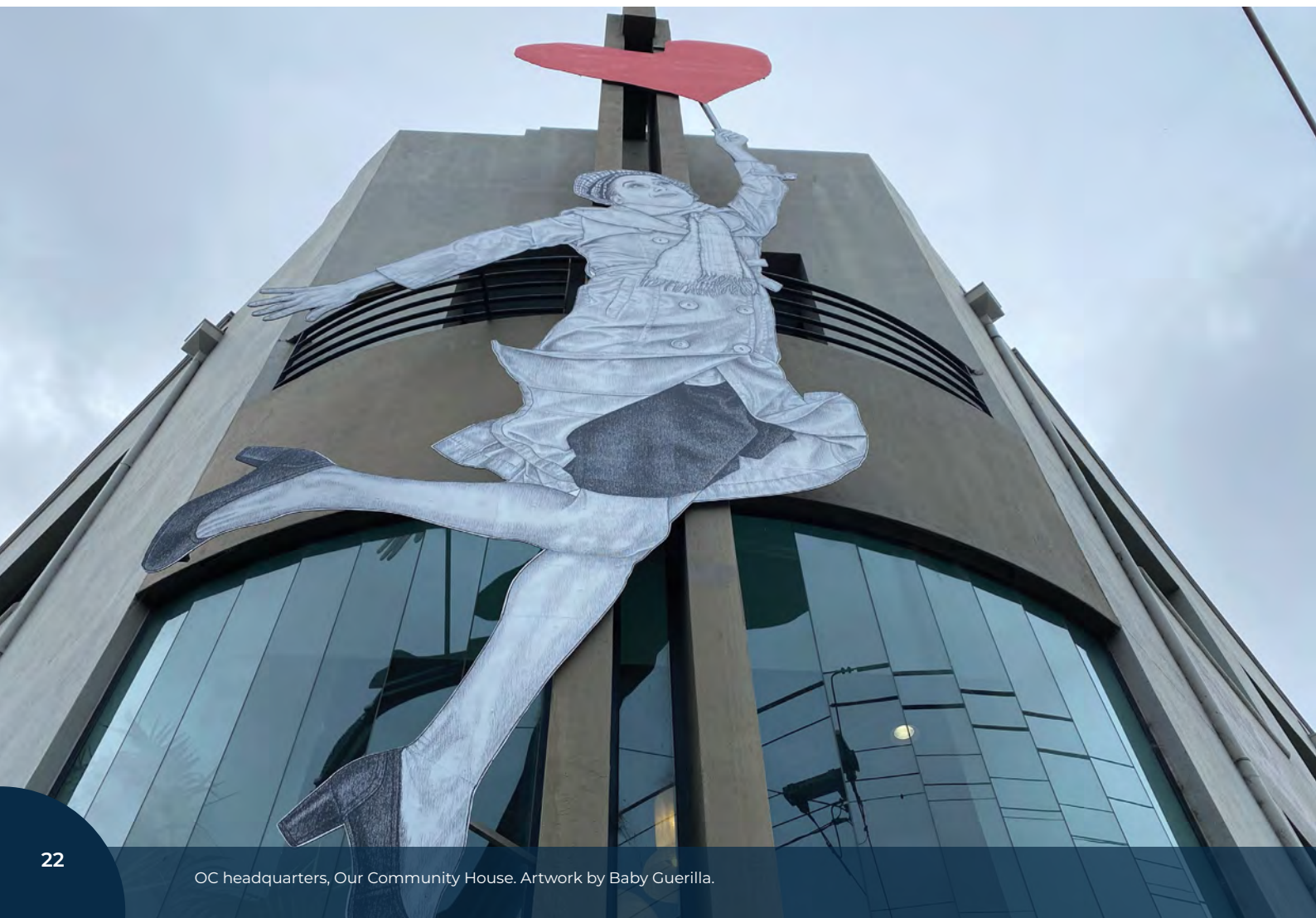
The system has been developed to provide maximum flexibility to staff without causing any disruption to the workflow of the organisation or any inconvenience to the clients of Our Community.

This approach won't work for every organisation, but it works for us.

Don't expect miracles

Similarly, you need to be realistic about how difficult it may be, at times, for staff to cut one full day out of their work week, particularly during the adjustment period. While the Per Capita study found that staff members' experiences were overwhelmingly positive, 18% of respondents did report a negative impact on their ability to complete daily work tasks.

"Roughly two-thirds of staff did not report any pressure to complete the same, or more, tasks in less time. Some staff, however,



were concerned about this problem. Some described work as intensifying, or a battle to work through lengthy to-do lists in the time available,” Per Capita wrote. The researchers concluded that the trial may have increased the daily workload or presented challenges for some participants.

We believe this pressure has eased in the months since the Per Capita survey was undertaken (in the period the research was undertaken, Our Community had just taken on a large new contract). Even during that time, Per Capita noted the downward pressure on work hours resulting from new work strategies identified as part of the all-staff survey.

“To work less while providing the same level of service, changes in the organisation of work were implemented. Most commonly, this was done by rethinking how tasks were completed: shortened meetings and cutting out unnecessary tasks. Employees reported several key improvements in productivity:

- Reforming the norms around meetings, making them shorter, less frequent, and with clearer agendas and objectives.
- Staff remained conscious of the time each process or task required, to identify ways to save time and develop new productivity targets.
- Reforming email etiquette, encouraging staff to be more attentive to the purpose of their messages and who needs to be involved.
- Reducing the number of staff involved in particular processes.
- Some staff introduced ‘deep work’ or ‘focused’ periods – designated hours of the day for staff to conduct uninterrupted independent work.
- Reorganising calendars to focus on individual tasks, reducing time wasted on switching between tasks.”

Per Capita concluded: “Through careful planning, and the input of staff, Our Community’s effort to revise working practices successfully improved and regained

any initial decrease in productivity without any knock-on ill effects. We associate this with most employees reporting an increase in job satisfaction as a result of the trial.”

In Appendix 7 we have reproduced a list of time-saving strategies produced by Our Community’s Institute of Community Directors team as a way of passing on our lessons to our not-for-profit partners about what works to preserve productivity in a time-poor environment.

Don’t let this be the only thing you do

The 4DWW did not come like a bolt out of the blue for our staff. Our Community was already working hard to be an employer of choice. Our 4DWW sits alongside a range of other initiatives designed to foster a human-centred workplace, including:

- a hybrid working model (most full-time staff work two days in the office and two days from home);
- no hot desking;
- flexible start and finish times;
- ability to combine work and interstate/overseas travel;
- gender equity initiatives (free period care products; carer/parent facilities; innovative and generous pregnancy, parental and menopause policies; paid leave for people experiencing family & intimate partner violence);
- provisions for celebrating non-mainstream cultural and religious days;
- 12% superannuation for all staff (well above the 10% that was mandated by government when we introduced this measure in January 2021, and years ahead of the July 2025 shift to 12% for all workers across the nation).

A full list of our workplace initiatives is provided as Appendix 5.

Be out and proud

We have experienced mixed reactions to our move, both from within and outside of the organisation. We've seen envy, admiration, cynicism, incredulity, stern opposition. Not everyone likes the idea. That's OK. We are happy to entertain others' points of view (though we also do like to prove them wrong).

From the outset we asked staff to be "out and proud" about the fact that we were moving to a 4DWW. We changed our answering machine and out-of-office messages and email signatures. We posted (boasted!) on social media.

Then reality hit, as our business experienced an upsurge in demand and we began to pitch for some important new contracts. We didn't try to hide from new clients the fact that our full-time staff worked four days, but we didn't shout it from the rooftops either.

That was a mistake. On urging from our staff members (see below), we have now reverted to the "out and proud" mantra. We believe it is important to acknowledge (both internally and externally) that this move is not for everyone, but that we dance to the beat of a different drum. As our staff noted in their one-on-one conversations with our External Culture Director, we now see many external practices as slow, messy and time-wasting. We are impatient and frustrated with what we perceive as a "push to leave our world and join their manic way".

We proudly include information about our working arrangements in our tender responses. We point out that this helps us maintain a stable and committed workforce.

