

Wednesday, 21 November 2012

Will you be able to leave work on time today?

Unions have warned that an increasing number of Australians are working unpaid overtime, as “Go Home on Time Day” encourages workers to try to leave work on time.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the growth of insecure work and unpaid overtime were putting more pressure on workers and families.

“Today is a reminder that workers have other responsibilities and working unpaid and unpredictable overtime adds to stress and anxiety,” Ms Kearney said.

“Research from The Australia institute shows that 20 per cent of people have unpredictable working hours and cannot be certain of what time they will finish work.

“This backs the findings of the ACTU’s Working Australia Census by the ACTU, which found 60 per cent of respondents regularly worked more hours than set out in their employment agreement, and that close to half of them received no extra compensation for that overtime.

“Workers are finding it harder to balance work and family demands, and the growth of technology that means workers are always “on-call” makes it even harder.

“It is estimated that Australians work more than two billion hours of unpaid overtime a year, which adds up to a \$72 billion gift to employers.

“Unfortunately many workers feel they have to work unpaid overtime to keep their jobs.

“This is even more of an issue for employees on casual or short-term contracts who fear that they will lose paid work if they refuse.”

Ms Kearney said almost 40 per cent of the Australian workforce was in some form of insecure work such as casual, labour hire or short-term contracts.

“We hear a lot about workplace flexibility, but for most workers this means having to fit family responsibilities around an unpredictable work schedule, rather than the other way round.”

Ms Kearney said that the support *Go Home on Time Day* had received from *beyondblue* showed that unpaid overtime was not just a workplace issue.

“There is a link between the rise in insecure work and anxiety and stress among workers.”

“There is an opportunity for employers to improve their business performance by offering workers greater job security”, Ms Kearney said.

“A healthier workforce is a more productive workforce.”

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