
UP FRONT



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The great office debate

As Melbourne in particular, and Victoria more widely, is 'released' from lockdown, anyone who has been lucky enough to have not been required to live through it should take a moment to do two things. First, be thankful. Second, congratulate the people of Victoria. What an amazing effort.

I am fortunate to have friends and colleagues in Melbourne and have tried to stay in regular contact with them in recent months. During some of those conversations, I have mentioned they will be surprised how quickly things return to normal. Or at least a 'new normal'.

In Queensland, if you're middle-aged, don't get invited to a wedding, and don't feel the urge to dance when you're out, then by-and-large things are pretty much the same.

Which brings me to the 'great office debate'. Is the CBD office market going to crash under the weight of the work-from-home (WFH) tsunami? I am still surprised when I get asked if I am 'back in the office'. Yes, I am, and I came back in about April. There were fewer people in our office than in my home, so it was safer! But, in all honesty, I prefer to be in the office when I am working and 'at home' when I am not. My view is 'the office' is also much better for sharing ideas, solving problems, and learning. So, if you're trying to develop people and talent, then the office is the best place to do it. Zoom/Teams etc are all useful tools, but there are moments in every day where you need to explain an idea, solve a problem, or just share an anecdote. Things that are much harder to do in a WFH environment.

So, I encourage Melburnians to get back into their old routines. Go to the office and get that great city of yours humming again.