Be creative

Our Community prides itself on being an innovative, curious, creative organisation. Throughout the pilot and beyond, staff were urged to apply that spirit to the challenge of reimagining their workplace (and their lives).

As External Culture Director Sheena Boughen told the Per Capita researchers, one of the most notable changes since the pilot began was the palpable shift in how workers valued their time.

"The efficiencies ... stemmed from employees valuing their time more and collaborating to find ways to waste less of it," they wrote, noting that this was also detected in staff survey responses.

"In line with the very high satisfaction recorded for the overall staff experience of the trial, most of the staff surveyed described positive changes to work culture tied to the 4DW.

"Some staff write about the energy and shared purpose arising from the collective effort of making the 4DW work. Others write about feeling valued by their employer or being proud of their organisation due to its willingness to try something novel.



Emilie Cobbold in one of OC's meeting booths.

"We should be proud and loud about what we have learnt about the impact of the 4DWW. We know how to work better – let's build it into our contracts. Not just what we offer but what AND how we work."

"In our contracts, don't apologise for who we are. Hold the line. Sorry is not in our language."

"...Let's show it off (our culture) and talk about why 4DWW is sophisticated and part of our winning formula."

Staff comments during one-on-one interviews with our External Culture Director.

Others still described colleagues as having a ‘bounce in their step’ or wrote that they enjoyed conversations with colleagues about what they were doing on their days off.”

Celebrate progress (the “My Week” email)

For many years, Our Community has encouraged staff to start each week by documenting in a short all-staff email what their priorities are for the week ahead. In a busy, multi-faceted organisation, it’s a simple way of ensuring people think about what needs doing in the week ahead, and that all staff are aware of what’s happening in other parts of the business.

During the 4DWW pilot these ‘My Week’ emails evolved into something of a 4DWW diary. Many staff began their emails by documenting what they had done on their “bonus” day off. We read about visits to grandparents, coffees with friends, gardening triumphs, long weekends in the country, artistic pursuits, culinary experiments: things that had been only made possible by the injection of an additional day into each weekend. Often photographs were attached.

(As we write this document another My Week email arrives. “Hope this weekend went well for all,” the staff member writes. “I used my Friday for a trip to my dentist office, market, pool cleaning, and 20k bike ride. 4DWW is great!”)

It must be remarked that not everyone is a fan of these emails – not everyone sends one; not everyone reads them. However, they allow us to bring ourselves more fully into the workplace, to learn more about each other, and to watch what the gift of a day is helping to create.

Bringing newbies on the ride

It’s important to recognise that the work you have been doing to reconfigure and realign your practical and cultural practises to support the 4DWW will normalise – because normalisation is what you are going for. We have responded to this by ensuring we continue to host a thoughtful and intentional induction for new staff to ensure they understand why we do things the way we do them. Our 4DWW is spoken about, alongside our other human-friendly workplace policies and practices, during the induction sessions that all new staff attend with our HR Manager and Group Managing Director. In addition, for the past 12 months our External Culture Director has followed up informally with each new staff member to help ensure they feel part of the team.

We have found that new staff come with their own assumptions about productivity that are more suitable to a 5DWW than a 4DWW, so bringing them along for the ride relies on clear communication and modelling – that is, *showing* is as important as *telling*. Formal and informal support is essential to ensuring our ways of working are evident to new staff, or else “cramming” can slip in.

Consider the changes you have made and document them so that you can share norms with newbies and ensure a smooth sustainability of your change. Invite new staff members to use their newness to best effect by questioning your standard practices from a productivity perspective – they’ll probably have new ideas to add to the mix.

Playing a part in the movement

It's now more than 170 years since a group of Australian stonemasons began organising around the issue of excessive working hours and petitioned the Victorian Government to implement an eight-hour day with no loss in pay. It seems logical now: eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest.

We moved to the 38-hour week in 1983. If you go by Australian Bureau of Statistics figures productivity has gone up by 83% since then, which would imply we can afford to move to a 20-hour week. We're not actually proposing that, but the burden of proof surely lies on anybody suggesting that we're currently at the sweet spot.

Our society, and our businesses, are like plate tectonics: in some areas of life things proceed smoothly and gradually, a millimetre or so a week, and in others the plates grind for decades and then slip apart in sudden earthquakes. When that happens, we suddenly notice that we're actually not the society we thought we were at all, and we run around frantically until we can settle on a new equilibrium. That time is here again. It's long past time for us to drop our current working habits.

We are proud to have been a part of the vanguard of early-movers embracing the transition to a four-day work week, and we're keen to help others follow. Since finalising our shift in November 2022, we've discussed our experiences in many public forums, and in the media, and met with dozens of organisations – businesses and not-for-profits, big and small, working in a range of contexts and sectors – to help them understand what a shift to a 4DWW might mean for them, and how to go about handling the transition. (A list of these interactions, including links where available, is provided as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3).

This move to a 4DWW is, we believe, particularly important for not-for-profits. We believe helping the not-for-profit sector to make this shift will help them retain a competitive advantage that they lost when other types of organisations adopted flexible work practices during and after the pandemic. See Appendix 7 for our ideas on how not-for-profits can do more with less.

Far from taking a financial hit as a result of cutting our staff members' hours, our client base has expanded, our workforce as grown, and our profitability has increased. At the same time, our employees are happier and more effective. We have experienced less sick leave and have recorded just one resignation since this initiative was introduced. In response to increased demand for our services we have recruited 26 new staff members and the quality of job applicants has improved substantially.

We urge anyone contemplating this move to just take the plunge. Things seem impossible. And then suddenly they're not.

The main challenge for us as this new move is bedded down is to look around and ask ourselves what else we're just not seeing because we're still wearing the blinkers of habit. What's next? Ready, fire, aim.

Appendix 1:

4DWW implementation timeline

2021

NOVEMBER

Return to the office after lockdown

- Group Managing Director Denis Moriarty welcomes staff back to the office after Melbourne's 6th Covid-19 lockdown (Melbourne spent a total of 262 days in lockdown between March 2020 and November 2021). He observes that we need to change how we work in order to improve our lives. He invites staff to consider communication and efficiency processes.
- Denis appoints Sheena Boughen as External Culture Director, highlighting that 'Everything will be up for grabs to review.'

Commencing engagement with staff

- Sheena commences one-on-one interviews with OC staff, asking:
 - What is something you loved about working from home that you don't want to lose?
 - What are your assumptions about hybrid working options – would you like to be able to work from home?
 - What would you think about moving to a four-day work week?
 - What else is on your mind?
 - Sheena provides feedback from interviews during an all-staff meeting
 - Journalist Matthew Schulz begins to record internal and public 4DWW interactions
-

DECEMBER

Setting up a steering group

- Denis sets up a 4DW steering group, comprising:
 - Group Managing Director: Denis Moriarty
 - Human Resources Manager: Linda O'Halloran
 - Chaos Controller: Kathy Richardson
 - Journalist and Media Manager: Matthew Schulz
 - Chief Financial Officer: Michelle Eddy
 - Director Special Projects: Eden Rose
 - External Culture Director: Sheena Boughen
- Steering group comes together to discuss:
 - Which day off? Some variation is required to allow for a five-day service for customers and meet life needs of team members (e.g. pre-existing childcare arrangements or existing part-time hours)
 - Hybrid arrangements including set day/s in office
 - Implications: need financial and legal analysis regarding part-time and long service leave requirements

2022

JANUARY

Setting expectations and parameters

- Denis meets with steering group to review the key drivers to shift organisation ready for 4DWW:
 - Why do 4DWW? Better for our health and lifestyle; better for our customers; better for our business
 - How we get there: Curiosity; Creativity; Coaching
 - Investigate what practices and policies are 'mad, bad or just inefficient'

- Investigate technology solutions that will improve productivity and outcomes
- Shift work responsibilities
- Productivity measures need to be individualised
- No reduction in client service

MARCH

Joining the global movement

- Our Community joins 4DW Global

Surveying staff

- Steering group devises a staff survey. All staff members are requested to respond

APRIL

Analysing survey results

- Steering Group analyses the results of the survey

MAY

Preparation for launch

- Denis leads project to commence implementation of productivity, reimagination and 4DWW preparation strategies
- Managers lead team-based strategies and individuals take ownership of their own preparation and adaptation strategies
- Essentialism by Greg McKeown is provided to all staff
- Denis negotiates adjustments regarding timing and pay with part-time staff

