

# *Theft By Any Other Name:*

*Unsatisfactory Working Hours  
and Unpaid Overtime  
2022 Update*

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### About the Author

Eliza Littleton is a research economist at the Australia Institute. She has published research on higher education policy, employment, and taxation.

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# Summary and Introduction

This year marks the fourteenth annual *Go Home on Time Day* (GHOTD), an initiative of the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute that shines a spotlight on the maldistribution of working hours and the scale of unpaid overtime worked by Australians.

Last year's report focused on working conditions during the pandemic. Since the re-opening of the global economy after pandemic era lockdowns, Australia's economy and labour market face both new and old challenges. While the unemployment rate is at historic lows, inflation has accelerated, interest rates are rising, and real wages continue to decline. The tighter labour market conditions, combined with strong productivity growth should theoretically place workers in a position to shop around for well-paid secure work. Accordingly, we should be witnessing improvements in working conditions and wages at least keeping up with prices. But this is not what we observe, this myth that a tight labour market will automatically empower workers hides the many diverse realities of working lives in Australia.

While the labour force participation rate is high, we continue to see growth in non-standard low security employment like labour hire, casual, rolling fixed term, and gig work. While the 'strong' labour market conditions may benefit some workers, they are not improving conditions for all, particularly persistently disadvantaged workers like young people, women, first nations workers, and people with disability. Meanwhile, financial dependency on employment remains high as disruptions to global and domestic supply chains cause price hikes for critical products and real wages continue to fall behind, undermining the purchasing power of Australians. This year's GHOTD focuses on issues Australian workers are experiencing in this economic context.

Since 2009, the Centre for Future Work and the Australia Institute have commissioned an annual survey to investigate overwork, unpaid overtime, and other instances of time theft in Australia. This year's poll of 1,410 was conducted between 6 and 9 September, with a sample that was nationally representative according to gender, age and state or territory. For a complete list of the survey questions and details on the composition of the sample, please see Appendices B and C.

Of the 1,410 respondents, 876 (or 62%) were in paid work. The survey then asked this sub-sample several questions regarding their work, preferences for more or fewer hours, and how much unpaid overtime they performed in their jobs.

The report summarises the results of that polling and places it in the context of national labour force and economic trends:

- On average, respondents reported they performed **4.3 hours of unpaid work in the week of the survey, equivalent to 15% of total working hours.**
  - Full-time workers reported the greatest incidence of unpaid overtime, on average 4.9 hours per week.
  - The two youngest age groups, those between 18-29 and 30-39 performed the most unpaid overtime, 5.2 and 5.3 hours per week, respectively.
- This time theft equates to **224.3 hours per year per worker, or six standard 38-hour work weeks.**
  - This means the average worker is losing \$8,188 per year or \$315 per fortnight.
- At the economy-wide level, this equates to **\$92 billion of lost income per year.**
  - This is roughly the same as the Commonwealth's annual expenditure on healthcare and it is seven times the budget for unemployment assistance including JobSeeker.
- Workers not being paid by employers for a significant portion of working time is made worse against the backdrop of labours' declining share of national income.
  - **Workers share of national income is at an all-time low of 44% in 2022,** while the profit share of income is at an almost record high of 30%.
- Across the whole labour market, **over half of all workers (56%) are unsatisfied with their working hours** – wanting either more or less hours.
  - Almost one in two (46%) workers in Australia reported that they wanted more paid hours, up from 38% in 2021 and 36% in 2020. This desire was especially strong among workers in casual positions (50%).
  - One in ten (10%) workers would prefer fewer paid hours.
  - 44% of workers indicated their hours were about right.
- A theme in the recent Jobs and Skills Summit was lifting labour market participation. The survey suggests that there is **considerable desire for more work among many workers**, and one of the barriers to tapping that potential labour supply is the insecure nature of casual or temporary working positions.
- More than one in three (36%) employed Australians reported experiencing one or more dimension of non-standard or insecure employment.
- Women were twice as likely as men to work in part-time or casual roles, 25% compared to 12% respectively.
- Part-time and casual employment was highest for community or personal service workers (55%) and sales workers (49%).

# Hours of Work

Table 1 summarises the employment status and normal hours of work reported by respondents to the survey. Over three in five (62%) of respondents were employed. This figure is broadly consistent with the average employment rate reported by the ABS in its monthly labour force survey.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of respondents who reported that they were not in paid employment remains largely unchanged compared to previous surveys.

Of those employed, 65% worked in standard permanent full-time positions, while the remainder worked in permanent part-time (22%), casual/temporary (8%) or self-employed (6%) positions. In our sample, more than one in three (36%) employed Australians reported experiencing one or more dimension of non-standard or insecure employment. This also corresponds with overall labour market averages of non-standard work, suggesting that the sample is an accurate representation of the broader labour market.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Employment status of sample**

Of all respondents				
	Employed		Not Employed	
<b>Employment Status</b>	62%		38%	
Of employed respondents				
	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	Self-Employed
<b>Percentage of Employed</b>	65%	22%	8%	6%
<b>Average Hours/Week</b>	32.0	24.6	17.6	28.0

Source: Survey results as described in text. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

On average, survey respondents in paid employment worked 29.1 hours a week (29.6 hours among men and 28.4 hours for women). This is somewhat lower than the ABS average for all workers which was 32.7 hours per week (ABS, 2022a).

Full-time workers in the sample reported working an average of 32 hours per week. Permanent part-timers worked an average of 24.6 hours per week, compared to 17.6 hours per week for casual or temporary workers and 28 hours for the self-employed.

