

## Flexible Work Policy

### 1. Purpose

Inala Community House (ICH) is committed to providing employees with flexibility in their work arrangements in order to achieve a balance between their work and personal lives. ICH understands that work-life balance is essential for all employees and it is critical for the wellbeing of staff and their families.

ICH also recognises that flexible work times, may also be used to better meet the needs of clients and therefore may also result in improved service delivery.

ICH will seek to provide flexible work arrangements which will also meet the needs of the organisation and not adversely affect clients or the normal operations of ICH.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including casuals.

### 3. Definitions

**Flexible work arrangement:** A change to an employee's normal working arrangements such as changes to hours, patterns or locations of work in order to accommodate personal circumstances.

### 4. Policy

ICH seeks to ensure that as an organisation, employees are supported to balance their private and work responsibilities and wellbeing. Flexible work arrangements are a key component of this.

#### 4.1 Eligibility

Employees who have been employed at ICH for at least 12 months can request flexible working arrangements such as changes to hours, patterns or locations of work. Casual employees can make a request if they have been employed with ICH regularly and systematically for at least 12 months and there is a reasonable expectation of continuing work with the employer on a regular and systematic basis.

Employees can request flexible working arrangement if they:

- Are the parent, or have responsibility for the care, of a child who is school aged or younger
- Are pregnant
- Are a carer (under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*)
- Have a disability
- Are 55 or older

- Are experiencing family or domestic violence
- Provide care or support to an immediate family or household member who is experiencing family and domestic violence.

Employees must make a flexible work request in writing, explaining the changes being requested and the reasons for the changes.

## 4.2 Responding to a Request

ICH upon receiving a request shall consult with the employee to genuinely try and reach an agreement regarding changes to the work arrangements. This shall take into consideration:

- The needs of the employee
- Consequences for the employee if changes in working arrangements aren't made
- Any reasonable business grounds for refusing the employee's request

ICH will provide a written response within 21 days which outlines whether the request has been approved, modified (by agreement of both parties) or refused.

ICH can only refuse on reasonable business grounds and this shall be detailed in writing when refusing the request. Reasonable business grounds include:

- The requested arrangements are too costly
- Other employees' working arrangements can't be changed to accommodate the request
- It is impractical to change other employees' working arrangements or hire new employees to accommodate the request
- The request is likely to result in a significant loss of efficiency or productivity or would have a significant negative impact on customer service

Where a request is refused, ICH will outline in writing:

- The reasons for the refusal including an explanation of the grounds for refusing and how they apply to the request
- Other changes ICH is willing to make or a statement that there aren't any changes to be made
- Information about getting help from the Fair Work Commission for disputes about flexible work arrangements

If after consultation with the employee, a different flexible work arrangement is agreed, ICH will provide to the employee in writing with the agreed changes to work arrangements.

## 4.3 Dispute Resolution

If an employee is dissatisfied with the refusal of a flexible working arrangement request or if no response has been received within 21 days, they can apply to the Fair Work Commission for assistance.

#### 4.4 Other Flexible Work Opportunities

ICH also offers flexibility to employees through short-term time off in lieu (TOIL) arrangements (please see the TOIL policy).

ICH may also offer flexible work arrangements dependent upon the needs of staff and of the organisation. This may include flexible work times and work locations. These will need to be approved by either senior management for short term arrangements (under two weeks) or by the Chief Executive Officer where this arrangement will be ongoing in excess of two weeks or has the potential to affect the operations of ICH.

Flexible work arrangements available may vary dependent upon the Service.

Working hours must be between 6am to 8pm Monday to Friday (dependent upon the Service). Working outside of these times is available only with prior permission of the Chief Executive Officer. When reviewing the need to work outside of these hours, the safety of staff and the impact upon the Service will be considered. Any safety arrangements shall be documented.

#### 5. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three years.

This policy remains in effect unless otherwise directed by the Board of Directors.

#### 6. Related Documents

##### **Policies**

ICH TOIL Policy

ICH Working from Home Policy

##### **Forms**

Flexible Work Request Letter (Template)

Work from Home/Other Location Checklist

##### **References**

*Fair Work Act 2009*

*Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010*