JUNE

Commence pilot

- OC commences six-month pilot (alongside UK companies) – coordinated by 4DW Global
- Staff participate in Paul Holbrook's Diary Detox workshop

JULY

Checking in

- Sheena conducts one-to-one conversations with staff to sense check the impact of the 4DWW
- Staff participate in Inventium 'Finding your Focus' workshop
- Team members contribute to 4DW Global panel on our approach & learnings
- Matthew prepares content and film for media and external inquiries (interviews are conducted by Denis and Sheena, alongside other staff)

AUGUST

Checking in

- Individuals and teams are encouraged to observe adaptation to the change and support dialogues to unlock obstacles – both as individuals and within their teams
- Teams are encouraged to use questioning to suggest ways of doing things differently

OCTOBER

Monitoring the results

- Our Community and Per Capita kick off study of the Our Community experience
-

NOVEMBER

Confirming the switch

- Denis announces in an all-team meeting that the shift to a 4DWW is permanent

2023

JANUARY

Monitoring the adjustment

- Each OC team participates in a workshop with Sheena to reflect on how the shorter week has impacted us. Sheena enquires about which tools have been useful, and what the impact has been on culture and communication
- The discussion is broadened to discuss culture and the way we work – it's clear that this is about more than a four-day work week; it's about reimagining work and the differences that flow on from that to our lives

Assessing the results

- 4 Day Week Global study is released
-

APRIL

Assessing the results

- Per Capita study into the Our Community 4DWW experience, including application of a gender lens, is released
-

JUNE

One year since start of pilot

- All staff are invited to book a one-on-one conversation with Sheena to discuss:
 - What's the most significant thing that has changed in your life with the 4DWW? Why?
 - How has 4DWW impacted your work life?
 - Anything else you'd recommend to improve our workplace overall?
 - Approximately 75% response rate
 - Interview responses, reactions and observations are captured by Sheena (see Appendix 6)
-

OCTOBER

Reflecting on the change

- All-staff meeting is held at Melbourne HQ. Denis and Sheena provide reflections and additional actions to improve work processes
- Internal report is shared with all employees and adapted for sharing externally

Appendix 2: Media appearances



The Project Sept 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrWEQw8kURQ>



Nine's Today Show

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCyMa0fYunA>



Channel 7 Sept 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6KX9FeizpQ>



Guy faces IBAC probe on donor scandal

Rachel Eddle
Paul Sakal

Opposition Leader Matthew Guy will go to court today to face charges with the prospect of an anti-corruption investigation into alleged disloyalty hanging over his head after a Liberal donor scandal was referred to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.

Victorian Electoral Commissioner Warren Entsch said yesterday that the VEC had referred attempts to fully investigate Guy and his former chief of staff, Mitch Cullen, and had referred potential breaches of Victoria's donation disclosure laws to IBAC.

Guy says he has done nothing wrong and is happy to co-operate but walked out of a heated press conference in Melbourne yesterday while journalists were questioning him about the investigation.

While Guy earlier this week said the electoral commission was not investigating disloyalty, Cullen was referred yesterday that the VEC was

THE AGE SAYS
Voting system in dire need of reform
EDITORIAL PAGE 20

looking at potential breaches of the law.

The news came on the same day the Liberal-referred Labor and so-called "preference whippers" Simon Denery to IBAC over a leaked video of Denery discussing how the state's voting system for the upper house was manipulated.

Guy and the opposition's attempts to respond on the integrity of Premier Daniel Andrews over the extent of his involvement in several IBAC inquiries have been hindered by the Cullen saga.

But a bulletin Guy said yesterday that his referral to IBAC paid to competitors to the inquiry that Labor had faced, which he described as unprecedented.

"I say to Victorians, you do have



Less can be more with a four-day work week

Jewel Topfield
Local affairs editor

When software company Our Community told staff it was trialling a four-day working week, it was clear: "If we fail to maintain productivity, then we have failed the pilot."

On November 7 - five months into the six-month pilot - group managing director Denis Moriarty told the firm's staff the staff had a four-day week would be permanent. The North Melbourne office erupted in cheers.

Our Community is part of the Australian pilot of the world's longest trial of the four-day working week, where employees get a five-day day off a week with no loss of pay.

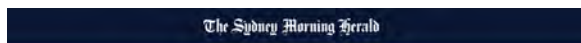
The pilot, run by the not-for-profit, Day Work Global, is based on the 100,000-200 model - workers get 100 per cent of the pay for 80 per cent of the time at 100 per cent productivity.

This week, Unilever Australia - which makes toiletries including Rexona, Dove and Softly, as well as Shwartz hair-care - also began a separate 15-month trial of a four-day working week based on the 100,000-200 model.

This fall was successful

The Age, November 2022

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/workplace/less-is-more-staff-all-for-making-four-day-working-week-permanent-at-melbourne-firm-20221116-p5byol.html>



Our Community team leader Max Perre with Reno Basile: "I look forward to coming in." PHOTO: CHRIS HOPKINS/GETTY IMAGES/REXUS

Why now? And is there an ideal work-life balance?

Basile can pinpoint the moment his working week blurred into evenings and weekends. His advertising agency gave him a Blackberry phone, allowing him to answer emails at all hours. "That was really the death knell of the personal-professional life separation," he says. Years later, he was typically working nine or more hours a day in IT, elastic hours that stretched further when he worked from home during the pandemic. "The biggest thing is getting to the end of the week and feeling exhausted," he says.

The pandemic amplified interest in rethinking the world of work - from the right to switch off and the value of offices, to how and when we work. Hopkins believes a pay increase is less important to many people than their work-life balance. "We might be feeling the interest-rate increases and prices going up," Hopkins says. "But we are not feeling it anywhere near as much as we felt a pandemic ... People are prioritising themselves and their health and wellbeing over their job."

Age explainer, May 2023

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/workplace/a-four-day-work-week-sounds-like-a-pipe-dream-but-can-it-work-just-as-well-as-five-20230517-p5d97s.html>

These bosses tried a four-day work week. This is what they learnt



Euan Black
Work and careers reporter

Sep 29, 2022 - 5:00am



Denis Moriarty reckons an employer would have to be "absolutely nuts" not to try out a four-day workweek.

The founder of social enterprise Our Community has been trialling a [shorter workweek](#) since August and says staff are "overwhelmingly" happy with the extra day off and producing more in less time.

"It's had a profound impact on staff and their families," Mr Moriarty said.

"They do more [work] in that four-day period than they did in five days because they're recharged and refreshed."



Denis Moriarty (right) and partner Brendan Shanahan (left) with their son John Neeson at home. Eddie Jim

Mr Moriarty's company is using the 100:80:100 model - [where employees retain 100 per cent of their pay](#) while reducing their hours to 80 per cent, provided they maintain 100 per cent productivity.

Australian Financial Review, September 2022

<https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/workplace/these-bosses-trialed-a-four-day-work-week-this-is-what-they-learnt-20220927-p5bl8j>

Finish early and work less. Four-day weeks worth the trade-off



WELL, they tell me it's a new year, and in this office we're going to be celebrating it by spending a collective total of 10.5 years less at work.

In my day job I run Our Community, a medium-sized company with 80 staff that services the not-for-profit and government sectors.

Mid last year we were the first Australian company to join a global trial of the four-day week. It worked out so well, we finished it early and now we're all working less. You - employer, employee, whatever - should think about it yourself.

Just to hit the FAQs, no, we haven't just worked the same number of hours over fewer days.

No, there has been no cut in salaries. No, there has been no drop in productivity. Instead, staff have been given training and guidance to offset the changes with innovations, efficiencies, and a clearer focus on the Our Community mission. What's more there have been improvements on some measures - for example, sick leave is down 36

per cent. If there is a downside, we haven't found it yet. Sure, there are going to be a lot of Australian businesses that have problems making the change. But there are a lot more that could do it on their own. The office today isn't at all like the Model T Ford production line, which underlies the five-day week and eight-hour day, and the clocking-on system that we've got now.

