

ITEM 12

NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR TANIA BROWN - REGIONALISATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Councillor Tania Brown has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that -

- 1 Council develop and implement an advocacy program to promote Wollongong as a location for regionalising NSW state government functions and offices due to changes in workforce post COVID.
- 2 The General Manager and Senior Executive be authorised to meet with the NSW Government, including key Ministers and Heads of Departments and relevant agencies such as NSW Property, to promote the regionalisation program.
- 3 The General Manager be authorised to include local peak bodies and representatives to assist this advocacy program, which will help with implementation of the city’s adopted Economic Development Strategy and particularly action 1.8 which calls for advocacy to government for relocation of services.
- 4 Council note that the COVID pandemic and rise in technology has shown that workforces no longer need a physical presence in a capital city but can be decentralised, for example away from the Sydney CBD or Parramatta, and delivered effectively from regional centres.
- 5 Council note that Wollongong presents a safe alternative for workforce relocation and has 58,000 sqm of A-grade office space under construction or in the pipeline. This provides an opportunity for the NSW government to deliver tangible and long-term support to regional economies such as the Illawarra and assist in regional economic development.
- 6 A report be delivered, or Councillor Briefing be held by 30 June 2021 to update on the success of the advocacy program.”

**Background provided by Councillor Tania Brown:**

In a post COVID world we are seeing the future of work change in real time with digital technology driving innovation and workplaces changing at a rapid pace. We no longer need to be at our desk in the Sydney CBD to deliver for our employer. Rather a hybrid model is emerging that sees employees moving between home and office. If the office is in a regional centre, away from the urban density of a capital CBD, it is assumed that the risk of community transmission of COVID is reduced.

**Building Australia’s Digital Future in a Post-COVID World, a White Paper by the Australian Information Industry Association;**

“Work will no longer be defined by a physical location and workplace engagement will be more than just physical presence. NBN Co research indicates that a majority of people expect to work more home after the crisis has ended. Organisations will challenge the idea that work should be performed in a specific physical location by exploring ways to digitize some or all work through advances in robotics, IoT, cloud and other technologies. Collaboration tools and platforms will also support dynamic work locations and asynchronous collaboration. Additionally, the recent experience of COVID-19 should motivate organisations to fully embed wellbeing into every aspect of the design and delivery of work itself.

With the clear support that technology has provided to demonstrate the unessential nature of physical co-location of the workforce, government should focus policy on the regionalisation of government services and industry. This should also be supported by the design and new business and government service models that incorporate regionalisation and regional economic development.

State government can especially play a lead role in promoting links to centres of excellence in regional areas leveraging future infrastructure investments as well as tertiary and R&D linkages. This would also take pressure off Australia’s main capital cities.” The Paper can be found using the following link -

[https://aiia.com.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/103562/Building-Australias-Digital-Future-in-a-Post-COVID-World-AIIA-Whitepaper-2020.pdf](https://aiia.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/103562/Building-Australias-Digital-Future-in-a-Post-COVID-World-AIIA-Whitepaper-2020.pdf).