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Media release

Time pressure bad for our health and family life Go Home On Time Day – November 24

Half of all Australians are suffering from time pressure, with overwork preventing us from keeping healthy and spending time with family, according to new research by The Australia Institute.

The research was conducted for this year's national Go Home On Time Day, which will be held on November 24. Go Home On Time Day 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.

Anyone can get a personalised 'leave pass' from the www.gohomeontimeday.org.au website, or register their intention to participate on the GHOTD Facebook page.

The survey shows that many people who are 'income rich' are also 'time poor'.

'Time poverty', or not having enough time to do all the things you want or need to do, is affecting our health and our relationships. The survey found:

- One in two (50%) Australians, and 61 per cent of those working overtime, were prevented from spending enough time with family in the week leading up to the survey because of work
- One in two (46%), and 58 per cent of those working overtime, said work had stopped them doing physical exercise
- Work prevented one in three (35%) from eating healthy meals
- One in four (27%) reported being too busy to go to the doctor when they probably should
- One in five (20%) were prevented from walking or cycling to work because of their job commitments.

"A decade on from John Howard declaring work/life balance as the barbeque-stopper, it's still stopping barbeques. But we don't hear our leaders talking about it much anymore. Overwork comes at a cost to other, more important aspects of our lives, such as our families and our health. Go Home On Time Day is an opportunity to spend time on the other priorities in our lives," said The Australia Institute's Executive Director Dr Richard Denniss.

beyondblue: the national depression initiative is supporting Go Home On Time Day to get the message out that poor working conditions, along with other factors, can impact on mental health, thus contributing to substantial costs to business and industry.

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Deputy CEO of *beyondblue* Clare Shann said the combination of high job demands and low work autonomy, paired with poor social support at work, can result in job-strain related depression and anxiety.

“On average, every full-time employee with untreated depression costs an organisation \$9,665 per year, and this is on top of the significant personal and social costs,” said Clare. “But we know that much of the costs associated with work related depression and anxiety are potentially avoidable. In order to address the impact of depression and anxiety in the workplace *beyondblue* developed the National Workplace Program.”

VicHealth, The Public Health Association of Australia, The Australian Health Promotion Association, Oxfam and the Media Arts and Entertainment Alliance are also supporting GHOTD.

The full results of The Australia Institute’s research will be released in the lead-up to Go Home On Time Day.

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