The software workers at our office, for example, don't have to work at the pace of the line, turning out a set amount of code every day. They enjoy a high degree of autonomy because they're the people who best know how their piece of the puzzle fits in.

As their boss, I can tell whether they're doing good work, but I rely on their help to do it better.

Last year I asked them - and the rest of our crew - how our business could work better, and I believe that's why the changeover worked so well. Given a chance to suggest how we could make the four-day week work, staff passed me 193 pages of productivity improvements.

Since then, we've put a premium on people's time. We're more organised, we've cut back on meetings, and we focus on what's essential and reducing wasted effort. We've made up the drop in hours with a greater

understanding of what we're aiming for.

We're tapping into the creativity of some very creative people, and we can do that only because we're showing that we respect them as people, not just as hired hands.

Because - and I should perhaps have mentioned this earlier - the fundamental point of the exercise isn't to add a percent or two to the annual accounts, it's to make people happier. Our grants search guru Stef is using the spare time to hone her yoga moves. Data analyst Orgil is spending his day off with his three-year-old daughter and picking up his other kids from school. We've all been able to find time to relax, take a breath, reflect, and catch up on what's going on in our lives.

I could defend the move to four days by saying that I expect better mental health to further reduce sick leave, and for better work conditions to attract more good people to sign on, improving the bottom line, but that's just stuff at the margins.

The real reason for us moving to a shorter week and reinforcing our hybrid work arrangements, is that after what we saw during our lockdown, there's no reason for regarding the standard setup as sacred. We've been fetishising the 38-hour week as if it was a tribute to an angry god, enforced by thunderbolts or plagues of locusts, and it's

just not. The four-day week is only a down payment on a total life-changing rethink of the way we should do business. Today's workers are impatient with hierarchy and bullshit. We're in unsettled and unpredictable times, and management must be flexible. I mean, I shouldn't have to take on the onus of demonstrating that the four-day week can work. Other employers should be made to prove that they really need to keep workers at their desks and away from their families and friends and gardens for that precious extra day.

More happiness - and it's a tribute to the power of our mid-Victorian work norms that I have to say this - is, other things being equal, better than less happiness. The people who assume that this can't work are probably the same people who don't believe in climate change, or addressing disadvantage, when all the evidence points to the need for action.

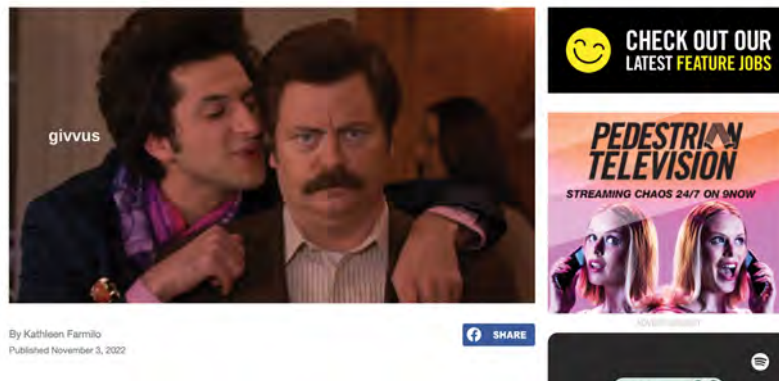
Real change can't be just a one-off effort. It has to be systemic and it has to start somewhere. I'd suggest that you look around your workplace now.

Denis Moriarty is group managing director of OurCommunity.com.au, a social enterprise helping the country's 600,000 not-for-profits.

Canberra Times commentary, March 2022

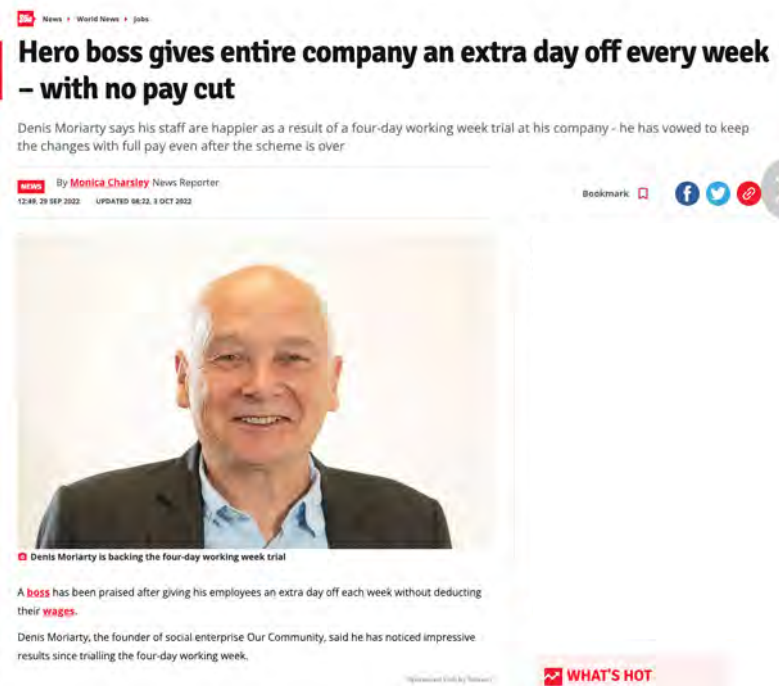
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7666467/my-organisation-is-moving-to-a-four-day-week-heres-why/?cs=14246>

Why Doesn't Australia Have A 4-Day Work Week When It Sounds Like Fkn Bliss? An Investigation



Pedestrian TV

<https://www.pedestrian.tv/news/australian-four-day-work-week/>



Daily Star (UK)

<https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/world-news/hero-boss-gives-entire-company-28112841>

Our Community's web report of our four-day week experience:

<https://communitydirectors.com.au/articles/our-communitys-experience-of-the-four-day-work-week>

Five-minute YouTube video summary:

<https://youtu.be/K1-5bUaWMfM?si=dalOOPu2xmAfCfw8>

Appendix 3: Meetings & Training

Our Community has participated in numerous meetings and forums on the 4DWW, both as viewer and participant. Below we have listed a selection of these events.

Global Presentations for UK Pilot

Workshop 1

1 April 2022 (2.5 hours) Introduction to UK Pilot and planning session (Alex Soojung-Kim Pang and Banks Benitez)

Banks Benitez Co-founder & CEO Uncharted – who rolled out a 4DWW in 2020 – his experience, lessons learned.

Workshop 2

14 April 2022 (1.5 hours) Andrew Barnes (Founder Perpetual Guardian and Architect of 4 Day Week Global). Perpetual Guardian experience and important messaging.

Workshop 3

21 April 2022 (1 hour) Research Briefing – Juliet Schor, Economist and Professor of Sociology, Boston College USA.

Workshop 4

3 May 2022 (1.5 hours) Paul Holbrook “Time Management & Prioritisation: Discovery Workshop”.

Workshop 5

10 May 2022 (1.5 hours) Ask Me Anything Pioneer Roundtable.

Mark Mullen, CEO Atom Bank

Emily Mikaili, SVP of People Operations, Signifyd

Jack Selman, Head of Operations & Deliver, Edison 365

John Lennon, Founder, Tryve Talent



Alex Soojung-Kim Pang from the 4DWW global group on a visit to Our Community House

Workshop 6

12 May 2022 (1.5 hours) Finding your Focus: Keynote on Workday Reinvention – Sasha D’Arcy, Inventium.

Workshop 7

18 May 2022 (1.5 hours) Productivity Hacks Masterclass – Curium.

Workshop 8

20 May 2022 (1.5 hours) Facilitated Networking and Problem Solving Session.

Our Community key dates

6 June 2022

Go live for Our Community

20 & 21 June 2022 (9.30am – 11.00am)

Our Community training: Time Management & Prioritisation: Diary Detox with Paul Holbrook

7 July 2022 (11.30am – 12.30pm)

Our Community training – Finding your Focus with Sasha D’Arcy, Inventium

Appendix 4:

All-staff survey

In March 2022 we launched an all-staff survey that served to put down in writing what we felt our move to a 4DWW would (and would not) be, and to invite staff to lead the change. The text of this survey is provided below.

