

Media release

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Beware of bosses bearing gifts: National Go Home On Time Day – 30 November 2011

Many workers who are given mobile phones and laptops by their employer feel obliged to work overtime, new research by The Australia Institute reveals.

The research on the increasingly blurry boundary between work and life was conducted for this year's national Go Home On Time Day, which will be held on Wednesday November 30.

Now in its third year, Go Home On Time Day – www.gohomeontimeday.org.au – is an initiative of The Australia Institute to raise awareness of the extent of overwork in Australia and the important workplace, health and social consequences it has. This year's research focuses on the phenomenon of 'polluted time'.

The Australia Institute's Deputy Director Josh Fear said that time pollution is one of the many consequences of a labour market which has become increasingly 'flexible' over the past few decades.

"Our survey findings suggest that in a workforce of 11.4 million people, some 6.8 million workers experience some degree of time pollution in any given week, while 1.75 million workers regularly have their free time polluted by work demands," said Mr Fear.

Seven out of eight (83%) survey respondents with a work device provided by their employer said that they had worked outside of normal work hours in the past week, compared to around half of those without a device (52%).

"Many workers consider their laptops and smartphones as a perk of their job, but those same devices can also invade free time. Australians already work some of the longest hours in the developed world, and technology often exacerbates the problem rather than relieving it by making people perpetually on-call.

"National Go Home On Time Day is a simple way for managers to show that they value their staff and for workers to focus on those parts of life that are more important than work – like family," concluded Mr Fear.

*A copy of **Polluted time: Blurring the boundaries between work and life** can be downloaded from www.tai.org.au under 'Publications'*

Notes for editors

- The Australia Institute conducted an online survey of 1,384 Australians, of which 845 reported being in paid work, in July 2011. The survey sample was sourced from an independent online panel provider. The survey sample was broadly representative of the Australian adult population by age and gender. The results reported have been post-weighted to precisely match the population profile by age and gender.

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