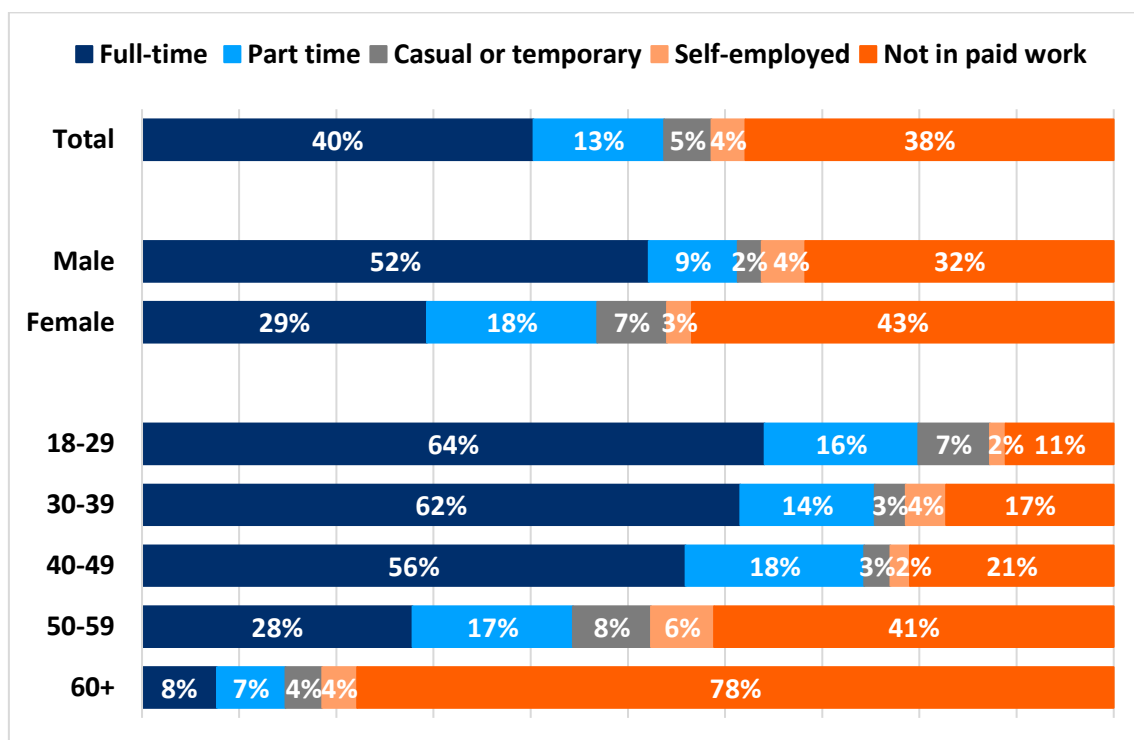
<sup>1</sup> The employment to population ratio was 64.3% in August 2022; see ABS (2022a).

<sup>2</sup> Note: the share of casual employment is low in our sample compared to ABS data; this may reflect overlap between casual and part-time status in many roles, and/or confusion among respondents about what constitutes 'casual' employment.

Figure 1 shows employment status by gender and age for the whole survey sample (including those who reported not being in employment). Women were twice as likely as men to work in part-time or casual roles, 25% compared to 12% respectively.

Surprisingly, people between the age of 18-29 were most likely to be in full-time work (64%); this is a higher portion than in previous GHOTD surveys, although the ABS have also recorded an increase in full-time employment among this age group compared with before the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Lower unemployment could explain why more young people, who are usually disadvantaged in competing for work, are finding full-time jobs. Australians aged 50-59 were the most likely to be in part-time or casual work (25%), followed by those aged 18-29 (23%).

**Figure 1: Employment status by gender and age, percentage of all respondents**



Source: Survey results as described in text.

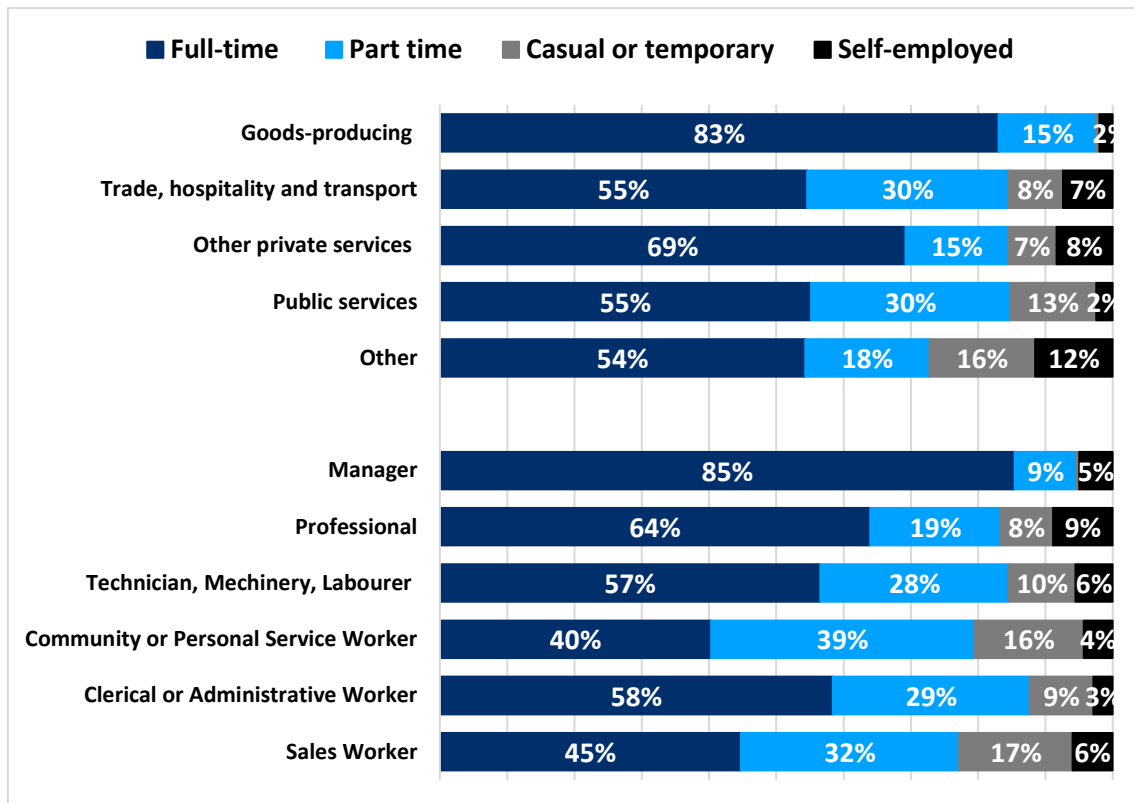
Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown of employment status by industry. There are stark differences in the employment status between sectors in the Australian economy, which contributes to the growing polarisation of working conditions across the labour force.

Goods-producing industries like mining, manufacturing, utilities, construction, and agriculture were the most likely to have workers in full-time positions (83%). In

<sup>3</sup> Note the ABS uses slightly different age and employment status categories; see ABS (2022a)

contrast, barely half of workers in trade, hospitality, and transport were in full-time positions (55%), this includes retail, accommodation, and food services. Similarly, 55% of Australians working in public services like health, education, and administration were in full-time jobs. Part-time and casual positions are most prevalent in public services (43%) and in trade, hospitality, and transport (38%).

**Figure 2: Employment status by industry and occupation, percentage of employed**



Source: Survey results as described in text.

