



Tuesday, 17 March 2020

Retail, Transport and Manufacturing are the industries least likely to offer working from home

The COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak has forced many employers to consider encouraging, or even forcing, their employees to work from home to reduce the possibility of the virus spreading around the community – however this is not possible for all jobs.

The latest in-depth employment data from Roy Morgan shows that 71% of employed Australians do no work from home, down by only 1% from a decade ago. In contrast, just over a quarter, 29%, of workers do undertake some work from home, up from 28%.

Until this year, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, these figures have barely changed in the last ten years.

Importantly there are several industries for which working from home is simply not an option for all employees. Over three-quarters of employees in the Retail (87%), Transport and Storage (82%), Manufacturing (82%) and Recreation and Personal (77%) do no work from home.

There are two industries for which 'doing some work from home' is reported by almost half of the workforce including Finance, Property and Business Services (49% have done at least some work from home) and Communications (44%).

Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine says the unprecedented global pandemic declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday last week has tipped off a significant global escalation in the response to the COVID-19 viral outbreak and this has significant implications for businesses:

"There are several responses businesses are taking to deal with the sudden disruption caused by the COVID-19 coronavirus. One of the most effective for some businesses is to encourage, or require, employees to work from home where possible to avoid unnecessary contact in confined environments such as the workplace and on public transport on the way to and from work.

"Businesses in industries such as Finance, Property and Business Services and Communications are in the best place to stop their workers coming into the office with nearly half of workers in these industries already doing at least some work from home.

"However, there are real problems for industries such as Retail, Transport and Storage and Manufacturing that generally require the workforce to be on-site to conduct their work. There is simply no good way to work in a retail store or operate complicated heavy machinery from a remote location.

"Transport, which involves delivering goods to all parts of the country via trucks or heavy rail, does involve getting out and about but is also more conducive to increased social isolation even when on the job.

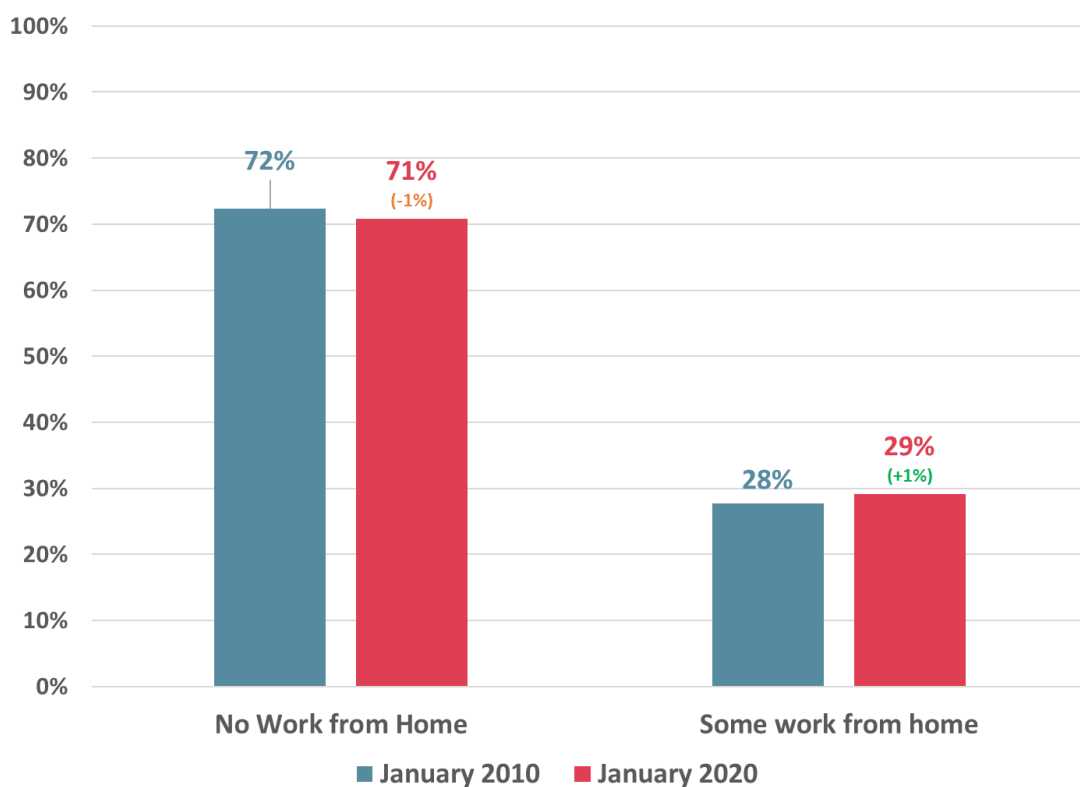
"The uncertainty surrounding how effective the response to the COVID-19 viral outbreak will be means it is impossible to ascertain the full economic impact on the economy and businesses in Australia at this stage. What appears likely at this early stage is that this impact is set to grow significantly over the next few weeks at least as comprehensive measures are taken by governments, businesses and individuals alike to reduce their chances of being personally exposed to the virus and prevent the viral outbreak in Australia approaching the levels seen in countries overseas."