Introduction

Why it is essential that you complete this survey

Our Community is committed to moving to a four-day week. We are aiming to commence a six-month pilot from Monday, June 6 – that is, we expect to be working to the four-day week model from June 6. There's a bit of work to do before we get there.

What this isn't

Moving to a four-day week is not about dropping a day of work and damn the consequences. We want to use this as an opportunity to reinvent work at Our Community. And no one knows your work better than you. Your thoughtful contribution to this survey (and to the project as a whole) is crucial to this project's success. We will step into this brave new world with care and caution, but also (we hope) a lot of excitement.

Why are we doing this?

We are certain that moving to a four-day week will be better for our health and lifestyles; better for our customers; better for our business. We will need to shed some things but we do not anticipate a loss, either to our income or our impact. We all learned to work differently during the long lockdowns. We want to continue the evolution of work and be part of the revolution towards more human-friendly workplaces and lifestyles.

How will we get there?

With curiosity, with creativity, with good humour, and with a commitment by all to try our best and get it done. We need you to commit to making this work. We need you to abandon rigidity. We need you to think bigger and strive for greatness!

What will we do with your responses?

The information provided here will be collated and shared with the 4-day-week steering group (comprising Sheena, Denis, Kathy, Eden, Linda, Matt and Michelle). We'll treat it sensitively and we'll use it to inform our next steps. We can't promise you we'll agree to every suggestion you make, but we can promise we will come to the data with open minds and carefully consider each idea you put forward. We need to be able to connect responses to an individual so we are asking for your name in this survey. There's a link to an anonymous addendum survey if you want to provide some additional anonymised input.

What are the next steps?

We are applying OC's signature "ready, fire, aim" approach to the task of shifting to a four-day week; we have access to a lot of international examples of how this transition has been managed in other organisations but to a large degree we'll be feeling our way to find a process that suits our style. We're not interested in auditing every little thing everyone does and applying piles of metrics. At some points we'll guide you; other times we'll ask you to guide us. We hope you will trust us to make this exciting and liberating; not painful and stressful.

How will we know it has worked?

After our six-month trial we expect to see a reimagined workplace – inefficient personal practices reformed; workplace policies and systems that are mad, bad or just inefficient thrown out or rebuilt. Our client list will still be growing. Our existing clients will still consider our products and service the best in the business. You will be happier. The business will be booming.

Please complete this survey by 9am on Thursday March 31.

Sheena is available to talk you through any queries, concerns or suggestions or to discuss any ideas you have. You can call her on xxx or email xxx.

A note about culture

We are a culture-driven company. From our ability to have hard conversations, to office laughs when Rose dresses up at Christmas, to our sense of togetherness, our culture defines us more than anything else. If our hours are cut, our culture cannot suffer. Our culture is our essential service.

We have done a crash course in managing our culture during the past two years of working from home. We have had to plant our culture in small moments, nurture it remotely, and then work to make a two-dimensional work experience three dimensional again.

We have had to celebrate differently, listen more intently, create coffee and café moments with greater intentionality, and speak directly to each other with full truth and full love through a computer screen. Many miss the team's in-person togetherness, but our culture is as strong as ever after nearly two years apart.

Our culture survived during remote working, and it must survive during a four-day work week.

One last thing:

Please give yourself permission to put a lot of time, energy and creativity into completing this survey. You may not know HOW to change things, but please don't hold back on saying what you think needs to change.

Allow yourself at least a couple of hours for thinking and writing. Then ready, fire, aim.

Driver No. 1 - Policy Changes

Take some time to think through any Our Community-wide or team-based policies that

you think could be reformed, reimagined, or done away with entirely.

We're looking for examples of things that we could do to remove bureaucracy, save us time, save us money, make us more money, make us more effective, or make us more impactful. Tell us what, and why, and maybe even how.

1. What policies or procedures should we reform, reimagine, or axe?

Driver No. 2 - Changed work practices

Now think about the way you and others in your team or the wider group organise work and personal tasks. What practices could be altered to make room for an extra day off every week? Again, tell us what, how and why.

2. What personal practices could or should you or other team members alter?

Driver No. 3 - Reimagining our products and services

What should we be doing more of? What should we be doing less of? What are your burning ideas for new products or services we could introduce that could generate income or increase our impact? What could we let go of in order to create space for new things?

3. What products or services would you like to see introduced or axed?

Driver No. 4 - Business Process Improvements

Our Community is now more than 20 years old. We have entered the territory of "doing things that way because that's the way we've always done it." It's time to shake things up.

What business processes should be reformed? What would we gain by doing so? Be as broad-stroke or as specific as you like or as you can. No idea is too hard or too wild or too minor - let's get it all on the table.

4. What business process improvements could we make?

What did we miss?

What other ideas do you have for how we can reimagine work at Our Community? What could we be working towards as a long-term goal? How can we do more with less (time)? How do we ensure we're focusing on what really matters?

5. Let us have it! Post your ideas here:

Nuts & Bolts

OK, now we need to test the waters with a few options so we can start putting some flesh on the bones of this project.

6. **What troubles you or stresses you out about this move and/or any of the principles provided above?**
7. **What interests or excites you about this move and/or any of the principles provided above?**
8. **Would you be interested in joining any of these sub-committees/working groups? (Tick any and all that apply)**
 - a. **Communications taskforce (develop new email, Slack and other comms protocols)**
 - b. **Meetings taskforce (develop new systems for holding fewer & better meetings)**
 - c. **Other**
9. **Which day do you think OC should adopt as its third weekend day? (Note that we will still need to provide customer service Mon-Fri so some people may need to work on different days to the majority.)**
 - a. **Monday (OC office closes on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays)**
 - b. **Friday (OC office closes on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays)**
 - c. **Another day - please specify:**

10. **Why do you think this should be the day OC shuts shop?**

11. **How would you feel about us adopting a "FIFO" model after the pilot, whereby we have Friday off one week and Monday off the following week, giving us a 4-day weekend one week, followed by a 2-day weekend the next week?**

- a. **Love it - gimme the 4-day weekend**
- b. **Hate it - gimme structure and consistency**
- c. **Not sure**
- d. **Please feel free to provide some comments:**

12. **Anything else you want to say? (No comment is unwelcome!)**

13. **Your name:**

14. **If you would like to provide additional anonymous suggestions/feedback you can do so here: [link to anonymous survey]**

Final Note

At a moment in time where it seems like everyone is trying to predict an increasingly unpredictable future, we're making no proclamations that this should be the new normal, or that we have cracked the nut and figured it out, or that we have a rare vision into the future, or that we have it all together and now everyone should follow our path, or that the future looks like four-day workweeks.

It is not our intention to suggest any of that. This is one experiment for one team. Nothing more. We must understand that if we fail to maintain productivity at the levels required, then we have failed the four-day week pilot.

Appendix 5: Our Community workplace policies



Workplace Amenity

- Art & plant filled workspace
- Elimination of “dark corners” in office spaces
- Comfortable and private sick bay / pregnancy rest facility
- Female-friendly bathrooms/toilets/facilities (sinks available in cubicles; free tampons and pads available in every toilet)
- Rest space and provisions for those experiencing discomfort due to period and perimenopause or menopause symptoms
- Shower & laundry facilities
- Electric car charging facilities
- Dog friendly
- Cycling amenities
- In-house cafe



Health & Social Wellbeing

- Book club and other social meet ups
- Regular wine downs/ social events
- Sit/stand desks
- Flu & Covid-19 vaccination program
- No office bins (designed to encourage regular body movement)
- Perimenopause/ menopause accommodations, including additional leave if/as required
- Company sponsored Christmas party
- Regular informal staff quiz



Career Development

- Access to a range of company-delivered training opportunities, including Communities in Control Conference, Diploma of Governance, capacity building meetups and training
- Employee-led and manager-sponsored and company-wide (e.g. time management skills) training
- Ability to apply for study-related leave of absence (including paid study leave)



Equity & Inclusion

- Availability of non-gender-specific toilets
- Gender-sensitive recruitment and employment practices
- Wheelchair-friendly lift and accessible reception counter
- Dedicated disability car parking
- Prayer room / quiet room
- Provisions for celebrating non-mainstream cultural and religious days;