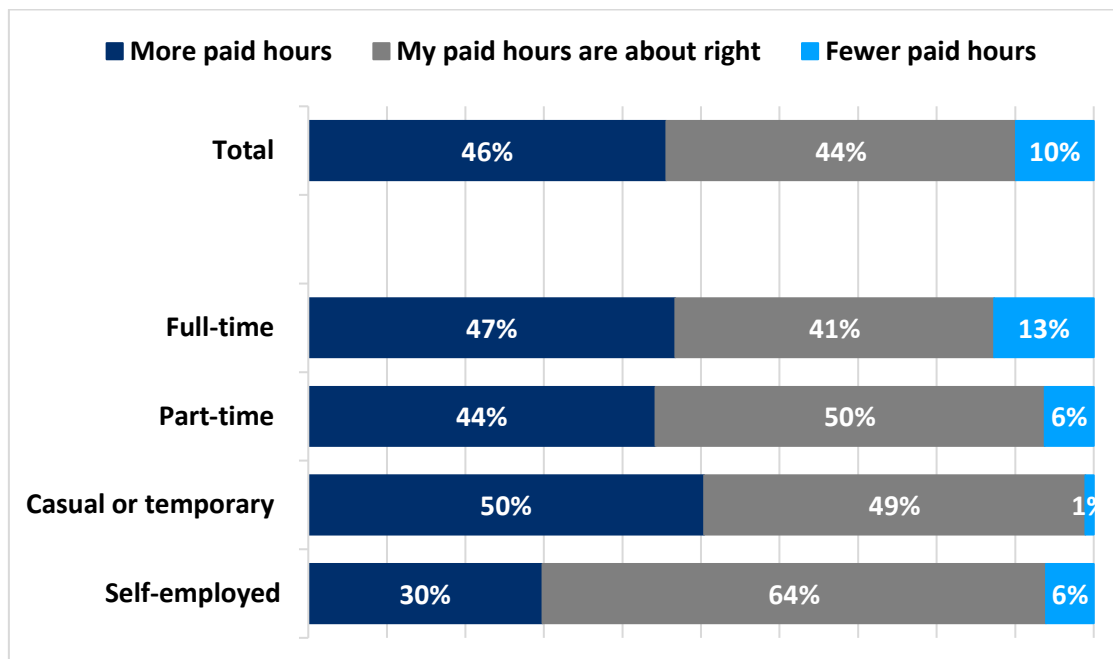
Figure 2 also shows incidence of full-time work across different occupations. Managers and professional staff were mostly likely to be in full-time work (85% and 64% respectively). In contrast, only 40% of community or personal service workers and 45% of sales workers had full-time work; these occupations also had the highest levels of part-time and casual employment (55% and 49% respectively). This is particularly concerning as the care economy is a significant sector for employment growth now and will continue to be into the future (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2022).



# Polarisation of Working Hours

Across the whole labour market, over half of all workers (56%) are unsatisfied with their working hours – wanting either more or less hours. One in ten (10%) workers would prefer fewer paid hours, 44% of workers indicated their hours were about right, while the largest proportion of workers (46%) wanted more paid hours. This is a larger portion than in any of the previous GHOTD surveys,<sup>4</sup> up from 38% in the same period last year and 36% the year before (Nahum, 2021). This result is particularly significant as a common experience during the pandemic (in the last two surveys) was reduced or loss of paid working hours.

**Figure 3: Hours of paid work preferences, by employment status**



Source: Survey results as described in text.

There are some variations in attitudes towards working hours depending on current working hours and employment status, as shown in Figure 3. Self-employed workers (6%), and those in full-time (13%) and part-time (6%) positions were most likely to say they preferred to work fewer hours, compared to only 1% of casual or temporary workers. On the other hand, half (50%) of all casual or temporary workers reported that they wanted more paid hours, reflecting the insecurity of this type of work.

<sup>4</sup> This question has not been asked in every previous survey and the wording has not always been exactly the same.

Self-employed workers were most likely to indicate they had the right number of hours (64%), while full-time workers were least likely to indicate they had the right number of hours (41%). This suggests that even those with relative stability in their work patterns are finding it difficult to make ends meet and to attain working arrangements that match their personal circumstances and preferences.

The survey results reaffirm a continuing polarisation of working hours in Australia's labour market. Many workers (especially those in casual positions) want more hours of work, while some workers (especially those in permanent roles) want less. The polarisation of working hours reflects the dichotomy in employer strategies. On one hand utilising a precarious, "just-in-time" workforce for many jobs (shifting the risk of fluctuations in business conditions and consumer demand onto the shoulders of insecure workers), on the other demanding very long hours (including large amounts of unpaid overtime) from a separate group of workers – largely full-time workers. These survey results challenge the claims that flexible labour markets give workers the freedom to work as much or as little as they wish. To the contrary, most workers are not satisfied with their hours of work.

Given the recent rising prices of goods and services, it is unsurprising that there has been an increase in the share of workers who report that they would like to work more hours compared to other years. Over the twelve months to September 2022, the consumer price index (CPI) has increased by 7.3%, after 30 years of relative price stability. The biggest increases have been for non-discretionary goods such as petrol, vegetables, oils, fruit, and appliances, products that households cannot easily opt out of buying (ABS, 2022e). Simultaneously, nominal wage growth has not kept up with price increases, putting financial pressure on households, particularly those on low incomes. In the context of declining real wages, it makes sense that more workers are expressing a preference for additional paid hours.

That workers are currently not getting enough hours is particularly interesting as the unemployment rate is at a historic low of 3.4% and the public narrative is that employees are struggling to fill positions. Conventional economic thought would suggest that where demand for labour outstrips supply, workers should have the power to shop around for better working conditions including ideal hours. This seems not to be occurring, with such a large portion of all paid workers not getting enough hours or remaining unemployed.

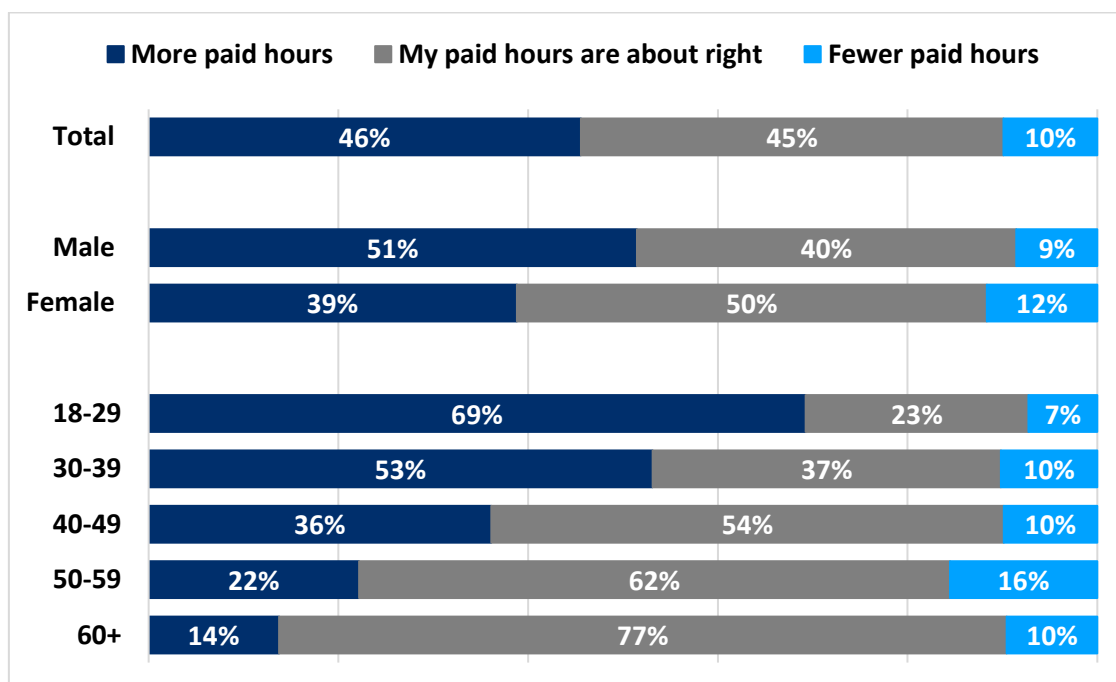
The problem of underemployment, experienced particularly by those in casual work and part-time work, is another indication of the polarisation in hours. It is notable that the survey results show far higher rates of underemployment than official measures published by the ABS. The GHOTD survey indicates that 46% of all workers want more

