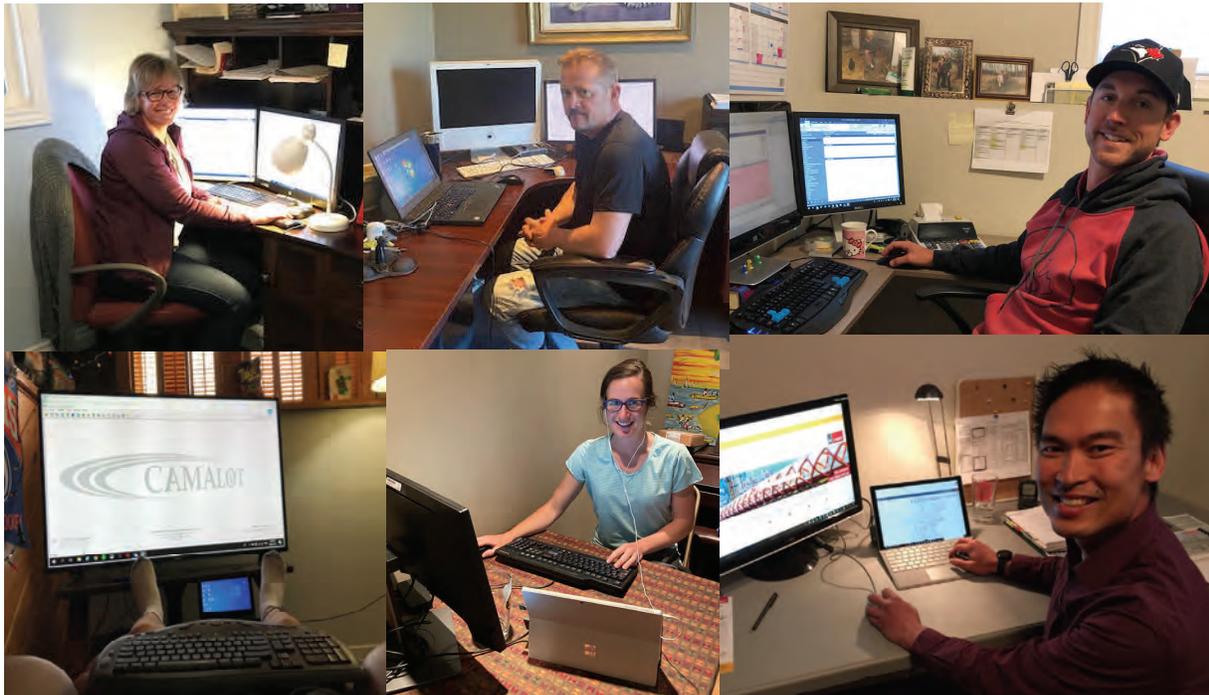




Alberta Assessors' Association



2020-21 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Executive Committee: Scott Powell, AMAA, President

Nominating Committee: Stephen Leroux, AMAA

Registration Committee: Vanessa Powell, AMAA

Practice Review Committee: Karen Burnand, AMAA

Examination Sub-Committee: Brennen Tipton, AMAA

Legislative Policy Committee: Mike Arnold, AMAA

MC&PR Committee: Melissa Zayac, AMAA

Discipline Committee: Ron Van Dam, AMAA

2021 Conference Committee: Suzanne Magdiak, AMAA and
Collin Hindman, AMAA

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President's Message



When I was elected back in April 2019, I do not think any of us could have imagined the state that our society, economy, or our country is in today. Nevertheless, I hope this message finds you and your loved ones all safe and healthy.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Steve Leroux as he marks the end of his term as President of the Alberta Assessors' Association. Steve has provided outstanding leadership in the face of the numerous challenges that we have faced. The association is lucky to have had him leading and representing us during the current crisis and the many months preceding it. I would also like to recognize all the volunteers who will be working on committees this year. It is a truly noble thing to give one's time and effort to make something better for others and it is because of the hard work put forth by those offering their time and expertise that we can accomplish so much.

A special congratulations to our new President Elect Dan Lidgren, Vice President Travis Lantz, Urban Director Jeff McKinnon, and Financial Director Mike Krim who will be serving the association on the executive committee. Our profession is founded and fueled by volunteers like yourselves, so thank you. I look forward to

the many great things we will accomplish together.