Responsible Employer

- Responsibility to employees (as well as the environment and the communities in which we work) enshrined in our constitution
- Employee collaboration in company Manifesto development & review
- 12% superannuation (well ahead of federal government mandated minimum) – including for casual employees
- Superannuation paid during parental leave
- Salary packaging for portable electronic devices



Responsible Business Practices

- Fair pay policies & practices (including regular gender lens audit of wages)
- Child labour-free and avoidance of modern slavery policies
- Whistleblower policy
- Child protection policy
- Anti-discrimination & workplace harassment policies
- Confidentiality, intellectual property, privacy & conflict of interest policies
- Work health and safety and fair work conditions



Giving Back

- Mission-driven organisation: “Stronger communities through stronger community organisations”
- Products & services designed for not-for-profits and community groups (including free and cross-subsidised/ heavily discounted products and services)
- On site community pantry & little library
- Workplace food/produce exchange
- Use of local suppliers wherever possible
- Staff participation on boards and committees of grassroots community organisations
- Donations of funds to community causes
- Pro bono goods and services, including use of facilities



Work-Life Balance

- 4 day work week for all full-time staff (with no loss of pay)
- Hybrid working permitted for all staff (days can be tailored to suit employee's preferences & commitments)
- Flexible start and finish times
- Ability to combine work with overseas/ interstate travel



Sustainability

- Modern end-of-trip facilities
- Electric car charging facilities
- Solar panels
- Green office
- Waste and battery recycling facilities
- Energy-saving lighting
- Modern and efficient heating and cooling facilities
- Recycling of food waste & soft plastics
- Minimisation of flights and car trips
- Aim to transition to zero carbon by 2030
- Program to support not-for-profits to transition to zero carbon by 2030



Family Friendly

- Paid parental leave provisions beyond statutory requirements – additional 8 weeks' leave at ordinary pay for both birth and non-birth parents
- Superannuation paid during parental leave
- Provisions for maintaining contact during parental leave, and for adjusting to return to work (including trial periods to test options)
- Pregnancy accommodations, including for non-birthing-partner
- Foster care/adoption/kinship care leave
- Special pregnancy, miscarriage, stillbirth and fertility-related leave (beyond statutory requirements, including for non-birth partners)
- Family violence leave
- Child-friendly workplace (e.g. breast/chest-feeding facilities, high chair, baby change facilities)
- Extended paid personal and compassionate leave if/as required

Appendix 6:

Field observations: staff reflections 12 months on

In August 2023, our External Culture Director Sheena Boughen conducted one-on-one meetings with staff members to gauge how things were going almost 12 months after our shift to a 4DWW was made permanent. All were invited to participate, with around 75% of the workforce agreeing to take part.

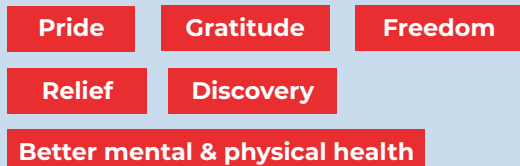
Sheena asked three questions of all staff:

- What's the most significant thing that has changed in your life with the 4DWW? Why?
- How has 4DWW impacted your work life?
- Anything else you'd recommend to improve our workplace overall?

Below we have reproduced Sheena's notes on the comments made during these meetings.

Question 1: What's the most significant thing that has changed in your life with the Four Day week? Why?

Frequently commented on:



What's changed a lot in the last 6 months?

There were many changes in people's stories with a shift towards *we* rather than *me*. There were comments about new people and new contracts, and Increase in tolerance for family & friends – especially the elderly.

Some insights:

"Private life has oxygen now."

*"We have agency in our lives now.
The whole week is different."*

"I was missing out on life before."

"Why did Denis think work should be more than it is?"

*"5 day week seems so ancient. So inhumane.
Not a life."*

"High tide raises all boats."

"Gift Denis gave us was called 4DW."

"Could have been a pay rise, or more holidays or talks on Tuesdays. It was called 4DW but really the tagline was...have a better life."

"Make the most of it. Every day."

"I appreciate OC even more now."

"Overwhelmingly positive."

"I am thinking now about my life. I have agency in my life."

"Now more than 6 months ago, my life is transformed."

"Feel tightness has gone and am less stressed, less jamming in."

"Such a change in my perspective."

"Before I just did, was just busy all the time. Now I can take space and think and let go of things that before were bothering me."

"No Sunday dread."

"Just lately I have started to imagine and feel what choice is about. Amazing."

"Critical to have space in my life, and now I can think about self-empowerment and decision making - agency it has given me cannot be overestimated."

"Mental health is SO different. I have focused on that knowing I am working somewhere that's real about self-care."

"I am thinking now about my life. I have agency in my life."

"I am excited more all week and feel an adrenaline rush on Thursdays to get everything done!"

"Space to think now."

Insights about relationships:

"Given me a gift. Gift of time with my grandmother."

"Gives me time and a chance to be a good son."

"My partner loves Denis!"

"Friday is 'thank you Denis day'"

"Made life outside of work easier"

"Family relations are so much better."

"Relationship with my parents is very different now. Not angry or anxious with them now."

"Flexibility we have is an essential partner to 4DW. Makes the whole week lighter."

"I care more about OC now. 4DW has done that."

"Sharing load with my partner more."

What else:

"Trust is everywhere at OC."

"My team leader is so conscious about making it work."

"Such power in being able to do this altogether."

"Far less grumpy on Monday now."

"Everyone comes in on Mondays and is happier."

"I love seeing the happiness of everyone experiencing what I have been as PT for years. Joyful."

"Time for life."

"Doom and gloom gone."

"We are being a community ...what a chance we have to explore something else, together."

"Not just a well-being course or book, or a Saturday yoga class."

What next:

"Help the new people more to get it."

"Was asking myself – now, is my four days valuable? I rethink. I want my four days to be meaningful not just valued. Would never have asked that before."

"Never ever going back."

Question 2: How has 4DW impacted your work life?

Frequently commented on:

Mondays are great as there are face to face interactions

So so different now

So proud to work at OC

Some insights:

"SO so different now. Coming to work is like going to yoga."

"People are much happier and workplace feels better now."

"So proud to work at OC."

"As a part-timer I am not saying sorry all the time now for what I missed. Am an equal. First time ever."

"People are much happier and workplace feels better now."

"Part-time is not a problem now. I am not a bit player anymore. Am bone fide."

"As three-day person, I am not always catching up now. Magnificent."

"WFH gives us convenience. But 4DW gives us a major shift in how to design our lives."

"4DW seems to be a language for 'how can I do this better?'"

"That's what makes us all SO grateful and feel so privileged."

"You know, it's working because DM just loves us all. Amazing isn't it. It's just love."

"Preparation we did together was so useful, although just some pieces of a tool bag for a better work life. We truly are having a shared experience of change, of transformation, together. It's much more powerful and sustainable."

"The workshops we did and follow up to talk about this now is SO valuable."

"Really appreciate being asked how it's going. Thank you."

"Now we talk about culture. It's so different and so powerful."

"We have a language now to talk about how we work."

"Others assume that it's good or necessary to work 5+ days, that it's what you have to do to succeed."

"I feel urgency to ensure we learn from our own frustration that when we have to leave our world and join others' manic ways."

"So much more productive with our culture."

"Needed first six months just to get my personal life better organised. Now I am focused at work so much more."

"Can't compensate for ramping up to five days a week with days in lieu. The spirit is lost."

"During a particularly busy time I was back to working five days a week, & I felt my performance going backwards. I felt things were dragging and was not sure why. Lost the sharpness. Then I stopped the five days and went back to four and I was so much sharper and more productive. Incredible experience."

"Others are jealous. They have 4DW envy."

What else?

"We are change makers in the world."

"More confident in everything at OC now. Finding my voice."

"I am better now at saying 'My calendar is full up so I can't help you.'"

"I know I am more focused, more enthusiastic, and feel sharper."

"I say 'no' more often or 'not just now'."

Am empowered."

"I can't hear yet what I am trying to see about my life."

"...let's show it off (our culture) and talk about why 4DW is sophisticated and part of our winning formula"

"Didn't really trust or believe it was real. Shift in how we work now is amazing."

"Are we the only ones who really get the power of our culture now?"