hours, more than seven times higher than the 6.1% underemployment rate reported by the ABS for the same time period (ABS, 2022a). This suggests the official measure is too conservative in how it defines and measures underemployment. For example, the ABS measure only includes those who are available to work additional hours in a specific reference period. This overlooks workers who would like to work more hour, but face barriers to participation.

A significant theme at the recent Jobs and Skills Summit was lifting participation and reducing barriers to employment to help address the alleged labour shortage (Treasury, 2022b). The results in the survey suggest that there is considerable desire for more work, and one of the barriers could be the very nature of casual or temporary working conditions.

As with the ABS data, the GHOTD results reveal substantial differences in underemployment and preference for working hours across gender and age. Men are more likely to want additional paid hours than women, 51% compared to 39% as shown in Figure 4. These findings are consistent with the skewed distribution of unpaid work activities like domestic duties and caring responsibility between men and women. According to a recent ABS (2022b) survey, more females (94%) than males (86%) participate in unpaid work activities and females spend on average 4 hours 31 minutes a day while males spend 3 hours and 12 minutes. It makes sense then that women do not have as much opportunity to work additional paid work hours.

**Figure 4: Preferences for more or less hours of paid work by gender and age**

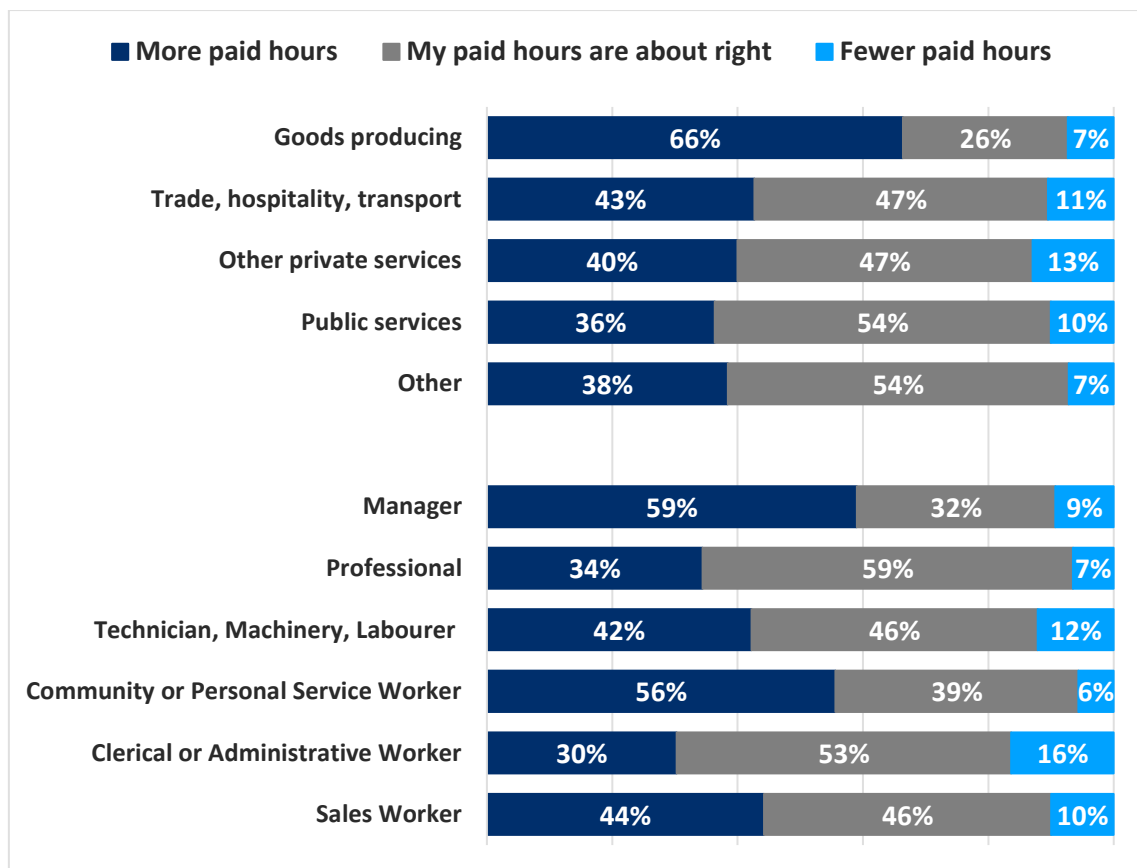


Source: Survey results as described in text.

Young workers (18-29) are much more likely to want additional paid hours compared to any other age group (69%) and the least likely to want fewer hours (7%). As young people on average earn less than other age groups, young workers would particularly be struggling to cover the rising cost of living. Young workers also experience higher levels of underemployment, which is also associated with the desire for more hours of paid work. The desire for more hours declines successively with age, with only 14% of people aged 60 or over who reported a desire for more hours.

Differences in attitudes towards working hours can also be observed across industry and occupation, as shown in Figure 5. Workers in goods-producing industries are the most likely to want additional work, with two-thirds (66%) indicating they wanted more paid hours. Workers in goods-producing industries also had the lowest share of workers seeking fewer paid hours (7%), along with workers in 'other' industries (7%). More workers reported to have paid hours that are about right than wanted more paid hours in every other industry group. In all industry groups, however, at least a third of workers would prefer more hours.

**Figure 5: Preferences for more or less hours of paid work by industry and occupation**



Source: Survey results as described in text.

By occupation, more than half of managers (59%) and community or personal service workers (56%) wanted to more paid hours, while clerical and administrative workers (30%) and professionals (34%) were least likely to want more paid hours (Figure 5). Community or personal service workers (6%) and professional workers (7%) were most likely to report that their hours were about right (59% and 57% respectively), while clerical or administrative workers (16%) and technicians, machinery workers, and labourers (12%) were most likely to report wanting fewer paid hours.

In sum, young people, and those in casual or temporary employment expressed stronger preferences for more hours of paid work, while older workers and those in full-time positions would prefer fewer hours. The coexistence of underwork and overwork is a persistent irony in Australia and resolving the evident polarisation of working hours in the labour market will require a multitude of policy responses.