To the many newly accredited members, and to those who received long-service awards, you should all be very proud of the work you put in to receive your designation, and to the dedication to this profession for many years. Please know that your well-deserved recognition is not cancelled, but merely delayed.

Over the next few weeks, the Executive Committee will be working with Administration and the Committee Chairs to review our strategic plan and detail the operational objectives for the coming year. I encourage anyone who has ideas or suggestions about how to improve the Alberta Assessors' Association to please reach out to me, administration, or another member of the Executive Committee. Here is a quick summary of topics we will be mindful of as we begin our annual planning process:

HEALTH AND SAFETY: A top priority must be the safety and health of our employees, the public, and our membership, now more than ever. We have worked with Laurie and Ashley to ensure all COVID-19 workplace guidelines are in place including physical distancing measures, minimizing public access to the office, and work-from-home options are being encouraged. However, as lockdown restrictions ease, we must continue to re-evaluate those procedures in the interests of the health and safety as well as business effectiveness.

FINANCIAL STABILITY: It should come as no surprise that the financial position of the Alberta Assessors' Association has changed because of COVID-19. The cancellation of the 2020 Annual Conference not only had a direct effect on our members from a training and networking perspective but will also had a significant impact on our budget for 2020. As members of the executive committee we must make decisions with a clear focus on ensuring financial stability through mitigating costs wherever possible and exploring new revenue opportunities.

EDUCATION: The importance of providing top-quality training has not changed for our association during this time, but how we deliver it certainly has. There is a need for focus resources on the implementation of distance learning options for members. The timeline for when physical distancing measures may be relaxed, or increases made to the sizes of public gatherings, is unknown and we must adapt to the current state rather than wait it out. Furthermore, we must also be mindful of the reality that many employers have made reductions to training budgets for staff, and so a balance must be sought.

COMMUNICATIONS: The social, economic, and health restrictions currently in place have rapidly changed the way that businesses communicate. Transparency, timeliness, and alternative methods to face-to-face communications have become more important than ever. Over the coming year we will be looking for opportunities to modernize our communications platforms to service our members better. Included in this initiative is the redevelopment of our website which is expected to be complete in 2020. In addition, professional networking sites such as LinkedIn to further support our updated communications plan may be explored.

COLLABORATION: The impact that COVID-19 has had on our business continuity is not unique; our partner organizations are experiencing it as well. In addition, the importance of the assessment profession for municipalities will not decrease (in fact it may be enhanced) in the current economic climate. As such we must ensure that, as experts in our field, we are reaching out to other groups who find value in our work and provide our expertise. Furthermore, looking for synergies with other assessment authorities can provide avenues to enhance our reputation, educational offerings, and value to others. In the best spirit of collaboration, I would like to acknowledge Municipal Affairs' Assessment Services Branch Executive Director and Provincial Assessor, Janice Romanyshyn, and Stakeholder Relations and Communications Advisor, Celeste Lee for the support and assistance provided to AAA staff and EC in managing the Association's virtual General Meeting. We are truly grateful and consider this "above and beyond" and a great forecast for the best of the coming year.

In the coming year, we will need to be both determined and flexible, in equal measure. In times of uncertainty there are still opportunities to grow, but these must be balanced with the risks of the current situation. We have no intention to "wait out" this pandemic but rather will seek to adapt and optimize for the future.

Changes to the Real Estate Act

On June 3, 2020, the Government of Alberta introduced Bill 20, the Real Estate Amendment Act 2020. Bill 20 presents changes to the Real Estate Act that will, among other things, remove the requirement for licensing of fee appraisers under the Real Estate Act. The amendments preserve the right of assessors to practice as real estate appraisers under the Real Estate Act, so long as they maintain good standing with the Alberta Assessor's Association.

The Alberta Assessors' Association has enjoyed a longstanding agreement with the Real Estate Council of Alberta wherein regulated members could apply for and obtain a license to conduct fee appraisals in Alberta. The AAA was one of three, including the Appraisal Institute of Canada and the Canadian National Association of Real Estate Appraisers, whose regulatory function formed the basis for RECA's licensing agreements. The amending Bill 20 removes RECA's fee appraisal licensing function.

