

Staff want better WFH set-ups and expect bosses to pay, survey finds

BUSINESS

Laptops, monitors and chairs top the list of demands as average home workers spend hundreds on equipment.

By [Philip King](#) • 10 March 2023 • 5 minute read

Most staff expect bosses to fund their home office set-ups even if going into work full time is encouraged, according to a survey by one office supply company.

It found company requests for staff to return were falling on deaf ears, with one-quarter going into the office only some of the time and one in five full time at home.

Just 56 per cent are spending full weeks back at their desks.

The study, of over 1,000 workers commissioned by office supplies company COS, found people were spending an average of \$450 on their home set-up and were increasingly demanding compensation from their employers.

The survey found 66 per cent of staff expected their employer to fund office supplies such as paper, notebooks and pens. When it came to equipment, most staff thought the company should pay for a printer (51 per cent), chair (58 per cent), monitor (64 per cent) and laptop (78 per cent).

More than two-thirds also wanted funding for a more ergonomic desk set-up.

Co-chief executive of COS Belinda Lyone said changes in working arrangements could end up costing companies thousands.

“Our research shows that people are expecting more from their work from home set up, even if WFH isn’t something their workplace is mandating,” she said. “This includes an ergonomic set-up and the additional outlay could be costing medium-sized companies more than \$250,000.”

The findings come in the wake of revised ATO guidelines about claiming work-from-home expenses which introduce a fixed rate of 67c an hour that includes consumables, but excludes depreciation on office equipment.

The revised fixed rate also removes a previous requirement for a dedicated work space.

The research showed almost 40 per cent lack a dedicated WFH arrangement and a quarter (25 per cent) have experienced health conditions ranging from lower back pain (52 per cent), neck pain (42 per cent), upper back pain (37 per cent) and wrist pain (29 per cent).

Almost four out of five had taken sick days because of an issue, for up to two weeks at a time (70 per cent).

Ms Lyone said companies were missing a trick when it came to keeping staff.

“Flexibility is most likely here to stay, so investing in your team’s at-home ergonomic set-up could be an effective way to demonstrate that you value their time and health both in the office and at home,” she said.

“In turn, you may find this promotes retention and that your team is healthier and even more productive.”

The research also revealed ways companies were trying to entice staff back, including pay increases (50 per cent), reimbursement for travel costs (36 per cent), incentives, team drinks and lunches (28 per cent), and an inspiring work environment (25 per cent).