In the more precarious segments of the labour market, limits must be placed on the ability of employers to mobilise a contingent workforce into jobs with inadequate and uncertain hours. Casual work should be used for its intended purpose (as a supplementary workforce to help smooth out seasonal or cyclical fluctuations in business), not as a regular, permanent staffing system. Workers need more stability in rosters and work schedules: including the right to advance notice for regular rosters, and compensation when schedules are changed. These measures would place limits on employers' current preference for using workers as a hyper-flexible resource, causing disruption and poverty among many workers in precarious jobs.

At the other end of the labour market, full-time workers also need support to attain a better balance of work and life responsibilities. This includes limits on overtime work, more personal freedom to turn down overtime, and better access to leave (including long-service, educational and family leaves; see Henderson, 2016). One possibility for reform is the introduction of a 'right to disconnect', which is explored further in the companion GHOTD report.

Steady improvements to labour productivity provides a real economic foundation for shorter working hours, and the pressing need to help families balance work and home responsibilities makes this goal all the more relevant. Revitalising the historic trend toward shorter working hours (for full-time workers) would help to strengthen employment opportunities (including for currently underemployed workers) and support healthier personal lives.

# Unpaid Overtime

Survey respondents were asked about the number of hours they worked unpaid for their employers in the past seven days. This could include arriving early at work, staying late, working through breaks (such as tea or lunch breaks), working from home in the evenings and on weekends, taking calls or e-mails out of working hours and other forms of unpaid labour. Across all forms of employment, unpaid overtime represents 15% of total working hours for paid workers. The ubiquity of unpaid overtime means that Australian workers are losing substantial amounts of income.

On average, employees reported they had worked 4.3 hours of unpaid work in the last seven days (Table 2).<sup>5</sup> This was lower than the reported 6.9 hours in the 2021 GHOTD survey, and 5.25 hours in 2020, but broadly consistent with reported unpaid overtime in pre-pandemic years (for example, 4.6 hours in 2019). The incidence of unpaid overtime seemed to increase during the pandemic, as workers grappled with the unprecedented disruptions of working from home, rapid job losses followed by re-hiring, and other insecurity. This year's results may therefore indicate a return to more normal working time patterns – although due to sampling errors and normal year-to-year fluctuations in data, this interpretation should be treated cautiously.

Unpaid overtime was most severe for full-time workers who worked an average of 4.9 hours of unpaid overtime per week. Self-employed (3.7 hours) and part-time workers (3.5 hours) worked less unpaid overtime. Even among casual workers, unpaid overtime is common, with respondents reporting 2.2 hours per week.

**Table 2: Unpaid overtime by employment status**

	Full time	Part time	Casual or temporary	Self-employed	Total
<b>Unpaid overtime per week</b>	4.9	3.5	2.2	3.7	4.3
<b>Share of paid hours worked</b>	15.3%	14.1%	12.3%	13.4%	15.0%

Source: Survey results as described in text.

On an annualised basis,<sup>6</sup> 4.3 hours of unpaid overtime per week translates to 224.3 hours of unpaid overtime over the year for every worker in Australia. Based on a 38-

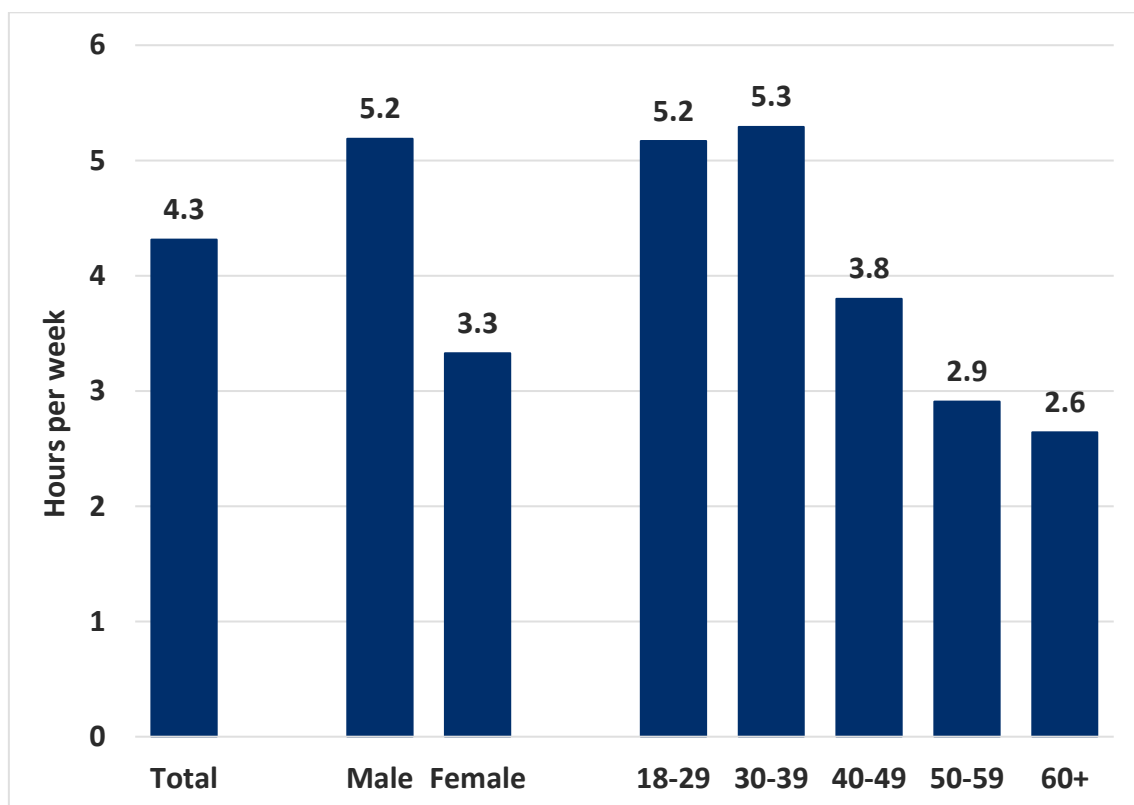
<sup>5</sup> The concept of unpaid overtime is more difficult to measure for self-employed workers (who may not be paid a formal wage and are compensated instead through the business's profit).

<sup>6</sup> Assuming a constant rate of unpaid overtime throughout the year.

hour workweek, this is equivalent to 6 weeks of unpaid work per worker per year. Extrapolated across Australia’s waged workforce, this implies total unpaid overtime of 2.5 billion hours per year.

Figure 6 illustrates average unpaid overtime per week by gender and age group. Men reported an average of 5.2 hours of unpaid overtime per week, compared to 3.3 hours for women. Of course, these figures refer to unpaid work time in a formal job, and do not include unpaid caring and household work in workers’ families – a disproportionate share of which is performed by women. According to a recent ABS survey, women spend 41% more time than men on unpaid work activities including domestic, childcare, adult care, and voluntary work activities (ABS, 2022b). This necessarily detracts from the amount of paid work women perform.