What does this mean for Assessors? Good news, regulated members of the AAA no longer need a license to conduct single property appraisals. The RECA-AAA agreement will be nullified by the enactment of Bill 20 which is currently passed 2nd reading. Bill 20, in the proposed new section 17.1, allows members of the Association to prepare real estate appraisals, provided they are members in good standing of the Association. The agreement relied on the AAA's regulatory oversight of its members whether they were valuing property using mass appraisal or single appraisal methods (if they had RECA's fee appraisal license). That regulatory oversight continues unchanged under Bill 20.

Members of the AAA who conduct fee appraisals as part of their business functions can rest assured that this practice can continue.

For more information, please [click here](#) for the Service Alberta news release and [click here](#) to view Bill 20 and its progress through the legislative assembly.

First Virtual General Meeting - How Did We Do?

We did not anticipate that we would be conducting the AGM on a virtual platform, but after considering options (delay, mail-in ballots, etc.), we thought why not try a virtual meeting. Our initial tests, using a now-abandoned platform, did not go well. We reached out to partners, including AUMA and Assessment Services Branch for advice and presto!...We were able to schedule a virtual meeting of our general assembly. According to the post-event response and to the unprecedented attendance, things went well and members were open to the experience.

The single most serious issue we had was our inability to manage questions from “the floor.” This was not a result of the delivery or the technology, but a screen issue that two of our panellists had. We have elected to deal with those questions here and offer the following Q&A:

1. Are the Auditors not independent from the Association?

There are two disparate duties related to the Association's Financial Statements. Firstly, the AAA uses Metrix Group to conduct a review of our financial records and prepare statements for the membership in accordance with the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Metrix also reviews internal controls and practices that may be requested in order to prepare our Financial Statements that are “free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.”

Continued on p. 4

How Did We Do? Cont'd from p. 3

At the AGM, the AAA also appoints two members as “auditors” to sign the Financial Statements as a requirement of the *Societies Act*. Member-auditors as a second appointment of “auditors” is on behalf of the membership and signals the memberships’ review and acceptance of the prepared Financial Statements.

2. Why such a large increase in Committee Expenses compared to last year?

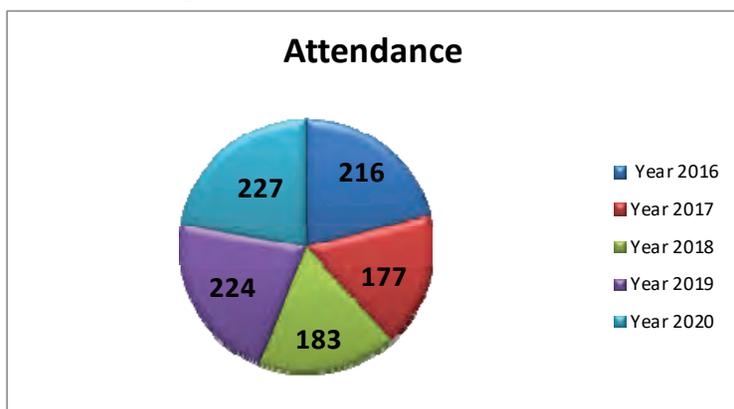
“Committee Expenses” is a grouped item that includes expenses categories for eight committees such as the following:

- Teleconference meetings
- In-person meetings
- Travel and Subsistence
- Hearings/appeals
- Examinations
- Conferences, etc.
- Discipline tribunals and appeals

It is the latter item that resulted in the threefold increase in committee expenses in 2019 with the defense of the Court of Queen’s Bench action against the Association for the discipline action against two members for plagiarism arising from 2014 investigations and hearings.

Additional questions were less critical, including whether Pres-Elect Lidgren would play his bagpipes; whether someone might like to practice their saxophone skills for the assembly; and, how individuals could congratulate incoming executive members.

What were the stats? 227 attended and were attentive for 64 minutes which was the length of the meeting. How does that compare to previous years? Attendance-wise, we can say more people were present this year; as far as whether people were more or less attentive this year well, that would be more difficult to measure, but we can attest to minimal background noise!



The majority of respondents are clearly open to the notion of holding AGMs via webcast which does allow some creativity with program-planning for future conferences. However, with nearly 40% responding “if needed,” it’s an alternative that needs discussion. Our thanks to members for being so accommodating and receptive to this experience, but our fingers are crossed for the next AGM. Here’s a view of what it looked like from “the front of the room,” in case you were interested:



How is everyone doing?

