

Flexible working at FMG

Moving from lockdown to the new
normal for flexible working

ICMIF AOA Webinar
March 2021



We've got the country covered

4 core segments



Farming & Growing



Commercial
Businesses



Lifestyle Blocks



Residential

Feilding

- Mobile Rural Consultants
- Rural / Commercial Consultants
- Rural / Commercial Managers
- Area Manager

Palmerston North

- Sales Management
- Information Technology
- Payment Services
- Inbound Service
- Insurance Consultants
- Claims

Wellington

- Executive
- Corporate services

Centralised Offices

Regional Offices/Mobile roles



COVID-19 in New Zealand

- 4th March 2020:
 - FMG employee was a close contact with the second New Zealander to contract COVID-19
 - The employee had also attended a regional meeting with 200 employees
- 26th March 2020:
 - New Zealand entered the earliest and hardest lockdown in the OECD
 - Alert Levels 4 and then 3 of the COVID-19 alert level system (with 4 being the highest)
 - Continued for 8 weeks with high levels of compliance
 - Resulted in COVID-19 being eliminated
- 14th May 2020:
 - New Zealand exited lockdown and most employees were able to return to work (Alert Level 2)
- 9th June 2020:
 - New Zealand moves to Alert Level 1
 - Close to normality with workplaces fully opened and large gatherings allows
 - Since June 2020 there have been three short term regional lockdowns in response to new cases getting through the border. The Auckland region moved to Alert Level 3 between 12-30 August 2020, 15-17 February 2021 and 28 February-7 March 2021

From 26 March – 14 May 2020, all FMG employees had to work from home

- All non-essential employees had to work from home and schools were also closed – as there was no choice this was not flexible working
- Initially email was the only way for clients to contact FMG
- An urgent project implemented the ability for employees to receive inbound client calls, which successfully went live two weeks into lockdown
- Over 25% of employees were operating at less than full capacity: caring for children or other family members and/or technology constraints, i.e., poor internet connection to their home
- FMG encouraged employees to “Do your very best” and they responded very positively – with clients continuing to receive excellent support
- From 14 May FMG had a managed return to offices with contingencies in place to allow for potential future lockdowns

The move into and out of lockdown created an increased desire for flexible working

- Key criteria when considering flexible working:
 - The wellbeing & safety of employees
 - Employee engagement is not compromised
 - Client servicing and engagement is not compromised
 - Does not introduce large new costs to the Mutual
- FMG has three distinct employee types with differing requirements:
 - Mobile client sales, advice and servicing roles
 - Phone based client sales, advice and servicing roles
 - Shared services roles covering corporate functions and administrative support
- Implemented an 8-month flexible working trial:
 - Focussed on enabling Information Technology employees to regularly work from home
 - Any other types of flexible work requests managed on a case-by-case basis, such as employees from other departments, 4-day week or working from a different city from an employee's home office
 - The trial is due to finish in April and is tracking well so far with all key metrics looking positive, with connectivity and relationships being the main challenge – as expected

A number of agreements and evaluation criteria were implemented to support good decision making

- Key agreements:
 - Flexible Working Policy: The core policy document relating to request for flexible working arrangements
 - Flexible Working Agreement: Documents a flexible working agreement between FMG and an employee
 - Alternative Place of Work – Wellbeing & Safety Checklist: A checklist to validate that all necessary Wellbeing & Safety requirements have been addressed. This includes the completion of a virtual workplace assessment
- All flexible work request are assessed against the following criteria:
 - Does the employee have long tenure in role: meaning limited supervision required?
 - Is the employee a proven performer as evidenced by performance reviews?
 - Is the employee's performance easily measurable?
 - Does the employee have a specialist skill set, that requires extensive training and/or is hard to recruit?
 - How will the employee remain connected to the FMG culture?
 - Are there clear expectation for travel to their home office around regularity and how this is funded?
 - Confirm the employee will not be a primary caregiver within working hours
 - Does this have the support of the employee's direct manager and the relevant Leadership team member?

Next steps

- Complete the flexible working trial at the end of April 2021
- Assess the outcomes of the trial and decide:
 - Whether the Information Technology teams will continue to operate with a flexible working arrangement?
 - Will any other flexible working options be considered and how will these be trialled/assessed, such as location or hours/days of work?
 - What flexible working arrangements will be made available to other employee groups within FMG?