**Figure 6: Unpaid overtime by gender and age**



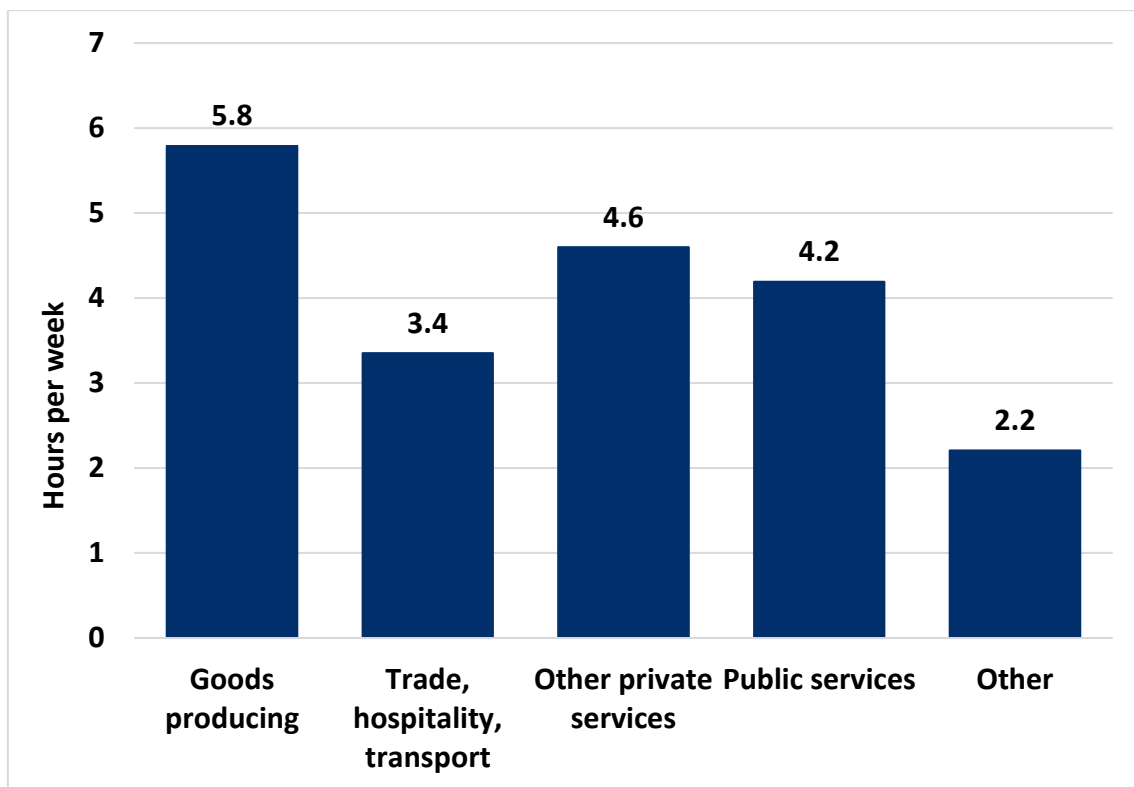
Source: Survey results as described in text.

The two youngest age groups, those 18-29 and 30-39, performed the most unpaid overtime, 5.2 and 5.3 hours per week (Figure 6). These cohorts are particularly vulnerable to exploitation as they tend to have less experience and qualifications, placing them at a disadvantage competing for jobs, even in a tight labour market. As previously discussed, even with low unemployment the pervasiveness of job insecurity and underemployment makes workers vulnerable to time theft. Young people are also

overrepresented in casualised industries rife with time theft, such as hospitality and retail, where it is common to be expected to complete unpaid work (such as opening or closing a store or restaurant, or unpaid ‘training’ time). Unpaid overtime is substantially lower in older age groups, including 3.8 hours for those 40-49, 2.9 hours for those 50-59 and 2.6 hours for those aged 60 and over.

There are clear disparities in the amount of unpaid overtime completed by workers in different industries (Figure 7). On average, workers in goods producing industries (including agriculture, mining, manufacturing, utilities, and construction) reported working the highest number of unpaid hours per week (5.8 hours). Workers in other private services (including media, financial services, real-estate, professional services, and administration) reported working an average of 4.6 hours of unpaid overtime per week, the second highest. This distribution of unpaid overtime across industries is consistent with results from the last two GHOTD surveys (Nahum, 2021 and 2020).

**Figure 7: Unpaid overtime by industry**



Source: Survey results as described in text.

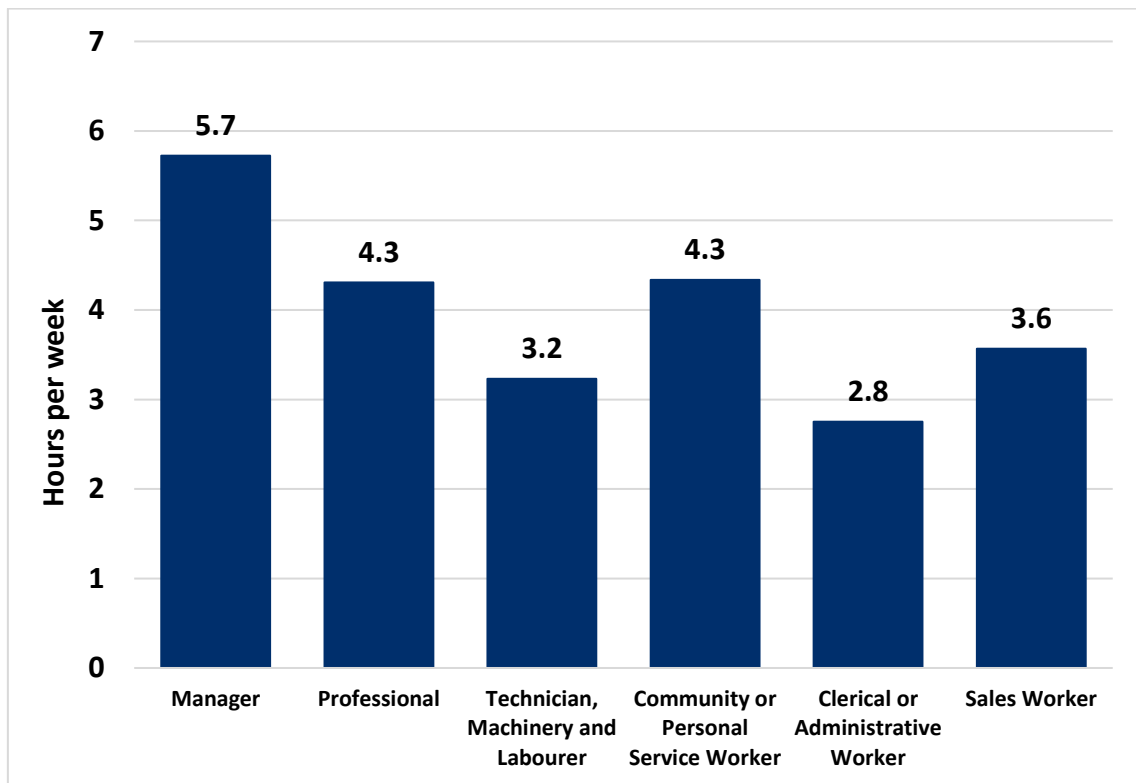
Figure 8 breaks down average unpaid overtime by occupational category. Managers (5.7 hours), professional workers (4.3 hours) and community and personal service workers (4.3 hours) report the highest levels of unpaid overtime. This is particularly



concerning as community and personal service workers are more likely to earn low incomes.