The Executive Committee prepared a survey to see how everyone is coping as we navigate the uncertainty and situations we are in. The survey remains open at this point and has, so far received 176 responses (26% response rate). It is also intended to give EC some ideas about what members consider critical as the 2020-21 Team gears up.

Half the respondents work for Major Cities (51%) with Rural, Mid-size cities and Municipal contractors coming in at 41%, 36% and 28% respectively. 26% of respondents are designated/appointed assessors, while 53% were either field or managers. 21.9% of respondents indicated “Other” which ranged from “tax agent” to municipal tax clerks to in-house industrial assessors. 61% of respondents are currently working from home and 70.2% indicated

● Major City (Edmonton and Calgary only)	51
● Mid-Size City (all others)	36
● Urban	5
● Rural	41
● Municipal Contractor	28
● Non-Municipal (Industrial) Assessor	9
● Agent for Ratepayer	4
● I am currently unemployed	1

their place of work had changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An overwhelming majority of respondents (65%) would choose a balance if they had the option to work from home or office regardless of pandemic.

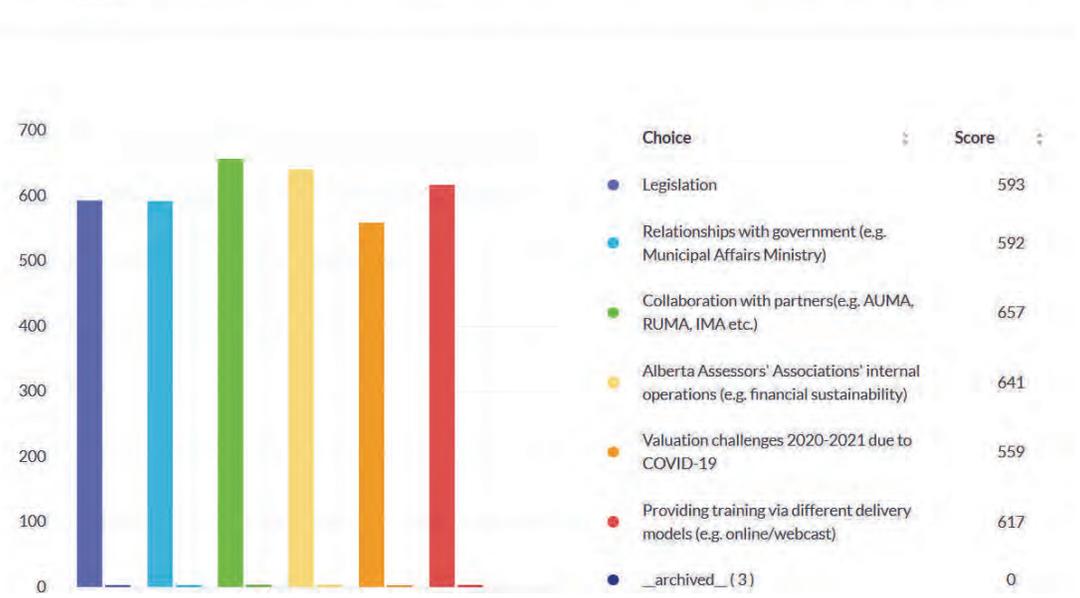
Half of respondents indicated their employers had reduced training/training related budgets. Since half of respondents are also major city employers, the result does not indicate accurately whether or not reductions have occurred outside the major centres.

94% of respondents are still employed full-time. Of the 6% who have had salary or hours reduced, 1 person has been furloughed, but no one has permanently released. 60%

of you are either very or somewhat concerned about your employment. This is significant; there are clearly a number of members who are under significant stress. Pre-pandemic, this number would likely have been far lower.

Additional questions had to do with issues and habits. The following graph is remarkable in its suggestion of what members consider critical. At first glance, all the choices are vital, but two clearly rise above others in terms of members’ concern. This information will assist the Executive as it discusses its priorities for the coming year.

