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Media release

Go Home On Time Day – November 25

Each year, Australians work more than two billion hours of unpaid overtime, a new survey by The Australia Institute has found.

Around half of all employees work more hours than they are paid for and international comparisons show that Australians work the longest hours in the developed world.

In recognition of the extent of unpaid overtime and overwork in Australia, the Institute has announced national Go Home On Time Day which will take place on November 25.

People can register their intention to participate at www.gohomeontimeday.org.au or on Facebook.

The survey also found that on average, a typical employee works 49 minutes of unpaid overtime per day. For full-time workers, the average daily amount of unpaid work is more than one hour.

Male workers reported working unpaid overtime more frequently than female workers (50 per cent versus 41 per cent). People with young children (46 per cent) were only slightly more likely than people with no young children (45 per cent) to work unpaid overtime. However, there were stark differences between male and female parents of young children. Fifty-two per cent of men with young children reported working more hours than they were paid for on a typical workday, compared with only 42 per cent of women with young children.

“We can all find it tricky to leave the office or finish work on time. The extent of unpaid overtime in Australia is enormous. So, we’re suggesting that for one day in the year at least we should all attempt to go home on time,” said The Australia Institute Executive Director, Richard Denniss.

“Most Australians accept that sometimes they need to work back. Surely most employers will be flexible enough to simply let their employees go home on time on this one day.

“National Go Home On Time Day on November 25 is intended to be a fun, inclusive and guilt-free way of raising awareness of the nature and extent of unpaid overtime in Australia and the important industrial, health and social consequences it often has.”

The full results of the national poll and research into the economic impacts of unpaid overtime will be released in the lead-up to Go Home On Time Day.

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