

HYBRID WORK SETUP · 2026

Phones for a Team That Is Not in One Place

Around a third of employed Australians work from home in any week, and that has been flat for three years. Four things broke when the team scattered. None of them show up in a report.

Laptops, video meetings and file access all got solved within a fortnight. The phones were left roughly where they were, because calls still seemed to be happening. **The quick diagnostic:** if a customer would struggle to reach a specific person at your business without knowing their mobile number, the phone system did not follow the team out of the building.

What the office was quietly providing, and what happens without it

The office gave you	Without it	How you notice
A shared front door	The main number becomes nobody's job, or one person's by accident.	Customers say nobody answered. Your report says it was answered.
Visible availability	Every decision starts with "are you free", half unanswered for 20 minutes.	Work waits. Nobody can name the delay.
Frictionless handover	A transfer becomes a message, then a callback, then tomorrow.	The customer explains it twice.
Ambient context	Nobody knows anything they were not directly told.	Someone rings a customer without knowing they complained on Tuesday.

The accidental receptionist

In almost every distributed team one person answers the main number far more than anybody else. They did not ask for it and it is not in their role. It happens because their app is configured properly, or they are simply fastest, and the ring group has no order or timeout. **Look at answered calls by person for a month. If one name is more than double the next, that is an unmanaged risk, not a hard worker,** and the front door is unattended the week they take leave.

Fixing the front door

- **The main number rings a group, never one person.** A one person ring group turns a flat battery into a lost customer.
- **Define what happens when nobody answers.** An unbounded ring is a customer ringing a competitor inside a minute.
- **Everyone presents the business number on outbound,** or your phone identity slowly migrates into private handsets.
- **Publish few direct numbers, deliberately.** Every published direct line is a future single point of failure.
- **Set hours on the business,** not on whoever happens to still be awake.

■ Home internet: what matters

- **Latency.** Above about 150ms people talk over each other.
- **Jitter.** Variation in delay. This is what makes audio break up, and the first number to check.
- **Packet loss.** Clipped words. Should be near zero.
- **Speed is nearly irrelevant.** A voice call uses very little bandwidth.

■ Nine times in ten it is the wi-fi

- Distance from the access point, a neighbour on the same channel, a microwave, a mesh node handing over mid call.
- Before ringing the internet provider: try a cable, or move within sight of the router, for one call. Two minutes.
- The other cause is contention, not shortage. A big upload or a backup running in the house.

■ Who gets what device

Who	Give them	Why
On calls all day at a fixed desk	Desk handset, headset, desktop app	Comfort over eight hours. Does not close with a browser tab.
Mixed day, some calls	Desktop app and a good headset	Most hybrid staff. Follows them office to home, no setup.
Moving or in the field	Mobile app with native dialling fallback	Business number travels; calls still work on weak data.
Anyone in a meeting room	Room hardware, not a laptop on a table	The most common hybrid complaint, and it is hardware.

Two Australian details that catch people out

Emergency calls. The address given to the operator is the *registered* service address, and the network cannot know somebody is in a spare bedroom eleven kilometres away. Register the address people actually work from, update it when they move, and tell staff to dial 000 from the handset's own dialler. **The right to disconnect** now covers small business employers. Set hours on the business, give after hours callers a real outcome, and if some calls truly are urgent, define urgent and name who is on this week.

Test with a call, never with a question

Do not ask a new starter whether they set up the app. Ring them, and confirm it rings **with the app closed and the device locked**. Thirty seconds per person, and it is the only test that proves the notification path works. Run it across the whole team once a quarter, because operating system updates quietly reset battery optimisation and notification settings, which is the real cause of calls that arrive as missed calls twenty minutes late.