
Media release

25 October 2013

Australia no longer a nation that lunches

Taking a lunch break has become a thing of the past for millions of Aussie bosses and their employees, a new survey has revealed.

The survey, conducted by The Australia Institute and *beyondblue* for this year's national Go Home on Time Day initiative, found that 3.8 million people routinely don't take a lunch break, with one in two of them saying it's because they are 'too busy'.

In addition, of those who said they do usually take a lunch break 72 per cent said they either choose to eat lunch at their desks, cut short or postpone their break until mid-afternoon.

beyondblue CEO Ms Kate Carnell AO said many bosses and workers have lost sight of how taking a break can improve their mental health and increase productivity.

"It's great that people are committed to getting the job done, but it is sensible to take a break away from your desk or the production line to exercise and think about other things. A regular walk at lunchtime improves both your physical and mental health and you will resume work feeling refreshed," she said.

A majority of people acknowledged that taking a break, even a short break to clear their head, makes them more productive. One in four said taking a full lunch break makes work less stressful and one in three said breaks make work more enjoyable.

The Australia Institute's Executive Director Dr Richard Denniss said despite Australia's reputation for being a land of 'sickies' and 'smokos' the evidence suggests otherwise.

"Lunch breaks have always been a part of modern workplaces, but in recent decades more and more people report that they are too busy or too rushed to do something as simple as walk away from their desk to eat their lunch. While Australians used to celebrate the practice of taking a long lunch, we're now struggling to even manage a short one," he said.

Go Home on Time Day is an annual initiative aimed at promoting mentally healthy workplaces and the importance of work/life balance. Participating organisations include **Great Place To Work, Murdoch University, Adobe, UnitingCare Australia and several unions, including the ACTU, NTEU, ASU and Unions NSW.**

This year's campaign focuses on encouraging workplaces of all sizes to recognise and acknowledge the impact the workplace can have on people's mental health and wellbeing. On Go Home on Time Day, consider promoting enjoyable workplace activities for staff such as a lunchtime yoga class, a morning or afternoon tea and a set time for everyone to go home.

**For media enquiries: Serena Rogers 0421 759 262 (The Australia Institute)
Julie Foster 0409 433 501 (beyondblue)**

www.tai.org.au

The full research paper *Hard to get a break?* will be released in the lead-up to Go Home on Time Day.

If you haven't already signed up, it's easy to do so. Simply point your mouse to www.gohomeontimeday.org.au and upload your logo to register. Your company will appear online as one of the Day's supporters, and you'll receive an information kit in the post, containing useful resources for the Day.

You can also join the conversation on:
Facebook www.facebook.com/gohomeontimeday
Twitter [@GoHomeOnTimeDay](https://twitter.com/GoHomeOnTimeDay)

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The Australia Institute conducted an online survey in July 2013. Respondents were sourced from a reputable independent online panel who earn reward points to participate. Results were post weighted (n = 1409) by age and gender based on the profile of the adult Australian population. The number of respondents who were employed at the time of the survey was 812. Small variations in sample size can occur from rounding errors as a result of the weighting process.
- To find out more about The Australia Institute visit www.tai.org.au or for *beyondblue's* tips for healthy workplaces, go to www.beyondblue.org.au/workplace

AUDIO FILES

News grabs can be downloaded here:

http://www.prodocom.com.au/filehosting/2020/TAI/GHOTD_denniss_1.wav

http://www.prodocom.com.au/filehosting/2020/TAI/GHOTD_dennss_2.wav

http://www.prodocom.com.au/filehosting/2020/TAI/GHOTD_denniss_3.wav