What next?

"Now I want to yell at people why don't you try 4DW! It's so much better and you'll get more done."

"How do we integrate our culture to clients?"

"Troubled somewhat as to how we retain the power and put our culture into the winning formula when selling OC externally."

"We are aware our team leaders are shielding us from the demands. That's not fair."

"Aren't we being hypocritical if we believe four days produces better output...why don't we sell that?"

"4DW should be a point of value alongside our content value."

"Team leaders protected us from excesses of customers. They were so overworked though."

"Setting pace is an issue. As a middle manager, am I overworking? Am I demonstrating the right behaviours?"

"We must have care and concern for how we integrate new people."

"Different days off do create more waiting – we need to be mindful of that."

"Concern for how we keep flexibility and feel we are one organisation."

Question 3: Anything else you'd recommend to improve our workplace overall?

Frequently commented on:

Denis

Learning from others

Staying connected as we grow

"Blown away by DM's ability to manage complexity in our organisation."

"Ready Fire Aim is the basis. Are we really learning together what's possible, and making the best impact we can?"

"What can I learn from others, e.g. from ICDA and their insights from workshops presented that better shapes my life as meaningful, to have better purpose?"

"With so many people – how do we stay as one – one Our Community?"

- Small subtle interactions were noted, especially messages from Denis.
- Many commented on the weekly quiz as a positive thing to be retained.
- Footy tipping comp likewise.
- My Week. So many look forward to these.
- Some love Mondays, to see, hear and enjoy each other's company.
- There is strong support for working from home – should it be reinforced to be at office two days a week?

"Celebrate what we have. Recognise what we have."

"WFH is about convenience – we are aware it's not engagement or belonging."

"Work to ensure we are one organisation – and must focus on next level of being the best."

"Tuesdays are like a graveyard. I worry about us not being together much overall."

"Thursdays are a bit drab."

"Sundays I can't wait to get back to work!"

What else?

- Some shared worry... will we have to hide our way of working which we are just understanding is more humane, much more sustainable and productive – and more fun?

"While we know Denis applauds taking initiative, sometimes hard to judge how much you can do."

"Need increased collaboration across enterprises & someone to get team leaders together every now and again."

"We should be proud and loud about what we have learnt about impact of 4DW. We know how to work better – let's build it into our contracts. Not just what we offer but what AND how we work."

"Ask - What's working well – what's challenging you and so what?"

"Would like to bring team leaders together say once a month to share what's going on and challenges. Otherwise I feel I am missing out on learning from each other."

"Wasting time and money too often I realise. At the decision making level we are duplicating processes e.g. all buying digital products and services. It's not a smart way to do it."

"Time waster is that our systems don't talk to each other."

"There is some innovation and focus to get better whole systems approach – but so much opportunity to think about whole of customer experience."

"We are not leveraging expertise."

"Not learning from the best at OC."

"Unmet potential from across different silos within OC. Missing intimacy of knowing everyone to have informal interactions."

"Want to elevate my thinking. PD in the OC style. Learn by doing. Want active learning – experiential learning."

What else?

"Need Denis to say - do a Spring refresh! All teams to spring clean – meet for 20 mins and work out top five things to clean up and out."

"If we believe that working less increases output, how do we ensure we don't do five days all the time, just to fit in with others' ways of working?"

"In our contracts, don't apologise for who we are. Hold the line. Sorry is not in our language."

"Ask customer questions. What problem are you wanting to solve that means you need this now?"

Requests for refresh of meeting process:

- Some observed that it can sometimes be more efficient to meet in-person.

Refresh how best to use Slack & email:

"Was our friend during Covid – now can be a monster."

"What's the chain of command....can't see what the outcome is and needs someone to say – this is what we have decided, we are now going to do x."

"Please – help us work out how to use email to get a decision communicated."

Offers from staff to share their tips to sharpen our processes on:

- **Slack and email:** Offers to review and also set up consistency for naming files
- **Systems:** Consistency with server labels (offer to do)
- **Induction:** Love induction and want follow up e.g. do meeting process with External Culture Director
- **Great to be in the office!** Promoting value of subtle social connections e.g. the quiz, the footy tipping comp, distribute sweets & lures to get people to move around office, do more of this as this makes Mondays the best day of the working week

- **My week messages:** highly valued, there is frustration regarding meeting new staff
 - ▶ new person could add a photo and two sentences about themselves in My Week so that people can easily come and say hello
- **Making new people welcome and integrated:** walk around and introduce as a minimum, new person to each team leader as the anchor, then they can cascade out

"So many of us are introverts and we hesitate even in the kitchen to say hello as we don't know if they are OC or not. Feel awkward to ask!"

Final thoughts:

"We are ready to do whatever it takes for next steps of us evolving. We can't drift into doing 5 days. It's a very bad habit."

"How do we have these conversations regularly?"

"Is this really forever?"

Appendix 7:

ICDA's Ten tips for doing more in less time

Our Community's shift to a four-day work week inspired the team that works most closely with the not-for-profit sector, the Institute of Community Directors Australia, to document what we learned about how to preserve productivity in a time-poor environment. This help sheet is reproduced below and is available from our website at <https://communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/how-to-increase-productivity-in-less-time>.

The opportunity to make the world – or at least one small corner of it – a better place is what draws many people to the not-for-profit (NFP) sector. Whether it involves making a difference in the area of climate change, youth, diversity, community, sport, health, animal welfare or something else, working in the NFP sector means having a strong sense of purpose. It means being heavily invested in the work.

If workers aren't careful to draw clear personal boundaries, and if workplaces don't have good policies in place to preserve work-life balance, that can lead to long hours, high stress levels and even burnout.

At the Institute of Community Directors Australia, one policy in place to help staff manage their work-life balance is the four-day week. All full-time staff work four days per week, not five, with no increase in daily hours and no reduction in pay. The policy has been an outstanding success in terms of company productivity and staff satisfaction. You can read more about it at <https://communitydirectors.com.au/articles/our-communitys-experience-of-the-four-day-work-week>.

Not every employer in Australia is willing or able to offer a four-day week. But there are plenty of lessons to be learned from the ICDA experiment that can be applied anywhere.

Here are our tips for doing more work in less time. It's a first step towards freeing up space for family, friends and fun away from work.

Check your meeting habits

Check the default setting for meeting length in your organisation's calendar – it's often 60 minutes. Can it be made shorter – 45 minutes or even 30 minutes? Then think about what will need to change about your meetings to actually make them shorter. Here are some things to consider.

- **Check whether you really need to meet.** Are you getting the team together at 10am on a Monday because that's what you've always done, or because your Monday morning meetings have a clear and useful purpose?
- **Insist on an agenda. This can be very short – a list of key words will do.** It's the responsibility of the meeting organiser, who should share it with attendees. What would you like to take away from this meeting? Is the aim to make a decision, to air considerations or to check on how a project is going and remove obstacles?
- **Be clear about the aim of the meeting.** If the reason for the meeting is not to make a decision but to gather input from a group, consider whether it needs to be more than 30 minutes, and why you think that.
- **Try agile methodology.** This calls for frequent "stand up" meetings of 15 minutes, which can save the need for longer meetings by speeding up your ability to solve problems. A stand-up meeting would ask attendees: What have you completed? What's next? What are your obstacles (if any)? Avoid going over time – if you do, then you know you're getting lost in the detail.

- **Invite the right people.** Inviting people who are not in a position to contribute is a waste of their time and other people's time. On the other hand, if you fail to invite key people, you might not be able to make the decisions you need to make, which could lead to more meetings.
- **Avoid post-meeting meetings.** If someone fails to attend a meeting where decisions are made but insists on having their say afterwards, put your foot down (unless there's a good reason for their non-attendance). Otherwise, the whole team's time is wasted.
- **Respect the chair.** Chairing meetings is not always easy. It's important for the chair to have confidence that they can bring agenda items to a close, and pull the team out of the weeds when required. It's also important that attendees demonstrate self-awareness, respecting the call of "Enough, let's move on" and trying not to get off topic.
- **Discuss the change.** Communicate openly about how meetings will be adapting to increase productivity.
- **What should we add?** Are there products and services you should be creating to better serve your mission?
- **What are we charging?** Have you reviewed your prices recently? Are you charging appropriately? A small price increase might cover the loss of income from products you stop offering.
- **Where can we save time?** Think about the quality of your products. Are your newsletters too long, for example? Could you save time by making them shorter or publishing them less frequently while not compromising the essence of what you want to communicate or your relationships with your readers?