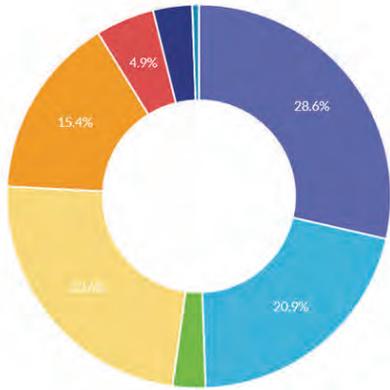
Q7 Rate the following matters from 1-6 (1 being most important) as important for the Alberta Assessors’ Association to focus
Scoring



The following pages show in graph the results that are briefly stated above.

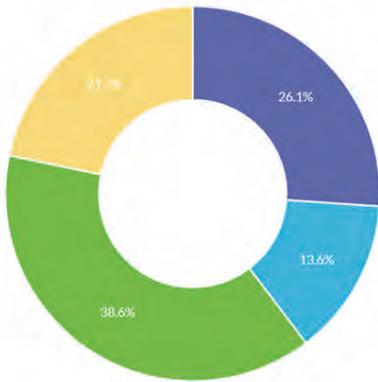
How is everyone doing? Cont'd

Q1 My current employer would be classified as
Multiple Choice



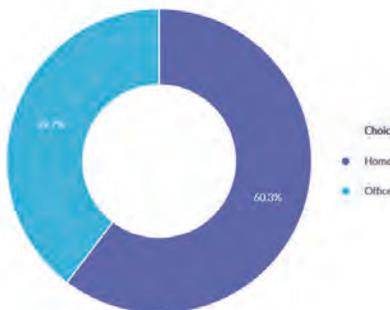
Choice	Total
Major City (Edmonton and Calgary only)	52
Mid-Size City (all others)	38
Urban	5
Rural	43
Municipal Contractor	28
Non-Municipal (Industrial) Assessor	9
Agent for Ratepayer	6
I am currently unemployed	1

Q2 My current position would be classified as
Multiple Choice



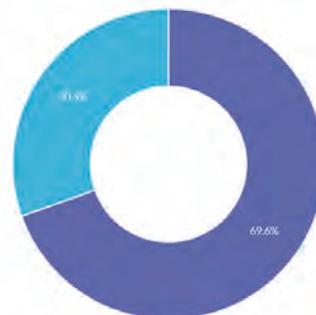
Choice	Total
Designated/appointed assessor	48
Managing assessor	25
Field assessor	71
Other (please specify)	40

Q3 What is your primary place of work currently?
Multiple Choice



Choice	Total
Home	111
Office	73

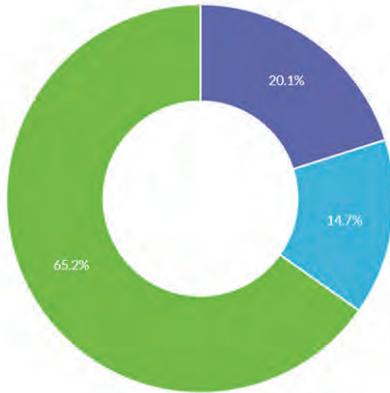
Q4 Has your primary place of work changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
Multiple Choice



Choice	Total
Yes	128
No	56

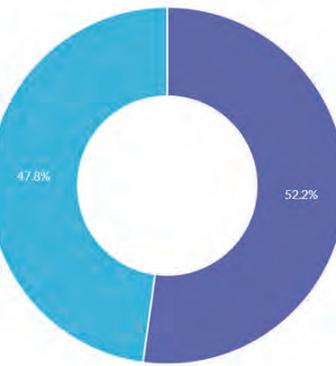
Q5 If given the option would you prefer to work from home or from an office setting in the future (post-pandemic)?

Multiple Choice



Choice	Total
Home	37
Office	27
A Balance of Both	120

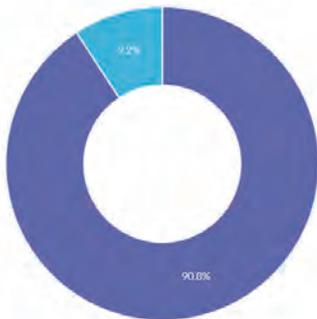
Q6 Has your employer announced reductions to training (and/or training-related travel) budgets because of COVID-19?



Choice	Total
Yes	96
No	88

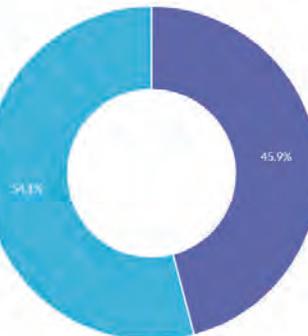
Q7 Would you like to see the Alberta Assessors' Association provide online training options in the near future?

