Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio	Industrial Relations
Witness	Mr O'Connor
Committee member	Mrs McArthur
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Question:

Mr O'CONNOR: The default position, as I said, is three days in the office, which could also include a hub—obviously a number of people are now working from some of the suburban hubs that have been set up during COVID—and two days from home. There is an ability, obviously, to negotiate up or down in relation to that default position. Most departments and employees would now have landed those policies, whether in writing or through discussions, but we are working across the departments at the moment to finalise them.

Mrs McARTHUR: So what would be the percentage?

Mr O'CONNOR: The percentage of—sorry, I am missing—

Mrs McARTHUR: Yes, that have returned to work.

Mr O'CONNOR: I cannot answer that. I do not have that information here today, but I can—

Mrs McARTHUR: Can you take it on notice?

Mr O'CONNOR: If it is available, I will provide it on notice.

Mrs McARTHUR: Surely it would be provided.

Answer:

Victorian Public Service (VPS) employees have continued to work throughout the pandemic from home and/or from their usual place of work as permitted by public health advice. We understand your question to be about the number of employees who have returned to their usual place of work on a regular basis.

Since the public health recommendation to work from home was lifted on 25 February 2022, VPS staff have been encouraged to return to the workplace. The data available shows that the number of staff attending VPS offices has steadily increased since restrictions were lifted, with approximately 53 per cent of employees regularly working from a VPS workplace (as at March 2022), whether that workplace be in the Melbourne CBD or in a suburban or regional office.

Public service staff are returning to offices in line with flexible work arrangements agreed under the VPS flexible work policy. Under the VPS flexible work policy, the default starting point for non-frontline employees is three days a week in an office (which could be a primary office location or suburban hub). This allows staff to benefit from in-person interaction in the workplace, and to maximise productivity gains that can arise from remote working.

VPS employers continue to support their workers to transition to hybrid working and it is expected the number of employees working in a VPS workplace will continue to increase progressively.