Be ruthless about processes

When we design a process or product, we do so with the skills we have at the time. It can take an outsider's eye to ask: Why are you doing this in six steps? Here's a way of doing it in one or two. When planning for productivity, we must be our own "outsider's eye".

Spring clean your inventory

Look at each product or service your organisation delivers and think about its purpose. Does it help financial sustainability, build the brand, or build output numbers? How does it align with the organisation's strategic plan or theory of change? Then consider these questions:

- **Are we keeping up with the times?** Do you offer products or services that were innovative 10 years ago but no longer do what your organisation should be doing? Sometimes, products we love are actually dragging down the organisation by using up valuable staff time or costing a lot of money.
- **How would we manage the change?** What would the process of ceasing these products or services look like? How long would it take? Which staff and customers would be affected and how would you communicate the changes to them?
- **Automate.** What can be automated? Might AI have a role to play?
- **Streamline.** Which processes have multiple touchpoints where you could aim to have just one?
- **Upskill.** As soon as someone says "That's not possible", rise to the challenge. What training could be provided to upskill staff so they can build systems with fewer processes?
- **Cajole, challenge, "bribe".** Always challenge the status quo. Staff and board members who have been with you for a while are likely to protest that that's the way it's always been done. Offer a chocolate reward to the first person who says this in a meeting. It most likely won't happen again.
- **Consolidate.** Encourage people to avoid multitasking. Chunk similar tasks together (e.g. completing surveys, sending out meeting requests, writing emails) to free up other chunks of time for tasks that require more focus.

- **Template it.** Do you find yourself sending similar communications to many different customers? These waste time. Consider writing a range of basic templates to re-use and adapt.

Think about how you can streamline how your customers engage with you, to reduce the number of questions in your inbox.

Technology

Technology doesn't have to be expensive. Here are some tips on using it to save time, some of them free.

- **Automation.** Consider what tasks you do regularly that you could automate. For example, there are survey tools available that send surveys and follow-ups automatically on the dates you set, rather than requiring a manual task each time.
- **Training.** Does everyone know how to use the technology you've got to its maximum advantage, or could the team benefit from professional development, externally or in-house? Do you have an Excel whiz within the team who can teach you all some hacks?
- **Artificial intelligence.** For documents that don't require your own creative flair, could you save time by using AI, at least as a starting point?
- **Investment.** A small amount of investment in the right technology can save you many hours of staff time and ensure their time is used for thinking, creating, collaborating, building relationships with customers, etc.

In-team communication and decision-making

Encourage your team to be thoughtful about who should be included in each interaction to ensure that everyone knows what they need to know, but nobody is pulled into conversations that waste their time. Lead by example.

Communication in a hybrid workplace often includes face-to-face meetings (one to one or in small groups), team meetings, email, and a messaging application such as Slack or MS Teams. Using the wrong "channel" can waste time, cause unintended problems, and lead to poor decision making. To prevent this, decide as a team which channel will most efficiently serve your team for:

- **Making decisions.** This is most likely to be a face-to-face meeting because this enables all attendees to engage in real time and to consider alternative views and test them.
- **Sharing information that doesn't require feedback.** This is most likely to be Slack or email (whichever is preferred by the team). This does not require real-time engagement.
- **Consulting and gathering input.** This will often be Slack, MS Teams or another messaging system. This allows people to input at any time throughout the day, without clogging an inbox.
- **Asking a question that requires immediate attention, such as an urgent request for data.** This is most likely to be Slack, MS Teams, or another messaging system.
- **Discussing or requesting feedback on longer documents.** This is most likely to be email. This is often less immediate than a quick message on Slack, and requires more thoughtful and often longer responses from recipients.

Customer service

Do you find the same or similar questions and complaints arriving in your inbox day after day? If so, consider expanding your FAQs or initial communications to "over-communicate" the things that are confusing people.

Consider whether your sales or customer service process involves friction points (things that stand in the way of customers using your service) such as too many questions or buttons before people can book a program or buy a product.

Professional development

It's often difficult to imagine things beyond what we already know. For example, we may not be able to design an automated solution using Excel if we don't know about the formulas available. Consider what kind of professional development will help each staff member to maximise their use of time and their impact. Key learning areas are likely to include technology, customer service, leadership and project management.

Work location

Consider how to ensure coverage of your services and customers while also allowing location flexibility to your team. Implementing a four-day work week might mean different people work on different days, or it might mean a closure on one day, whatever suits your business best.

Similarly, consider how hybrid working will work best for your organisation. Perhaps it's ideal if people work in the office on the same days, or maybe different days are preferable. Whatever the case, be intentional about the system you choose, and if it doesn't work, change it.

Encourage staff to be considerate of their colleagues in relation to online meetings and working remotely. Some people prefer to avoid online meetings on days they have chosen to be in the office, so consider how to meet with them when you are all in the office together.

Induction

Increasing productivity is a journey, and you want the newest members of your community to feel confident walking that journey with you. Ensure that induction for new staff includes both written and verbal information about how your team communicates and works, because different people learn in different ways.

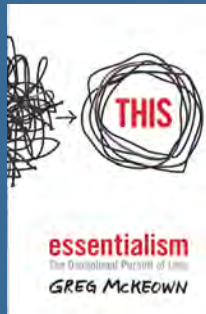
Ask new staff to give you the gift of their newness and share their observations and suggestions about productivity for the first few months – they will be invaluable. Even the question “Why do you do it like that?” can help longer-serving staff to reconsider the assumptions they hold and to think about whether systems can be improved.

Regular review

Consider productivity a journey rather than a destination. There is no perfect solution, and as our environment changes, so must we. We find new tools, hacks and advice every day. So when you think you've got it right, wait a few months and then do a quick review. Ask the team if there are bugbears and consider together how they might be improved.

When designing new systems, consider the unintended consequences of a variety of choices, aiming from the outset to design products and processes with productivity in mind. This is the same as trying to be your future self's best friend. Consider how your products interconnect and think to the future – what else might you want to do?

Appendix 8: Resources we found useful



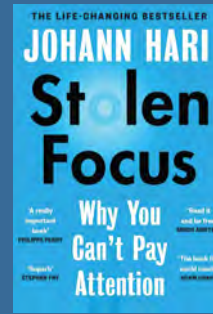
Essentialism
The Disciplined Pursuit of Less
Greg McKeown



Four Thousand Weeks
Time Management for Mortals
Oliver Burkeman



The 4day week
How the Flexible Work Revolution Can Increase Productivity, Profitability and Well-being, and Create a Sustainable Future
Andrew Barnes



Stolen Focus
Why You Can't Pay Attention
Johann Hari



Saving Time
Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock
Jenny Odell

Julia Gillard 2011

theconversation.com/philosophers-view-the-benefits-and-dignity-of-work-829

So if the “new culture of work” called for by the prime minister is to have ethical weight, it needs to involve much more than the provision of more jobs: **the quality of work has to improve.**

For the benefits and dignity of work are as much a matter of what one does while working, and of the social relations one enjoys or endures there, as they are of the economic power it brings.

Harvard Happiness Study 2023

hbr.org/podcast/2023/01/work-insights-from-the-worlds-longest-happiness-study

Three lessons the Director Robert Waldinger shares.

First, having social connections is better for our health and well-being—and conversely, loneliness kills. Second, having higher-quality close connections is more important for our well-being than the number of connections. Third, having good relationships is not only good for our bodies but also for our brains.

Dr Arthur Brooks

www.theatlantic.com/projects/how-build-life/hbr.org/2023/09/harvards-arthur-c-brooks-on-the-secrets-to-happiness-at-work

Two things show up on the happiest workers, the people who have the greatest happiness from work.

They feel like they're earning their success, which is to say that they're creating value with their lives and with their work lives. And number two, they feel like they're serving people so that they're needed. These are the two big things.



OC headquarters, Our Community House

November 2023