Clerical and administrative workers (2.8 hours) and technicians, machinery workers, and labourers (3.2 hours) experienced the least unpaid overtime. The differences in unpaid overtime are closely correlated to the form of employment most common in each of these occupations – managers and professionals are more likely to work in full time jobs which is where the incidence of unpaid overtime is highest.

**Figure 8: Unpaid overtime by occupation**



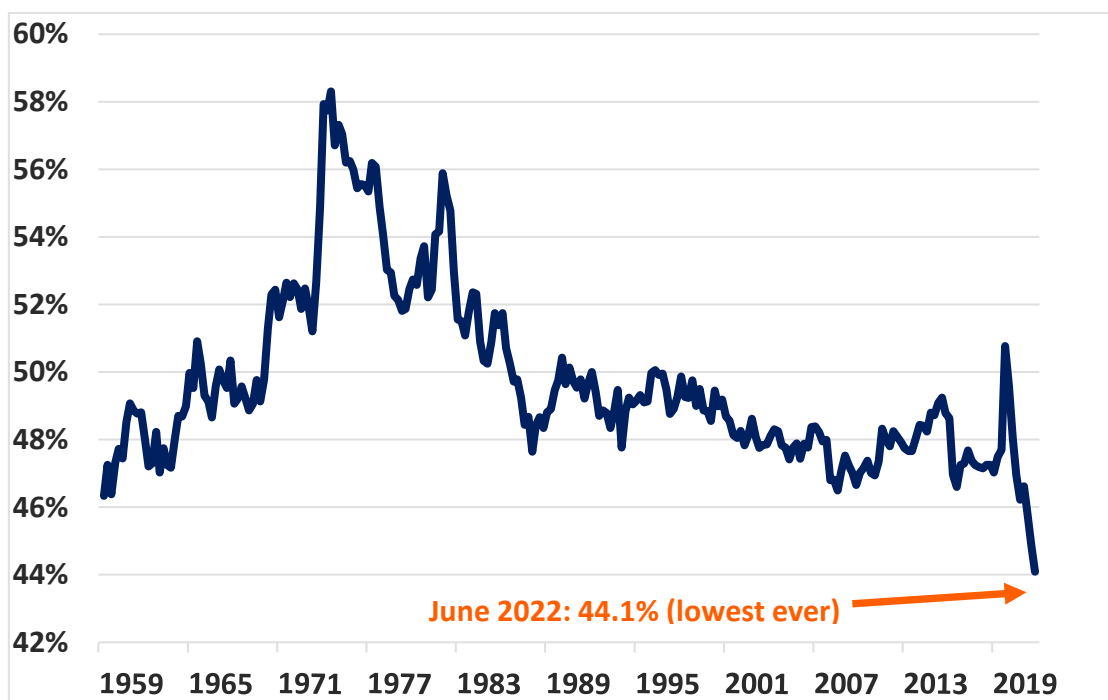
Source: Survey results as described in text.

# Cost of Time Theft

The survey results paint a seemingly contradictory picture of work experiences for many people in Australia, with inadequate paid hours, overwork, and demands for unpaid overtime simultaneously imposed on all types of workers. This combination of time pressures imposes significant negative consequences on Australia's society and economy. The frequent incidence of unpaid overtime described above means that Australian workers are losing substantial amounts of income. This is particularly concerning when worker's share of national income has fallen to record lows, wage growth is not keeping up with inflation, and the cost of living is rising.

Figure 9 shows that the labour share of GDP has fallen to its lowest point since the ABS began gathering this data. Over the past 47 years, the labour share of income has fallen from 58% of GDP to 44% in 2022, the lowest share on record. Meanwhile the profits share of income has doubled from 15% in the 1970s to an almost record high of 30% in 2022 (ABS, 2022d).<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 9: Labour compensation as a proportion of GDP, 1959-2022**



Source: Authors calculations based on ABS (2022d) Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Produce, June 2022, Table 7 (seasonally adjusted, current prices)

<sup>7</sup> Note: corporate profits were only higher in 2020 when JobKeeper payments artificially boosted profits.

This constitutes an ongoing and massive shift in national income distribution from workers to the companies they work for. It reflects the long-run tendency of wages to lag behind productivity growth – and more recently for real wages to fall in absolute terms. That workers are receiving a declining share of the output they produce is a clear indication of the relative weakness of workers’ bargaining power within Australian workplaces. This has implications for income growth, inequality and consumer purchasing power needed to fuel aggregate demand and economic growth.

Against this backdrop, unpaid overtime is adding insult to injury. Australian workers are not receiving a fair share of national income as is, but they are also not being paid by employers for a significant portion of their total working time. Between increasingly precarious working arrangements, cost of living pressures, and stagnating real wages, Australia’s industrial relations settings are persistently and dangerously out of touch with the worsening position of workers in the contemporary labour market. The phenomenon of time theft (through endemic unpaid overtime) compounds the more general experience of time pressure and work-life balance experienced by so many Australian households (Anxo and Karlsson, 2019).

Unpaid overtime has financial as well as social costs for individual workers. The value of this stolen time is particularly evident when viewed at an aggregate level for the overall labour market. Table 3 quantifies the cost of time theft by estimating the income that would have been received by workers if their unpaid labour had in fact been compensated. The survey showed that on average workers perform 4.3 hours of unpaid overtime per week. This works out to 2.5 billion hours of unpaid work over the year, by the 11.34 million workers in Australia.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3: Aggregate value of unpaid overtime, 2022**

Job Status	Number of Employed (million)	Median Wage (\$/hr)	Avg. Unpaid Overtime (hrs/wk)	Annual Total Value (\$billion/yr)
<b>Permanent Workers</b>				
<i>Full-Time</i>	7.04	\$40.59	4.9	\$73.0
<i>Part-Time</i>	1.63	\$36.50*	3.5	\$10.7
<b>Casual Workers</b>				
<i>Full-Time</i>	0.92	\$31.43	2.2	\$3.2
<i>Part-Time</i>	1.75	\$29.93*	2.2	\$5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.34</b>	<b>\$36.03</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>\$92.8</b>

Source: Authors calculations from survey results, ABS (2022c) Table EQ4 and (ABS 2021) Table 7.

Note: \* includes superannuation contributions for part-time permanent and casual workers.

<sup>8</sup> This figure only refers to waged employees, it does not include workers who are self-employed as median wage data is less indicative of compensation for this group.

