

CEDA media release

Remote work has boosted employment for parents and people with a disability

Embargoed until Thursday 22 February 2024

More parents, people with a disability or health condition and carers have joined the workforce thanks to the COVID-19-induced shift to remote work and the strong labour market, new CEDA research has found.

The analysis of 2022 Household Income and Labor Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey data found workforce participation in jobs where people could work from home jumped by 8.5 percentage points for women with young children and nearly six percentage points for people with a disability or health condition from 2019 to 2022.

These groups now also work from home at similar rates to other workers.

“This is a clear win for workers, employers and the economy and can help the Federal Government achieve its vision of full employment,” CEDA Chief Economist Cassandra Winzar said.

“Embedding these gains even when the jobs market inevitably softens should be a priority.

“Implementing changes that make both remote and in-office work more effective – such as clarifying performance expectations, formalising mentoring and developing communication and management skills – is a good place to start.

“While hybrid arrangements can deliver benefits by balancing productivity, participation and employee preferences, employers will need to continue to experiment with different approaches to find what works best for them and their employees, while noting the best approach may change over time.”

The findings by CEDA Senior Economist Melissa Wilson and Economist James Brooks form part of *Economic and Policy Outlook (EPO) 2024*, which looks at the key issues likely to drive economic and policy outcomes this year.

Other chapters include:

***Economic outlook 2024: Setting Australia up for long-term success*, by CEDA Chief Economist Cassandra Winzar**

This year the Federal Government must move from consultation to implementation. After more than a year of discussion and design on many policy issues, the focus must be on driving change to lift the productive capacity of our economy. We must properly address the major short-term challenges

facing us – getting inflation under control, addressing housing shortages and accelerating the energy transition, while setting ourselves up for longer term success and building a more productive, dynamic and resilient economy. Failing to do so risks entrenching intergenerational disadvantage, stagnant business conditions and lower living standards.

A critical year for emissions targets and energy policy, by CEDA Senior Economist Andrew Barker

Australia is not on track to meet its emissions-reduction targets. Tough decisions will be needed on energy policy this year to get back on track, while also protecting energy affordability and reliability of supply. There are looming challenges on all three fronts, as policy uncertainty has held back investment in generation, storage and network assets.

The labour market must work even harder this year, by CEDA Economist Liam Dillon

More than a year since the Jobs and Skills Summit the outcomes have been underwhelming and labour shortages persist. It's clear we still have work to do. We must get the right skills in the right places by boosting labour-market mobility and inclusivity and increasing the supply of workers through robust education and migration systems. Meanwhile, emerging international evidence suggests AI tools have the potential to accelerate the integration of new workers and compensate for skills shortages.

CEDA will launch the report at its annual EPO forum today at the Park Hyatt, Melbourne, and via livestream.

Speakers include: Productivity Commission chairman Danielle Wood; William Eberle Professor of Economics at Stanford University Nicholas Bloom; Federal Member for Goldstein Zoe Daniel; Federal Member for Kooyong Monique Ryan; Federal Member for Wentworth Allegra Spender; ING Global Group Chief Economist and Global Head of Research Marieke Blom; HSBC Chief Economist for Australia, New Zealand and Global Commodities Paul Bloxham; Goldman Sachs Australia Managing Director and Chief Economist Andrew Boak; ANU Professor in the Research School of Economics Markus Brueckner; Westpac Chief Economist Luci Ellis; and EY Oceania Chief Economist Cherelle Murphy.

CEDA Chief Economist Cassandra Winzar is available for further comment and interviews.

For more information, please contact:

Justine Parker, Media Manager and Content Specialist
Mobile: 0436 379 688 | Email: justine.parker@ceda.com.au

CEDA – the Committee for Economic Development of Australia – is an independent, membership-based think tank.

CEDA's purpose is to improve the lives of Australians by enabling a dynamic economy and vibrant society. Through independent research and frank debate, we influence policy and collaborate to disrupt for good.



committee for economic development of australia

CEDA has more than 530 members from a broad cross-section of industry, government, community and academia. Our members span every state and territory.

CEDA was founded in 1960 by leading economist Sir Douglas Copland. His legacy of applying economic analysis to practical problems to aid the development of Australia continues to drive our work today.