Related research findings

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For comments or more information about Roy Morgan employment data, call (+61) (3) 92245309 or email askroymorgan@roymorgan.com.

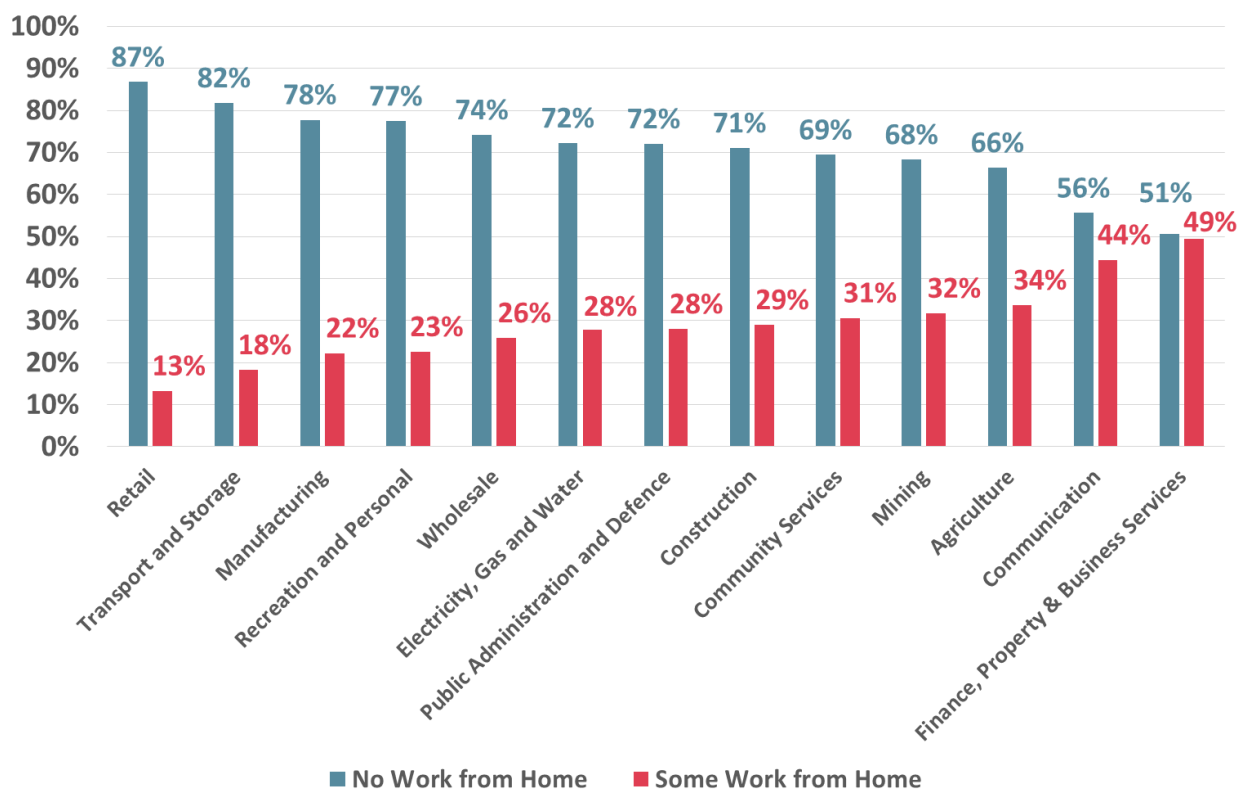
% of Australian employees that have done some or no work from home



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source. Feb. 2009 – Jan. 2010, n=28,759, Feb. 2019 – Jan. 2020, n=27,370.

Base: Australians aged 14+ in paid employment.

% of Australian employees in each industry that have done some work or no work from home



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source. Feb. 2019 – Jan. 2020, n=27,370. Base: Australians aged 14+ in paid employment.

About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia's largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years' experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2