

QG Breakfast Series

6 August 2019 event - transcript

What technology can make your work day more flexible

Nasa Walton, Chief Digital Officer, Residential Tenancies Authority

MC: I'd like to welcome our final presenter to the stage Nasa Walton who's the Chief Digital Officer with the Residential Tenancies Authority. Nasa leads the RTA's Digital Business Centre and brings extensive experience in leading teams to implement strategic directions that underpin the organisation's strategic plan and specialises in turning IT into enabling tools for her staff. Nasa is an award-winning Chief Information Officer who has a successful career in delivering innovative solutions. Prior to joining the RTA she was the Chief Information Officer of the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service for five years and has also held several senior leadership positions within the health industry. One of Nasa's enduring legacies in Queensland Health is the VC network, which we've talked a bit about in the last few days. So if you've been lucky enough to travel to one of our hospitals or primary health centres in rural, remote or regional areas you'll find one of these video conference units in pretty much every facility. They've been critical to our system to support engagement and collaboration. So good job, and thanks Nasa. Nasa has a Bachelor of Business, Human Resource Management and a Graduate Certificate in Marketing and Communication. So please join me in welcoming Nasa to the stage.

NASA: Thanks Kylie and thank you for everyone coming out early for breakfast. So what technology can make your work day more flexible. Before I begin I'd also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of West Moreton and Ipswich where I live the Yuggera, Jagera and Turrbal people. So the Public Service Commission released their normal report around flexible working and some stats. Before we start talking about technology and flexible working I wanted to actually clear up some definitions about flexible working. Cause today I'm going to talk a bit more probably not so much about the technology and the growth and the changes of jobs but more about what the call of action is that you can do and what you can take back to start to embrace digital and flexible working in your workplace.

So the Flexible Working Report was released late last year. It's released every year. Sad to say flexible working is still not predominant in the Queensland Government workforce. What's scary about this is the uptake is growing but it's still not there. And in fact across Australia the Deloitte Economics Report released last month still showed that most Australians are not embracing flexible working, only 25%. So that's only one in five are actually making flexible working work for them today. Even though the tools that make this possible have been around for 20 years. Why is it that flexible working and telecommuting and working from home is not being implemented more? I'll tell you why. It's not the technology. It's perception and trust. So when you actually Google working from home this is what you get. This is the social media and the internet branding for working from home. But guess what? Working from home is not flexible working. Working from home is the ad-hoc day that you take off because the NBN



deliverer is coming to your house and you need a six hour window, or your child may be sick but you know there's time that you can work. Working from home is something you do in coordination with your boss on trust. You do it ad-hoc. It's not a formalised activity. You don't do it every week. It is something that you do on occasion because a need arises. And your boss gives you trust. Hands up who does working from home? Yeah. Most of us. Somehow that's more than 25%. Flexible working is much different. So flexible working is where you actually make it a permanent arrangement. You actually can choose not just about where you work. And I talk about technology has made that possible for Queensland Government in a moment, but it's also about how you work. You embrace the technology. You change the way your teams interact. You do do video conferencing. Queensland Health you have been embracing this technology for years. You understand the tyranny of distance of your workplace. You have video conferencing in there. You have it not just for the hospitals and regionals you now have it on just about most of your devices. Most of your devices have been uptaken, you've embraced Windows 10, and you're starting to embrace the technology that goes with it. How many of you use more than 20% of those applications? Let's talk to your mobile phones. How many of you use more than just the standard apps on your phone? How many use Facetime versus phone calls? There is no reason why you shouldn't be doing that. Flexible working can also do things around your hours of the day. You can choose with your employer, negotiate this, to work longer hours and take more regular days off. You can actually, if your job is not a frontline service why, do you need to work school holidays. You can work longer hours during the school terms and take more time in those school holiday periods. Now the hard part about that is again management and leadership.

Technology. Everyone recognises this building. This building was a fairly controversial building at the time. But for us technologists we loved it. Do you know why? One government network came out. Now I know many of you might not know this, but for years government agencies you couldn't work, I could in a health site at Ipswich but I couldn't work at the Education Department, couldn't work anywhere else in government. Because we all had our own networks. The cost of that to this organisation has been huge to government. One government network was so successful it's now been rolled out into five working distributed centres. You no longer have to commute to the CBD if you work for Queensland Government. Not many people actually know that. You could work from Ipswich, Robina, Caboolture, Sunshine Coast, Logan. Those facilities exist. It's a hot desk arrangement. You just bring your laptop. So what's not in Queensland Government? Desktops. It doesn't arrange flexible working. It really doesn't help. What you should be looking for in your infrastructure, and please talk to your CDO and CIO – you should be having a strategic digital technology roadmap that embraces the employee experience. You should be moving to laptops, smart phones, smart tablets. And yes if you still have to have a SOE that is the best device to have it on. But you know what? We're now seeing rapid deployment of virtual desktops that you can download to any device anywhere. You don't necessarily even have to have your own. These things are safe, they're secure. Any CIO who tells you that they can't put in technology to stop cyber security on these they're lying. They can.

Microsoft. Right. That's a stable of Queensland Government. It is there. You all have these tools. You should be using these. Your email should be in the Cloud. You should be able to log in anywhere, any time. You should be able to use it on your smart devices. You should be using SharePoint and Yammer to keep into that social experience. You should be keeping your drives not on file servers in the office that you have to be on the network, they should be in One Drive in the Cloud. You should be using OneNote. If you have not used OneNote to take

your notes and are still carrying around a paper based book and a pen that's a bit scary. You have it all digitally. You can use it to make a task, to make appointments, to make calendars. This technology is on your devices I guarantee it.

Still scared now? Yeah. So I hear a lot being in IT. And yes as you can already work out most people that know me well know I'm passionate about technology. I talked about this before. It is the old saying the elephant, you eat it one bite at a time. If you don't know how to use technology in the workplace and you're a bit worried about bringing it up or learn to use it start personally embracing it. Use it at home. Don't leave it to your 14 year olds. They got it. Right. You need to start embracing this. So start upgrading your watches to digital watches. Start using Google Home and Virtual Assistance. You should be using these activities to start to balance a few things. If you can tackle this at home you have a chance of tackling it at work. The video conferencing unit at work is not that much more scary than using Google Home.

Now we're human. Most about flexible working is actually the social interaction. We like going to work and we know that organisations are far more collaborative and innovative when we actually all do talk together. Again, those platforms all enable you to do that digitally. And flexible working does not stop you from going into your workplace. What it can do is encourage you to open up your social network. Just as you came to this forum today working in those distributed work centres also enables you to work more across government and learn more. So you can hear more about what's going on and what's being implemented. So you can hear what more jobs are available and where you should be focusing yourself learning. Social interaction is a key to the workplace and it will never, ever stop.

What does need to be increased and this is your first call to action – and this is around leadership in management. Flexible working and embracing technology comes down to leadership. And I'm not talking about management, I'm talking about leaders. Anyone in your organisation can be a leader. Any one of you can take this opportunity and start embracing this. Your next team meeting ask it can be a virtual team meeting. You Skype. Start thinking about what other tools that you can use to be able to embrace that in that. And start talking to your management team about embracing the way flexible working in a distributed workplace can work. The days are gone of managing your staff by what time they arrive in the morning and what time they leave. You don't need to physically eyeball your staff anymore. They can be in click drift right in front of you and you have no idea. Trust is what is required. Trust is important to the workplace. Most of us have it in our Queensland Government. Let's embrace it. Let's start it. Let's do it.

And that's it from me.