

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSSIES STRUGGLING TO ACHIEVE HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE WHILST COFFEE INDUSTRY REAPS THE BENEFITS

Australian workforce spending \$18.7 billion each year on coffee whilst one-in-five workers can go a whole week without stepping foot outside the workplace

Many Aussie workers say that work-life balance is a key benefit of the modern Australian workplace, yet a fifth (19.4%) who regularly eat meals at their desk can go a full week without leaving their place of work during work hours, according to the newly released *Choosi Workplace Report*.

Analysing Aussie workers' attitudes towards various elements of their workplace, the *Choosi Workplace Report* is the seventh instalment in a research series that aims to explore the key barriers and drivers behind financial and social behaviour in today's society.

The percentage of workers increases to more than half (53.7%) when including those who do not leave their workplace at least three out of the five working days, which is at odds with the near three-fifths (58.4%) of workers who said work-life balance was the most important factor when assessing workplace benefits or culture.

The research also shows that whilst many Aussies are clearly putting significant hours in at work, they are not experiencing the break needed when on annual leave.

Nearly two-in-five (38.0%) said they became sick during a period of annual leave in the past year, and a fifth (19.8%) of those surveyed said they had to take sick leave within a fortnight of returning from annual leave. Furthermore, over a quarter (28.9%) hadn't taken any sick leave at all in the past year.

Choosi spokesperson Katrina Foster said: "To see such a large percentage of the Australian workforce say that work-life balance and wellness is an important focus for them, but then potentially not leave their place of work for an entire week, is concerning. This coupled with the number of people who fall ill whilst on annual leave shows a workforce which could be close to burning out.

"Our research also shows that whilst many workers are potentially paying a physical price for the time they spend at work, it is also hitting their pockets. Expenditure on coffee, food and clothing is high and is something Aussie workers need to budget effectively for."

The *Choosi Workplace Report* found that Australian workers buy 4.6 billion coffees each year, enough to fill 64 Olympic swimming pools and equating to a spend of \$18.7 billion which is more than workers are spending on their lunch (\$17.1 billion).

Furthermore, the Aussie workforce is spending over \$8.5 billion on clothes, shoes and accessories for work each year, with women spending \$1 billion more than men.

Dr Elliroma Gardiner, Lecturer in Organisational Psychology at Griffith University, said: "Despite the many different types of modern Australian workplaces, the results from this research reveal a number of interesting trends. Some workers spend all day – or even all week – without leaving their place of work. Given the wealth of research showing the many psychological and physical benefits of taking regular breaks and moving around during the day, these individuals may actually be doing themselves a disservice in the long-run. For instance, such individuals may find themselves rundown or falling ill whilst on annual leave.

“Moreover, working long hours may not only deplete the health of workers, but also their bank balances. To see Australian workers spending such a large amount each year on coffee, greater than the spend on both lunch and clothing, is staggering and suggests that there may be some way to go to achieving a healthy work-life balance.”

Almost half (47.0%) of the workforce across the country think their co-workers judge them on their clothes, while more than half (55.8%) think their customers or clients judge them on their clothes.

Surprisingly, the nearly three-in-five workers (59.2%) believe there are different standards in appropriate dress codes for men and women, with 57.9% believing women are expected to be more formal or well kept. However, it might be that Aussie workers keep these beliefs to themselves as people complaining was ranked the top pet peeve (20.5%) in the workplace.

Choosi spokesperson Katrina Foster concluded: “For over half of the Australian workforce to believe that there are different standards for men and women when it comes to dress code is surprising, given the equality we so often see these days. Whilst what we wear and how we are presented can sway perception it’s clear Australians are incredibly hard workers. This research underlines how important work-life balance is to their physical health, meaning sufficient rest and relaxation is vital if employers want their employees to be on peak form whilst at work. And, health and wellbeing strategies in the workplace, supported by employers are crucial in helping staff achieve this.”

ENDS

Additional findings from the *Choosi Workplace Report* include:

Pet peeves

- People complaining was the top pet peeve for Australian workers (20.5%), followed by poor personal hygiene/habits (11.4%) and excessive chatting (8.7%).
- Invading personal space was also a common pet peeve (8.5%) as was people talking loudly (7.8%).
- Nearly three-in-five workers (58.9%) have confronted colleagues over behaviour which annoys them one or more times, with the majority (82.4%) saying this resolved the matter.
- More than half of men (52.4%) would tell a co-worker if they had body odour whereas just over a third (36.2%) of women would do the same.
- 87.0% of people believe warnings should be given to co-workers for a lack of personal hygiene, with over a third (34.5%) seeing it as a sackable offence if those warnings are ignored.

Dress codes

- Nearly two-thirds of workers (58.1%) care about the way their colleagues dress, with 56.1% believing dress codes in Australian workplaces have become less formal over the past decade.

Health and wellbeing

- Almost three in five (58.4%) respondents took some sick leave over the past year. Those who went on sick leave over the past year took an average of six days.

Food

- Among those who bring home-made meals into work, nearly a quarter (23.0%) have had their food go missing at least once.
- 48.9% regularly eat lunch at their desk whilst 22.0% regularly eat breakfast at their desk.

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About Choosi

Choosi provides information to help customers compare, choose and apply for a range of insurance products online and over the phone. Choosi's free comparison service lets you compare the benefits and prices of a range of popular insurance products, so you can confidently choose cover that suits your needs, your budget and lifestyle.

About the Choosi Modern Australian Workplace Report

In order to explore workplace relationship, dress code and culture behaviours and attitudes in modern Australian society, CoreData surveyed 1,000 typical Australians across the nation in January 2018.

The sample collection employed soft quotas to monitor representativeness of the Australian population. Hard quotas by state were also engaged to ensure all the main states were represented with sufficiently robust samples (NSW = 200, VIC = 200, QLD = 200, WA = 200, Remaining states/territories = 200).