



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND OTHER CHANGE ON THE
FUTURE OF WORK AND WORKERS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

UPPER HOUSE COMMITTEE RELEASES REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF WORK, CALLS FOR MORE REGULATION OF WORKPLACE SURVEILLANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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An Upper House committee completing its two-and-a-half year inquiry into the future of work has handed down its second and final report, calling for greater regulation of workplace surveillance as well as of technological automation of work.

The Chair of the Committee, the Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC, said, 'This report sets out 13 recommendations aimed at improving the way in which surveillance is undertaken in workplaces and how automation can be better managed. The committee recommends updating workplace surveillance laws to improve protection for workers, and to require their involvement in the process and the sharing of benefits.'

'Workplace surveillance through technology can include monitoring employees' keystrokes and email content, automated collection of customer ratings, use of biometrics like finger scans, facial recognition and retinal scans, tracking location through digital badges and GPS, as well as digital profiling. The committee heard that laws have not kept track with the many, many ways that technology enables workers to be monitored, often without them being aware of it. In fact, the laws that apply were written 20 years ago – well before the iPhone was invented', Mr Mookhey explained.

'The committee makes detailed recommendations on what these legislative updates should include. We also recommend enhanced regulation of workplace automation, better access to training, and best practice guidance on implementing automation in workplaces. This includes regulating the allocation of work via technology, ensuring funded and accessible training for workers impacted by automation, and developing a strategy for managing technological advancements in public sector agencies.'

'Workplaces today are vastly different to what they once were. Technological advancement, emergence of new industries and pandemic-led changes to the way in which we work are just some of the developments that workers, employers and governments are grappling with', Mr Mookhey commented.

'The committee's first report, released in March, focused on the gig economy, particularly rideshare and food delivery services. The evidence the committee gathered over 9 hearings, and discussed in the two reports, provided a compelling account that proactive, deliberate and creative interventions are required to better shape the future of work in New South Wales. We cannot leave the fate of our workplaces and indeed the labour market in the hands of tech companies – it is for us to shape. The social and economic prosperity of our society rests on it.'

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, the Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC, on 9230 2736.