

Reading Between the lines this week:

1. Go Home On Time Day

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It's now a decade after then Prime Minister, John Howard, declared work-life balance to be a barbeque-stopper and yet, overwork still presents a massive imposition on the personal and social wellbeing of many Australians. Indeed, the steady creep of work on to weekends is, no doubt, responsible for stopping an increasing number of actual barbeques in addition to the metaphorical one referred to by Howard.

This is particularly pertinent as we head into the holiday season and contemplate time away from work. Did you know that in 2009 the majority of Australian employees did not take all their annual leave entitlements? Yet, only one in five of us are happy with the hours we work, with most of us expressing a desire to work less.

This year's national [Go Home On Time Day](#), held on November 24, focused on the notion of 'time poverty', something that has been referred to as a 'modern malaise'.

Our survey found that half of all Australians are suffering from time pressure, with overwork preventing us from keeping healthy and spending time with family. Half of all survey respondents wanted to work fewer hours than they had worked in the previous week. For those working overtime, four in five (81 per cent) wanted to work less.

Of course on the other side of the story are those who are not happy with their hours because they are fewer than they would like to work. Sixty per cent of part-time workers wanted to work more hours.

While the findings might seem intuitive, they do highlight the fact that there is a clear mismatch between the hours the labour market makes available and the hours that people want to work. They also point to the difficulty most workers face trying to start a conversation with their employer about their preferred working hours versus their actual hours.

We hope that [Go Home On Time Day](#) can be a way to start that conversation.

To view a story about GHOTD on Lateline Business, [click here](#)

If you would like to read more of our findings into time poverty, you can download our report *Long time, no see: The impact of time poverty on Australian workers* [here](#)