Multiple Choice



Choice	Total
Yes	167
No	17

Q10 Has your employer reduced the budget/staffing for Assessment related functions?

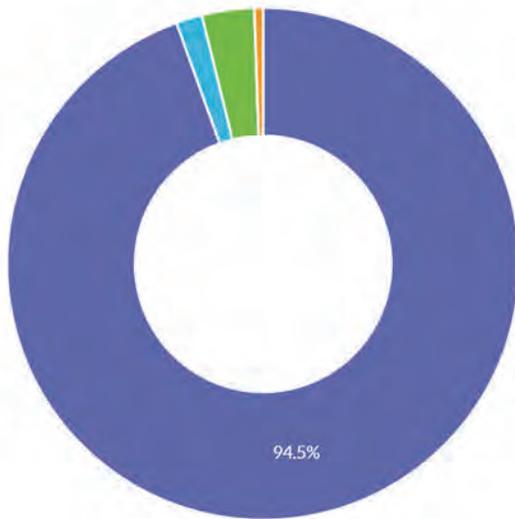


Choice	Total
Yes	81
No	99

Q11

Which of the following best describes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your employment status:

Multiple Choice

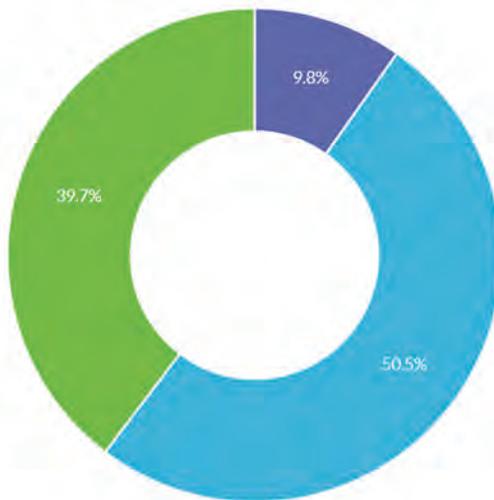


Choice	Total
Still employed full time at regular salary	172
Have had my hours reduced	3
Have had my salary reduced	6
Have permanently lost my employment	0
Have temporarily lost my employment	1

Q12

How concerned are you about your employment because of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Multiple Choice



Choice	Total
Very concerned	18
Somewhat concerned	93
Not at all concerned	73

JOB POSTINGS

CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE

ASSESSOR III

<http://www.assessors.ab.ca/content/16/CurrentJobPostings>

Welcome New Members

Having submitted an application for membership as required by policy, including obtaining the support of an accredited member, the following individuals have been accepted as regulated Candidate members:

New Candidates

- ⇒ Mervin McKenzie of the City of Calgary
- ⇒ Ayo Peters of the City of Calgary

Student Member

- ⇒ Meenu Nath (UBC)

Suspension for Cause

As prescribed in the *Municipal Assessor Regulation*, the Executive Committee has directed that the Registrar suspend the membership, and publish the name of the suspended member, for cause as follows:

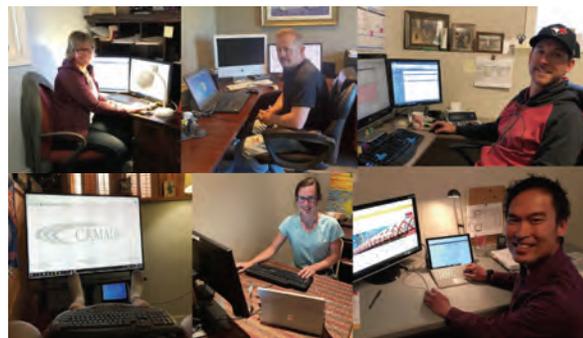
- Cherie Skolney

Thank you!

For our front page “work from home” models:

(top row) Becky Burke, Darwin Evans and Michael Krieger

(bottom row) Jerry Boutin’s view, Vanessa Powell and Eddie Lee



Inspection anyone?

Or vacation of a lifetime. This cliff house is a vacation home near Victoria, Australia, designed and engineered by Modscape Concept (AU).

See interior pictures [here](#)