The ABS reports the total number of Australian employees working in each of the four main categories of waged employment and the median hourly earnings for each category of waged worker. These can be used to estimate the aggregate income lost to workers by the failure of employers to compensate workers for unpaid overtime worked. The calculation assumes that overtime hours would have been paid at the same rate as average median earnings,<sup>9</sup> and includes a 9.5% margin reflecting the minimum superannuation contribution for part-time and casual workers which should accrue to workers for this time.<sup>10</sup> As indicated in Table 3, **this suggests that unpaid overtime represents a collective loss of some \$92.8 billion in income for Australian workers in 2022.**

To put this figure into perspective, \$92 billion is equivalent to a third of what the Federal Government is expected to collect in income tax from individuals (\$263.9 billion) in 2022-23 (Treasury, 2022a). It roughly matches the Commonwealth's annual expenditure on healthcare (\$105 billion in 2022-23) and is just over seven times the budget for unemployment assistance including JobSeeker (Treasury, 2022a).

At a time of economic fragility, it is especially important that workers are fully compensated for their work – for the sake of the broader economy and the well-being of working families. Especially in a labour market that is suffering declining real wages, underemployment, insecure work, and cost of living pressures, the loss of billions of hours of unpaid overtime per year is not sustainable.

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<sup>9</sup> In practice, most overtime work should incur a higher hourly rate, so this assumption is conservative.

<sup>10</sup> The calculation does not include superannuation costs for full-time workers, since superannuation contributions are not legally required for genuine overtime income.

# Conclusion

The fourteenth annual *Go Home on Time Day* report has once again highlighted the persistent and simultaneous problems of unpaid overtime, inadequate hours, and overwork in Australia. The common practice of expecting workers to perform unpaid work outside of normal (paid) working hours is imposing an enormous cost on Australian workers and on the national economy. Ironically, this imposition of excess unpaid overtime on one group of Australian workers coexists with an equally pressing challenge facing those who cannot find enough hours of work – and are relegated as a result to inadequate and irregular part-time and casual work.

This is happening against the backdrop of profits growing three times faster than wages since 2016 (ACTU, 2022). The distribution of economic benefits has too long been skewed in favour of employers and investors, and thus it's time to take advantage of opportunities to balance the scale. This growing maldistribution of national income is made worse when workers are not paid at all for billions of hours of their work.

This report has outlined key challenges in organising working time in Australia's current labour market. These include insecure, non-standard working arrangements; limited ability for workers to achieve optimal working hours; and the scale and cost of unpaid overtime. To ensure that workers are able to arrange working hours that fit with their preferences and personal and family circumstances and earn adequate and stable income flows to support their standard of living, these challenges need to be addressed through a range of responses.

The solutions involve reducing the burden of unpaid overwork and transferring the corresponding labour demand to those workers who want and need more work, not less. To end the epidemic of time theft, regulators must enforce existing rules regarding maximum hours of work, and payment for all time worked, on a more consistent basis. Finally, workers (individually and through their unions) must demand that employers respect their right to leisure time – for their own benefit, and for the good of Australian society.

# Appendix A - Methodology

Between 6 and 9 September 2022, The Australia Institute surveyed 1,410 adults living in Australia, online through Dynata’s panel, with nationally representative samples by gender, age group and state/territory.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the House of Representatives. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs.

The research is compliant with the [Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards](#). The long methodology disclosure statement follows.

## **Long disclosure statement**

The results were weighted by three variables (gender, age group and state or territory) based on Australian Bureau of Statistics [“National, state and territory population”](#) data, using the raking method. This resulted in an effective sample size of 1,342.

The margin of error (95% confidence level) for the national results is 3%.

Results are shown only for larger states.

Voting intention questions appeared just after the initial demographic questions, before policy questions. Respondents who answered “Don’t know / Not sure” for voting intention were then asked a leaning question; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. “Coalition” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” refers to Independent/Other, and minor parties in cases where they were included in the voting intention but represent too small a sample to be reported separately in the crosstabs.



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# Appendix B - Survey Questions

These are the questions that were asked in the survey described in this report.

## **Q. Are you currently in paid work?**

1. Yes, permanent full time
2. Yes, permanent part time
3. Yes, casual or temporary
4. Yes, self-employed
5. No

## **Q. What best describes the industry you work in?**

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
2. Mining
3. Manufacturing
4. Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
5. Construction
6. Wholesale Trade
7. Retail Trade
8. Accommodation and Food Services
9. Transport, Postal and Warehousing
10. Information Media and Telecommunications
11. Financial and Insurance Services
12. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
13. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
14. Administrative and Support Services
15. Public Administration and Safety
16. Education and Training
17. Health Care and Social Assistance
18. Arts and Recreation Services
19. Other Services
20. Don't know/Not sure

## **Q. Which of the following best describes the kind of work you do?**

1. Manager
2. Professional
3. Technician or Trades Worker
4. Community or Personal Service Worker
5. Clerical or Administrative Worker
6. Sales Worker
7. Machinery Operator and Driver

8. Labourer
9. Don't know/Not sure

**Q. Are you a member of a union?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/Not sure

**Q. How many hours a week are you generally paid to work?**

[NUMBER Open answer] \_\_\_ hours

**Q. Would you like to work...?**

1. More paid hours
2. Fewer paid hours
3. My paid hours are about right

**Q. Unpaid work may include things like arriving early, staying late, working through lunch or breaks, working at home beyond paid hours, responding to phone calls and emails out of hours, and so on.**

**How many unpaid hours of extra work did you perform for your employer in the last 7 days (i.e. unpaid overtime)?**

[NUMBER Open answer] \_\_\_ hours



# Appendix C - Sample Distribution

	N =	% sample
Total Employed	876	62%
Male*	464	53%
Female*	412	47%
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	252	29%
30-39	219	25%
40-49	184	21%
50-59	131	15%
60+	90	10%
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Permanent full time	568	65%
Permanent part-time	190	22%
Casual or temporary	69	8%
Self-employed	49	6%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Manager	272	31%
Professional	183	21%
Technician or Trades Worker	58	7%
Community or Personal Service Worker	69	8%
Clerical or Administrative Worker	147	17%
Sales Worker	63	7%
Machinery Operator and Driver	26	3%
Labourer	40	5%
Don't know/Not sure	18	2%
<b>Industry</b>		
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	47	5%
Mining	20	2%
Manufacturing	68	8%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	19	2%
Construction	44	5%
Wholesale Trade	26	3%
Retail Trade	88	10%
Accommodation and Food Services	33	4%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	31	4%

Information Media and Telecommunications	27	3%
Financial and Insurance Services	55	6%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	17	2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	62	7%
Administrative and Support Services	33	4%
Public Administration and Safety	28	3%
Education and Training	79	9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	95	11%
Arts and Recreation Services	28	3%
Other Services	65	7%
Don't know/Not sure	11	1%
<b>Union membership</b>		
Yes	305	35%
No	557	64%
Don't know/Not sure	14	2%

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