



THE POST-CORONAVIRUS WORLD: THE FUTURE OF OFFICE SPACES

Will office spaces become obsolete with the population adapting to working from home? Or is it more likely that the pandemic has in fact proven their necessity, with the result that offices will just need to adapt to ensure the safety of employees?

In the wake of the current pandemic, it has not taken long for people to speculate about how the virus will change our lifestyles going into the future. One of the ideas that has recently been raised is the extent to which the commercial world will need large, luxurious office spaces, given that people are adapting to working from home. Whilst some have claimed that there may be reduced demand for large commercial office spaces, many do believe that offices are still an essential aspect of a business. Mirvac CEO, Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, told *The Australian* that “the importance of the office is as much a social connection as business”. We are social creatures that crave interaction and spaces in which to congregate.

Whilst it may be unrealistic that the demand for office spaces may be completely eradicated, there has also been dialogue with regard to how the inner workings and layout of the office will change. Open office spaces will need to be adapted to new, more stringent hygiene standards in order to balance the need for cooperation with the necessity of safety and risk reduction. There could even be a reduction in open office spaces. A Dutch company has adopted the term “the 6 feet office”, a way to redesign their office spaces to ensure social distancing in the workplace. This involves six concepts consisting of an analysis of the working environment, rules of conduct, routing for offices to ensure safe traffic flow, adapted workstations, an employee dedicated to ensure the safety of the workplace and a certificate to prove compliance. This is how they plan to ensure the safety of their offices. We will have to wait and see how our commercial work spaces will change. Offices may be used for different purposes and CBD-based offices may no longer be needed - or maybe not much will change and companies will strive to maintain their office spaces as a symbol of wealth and success.