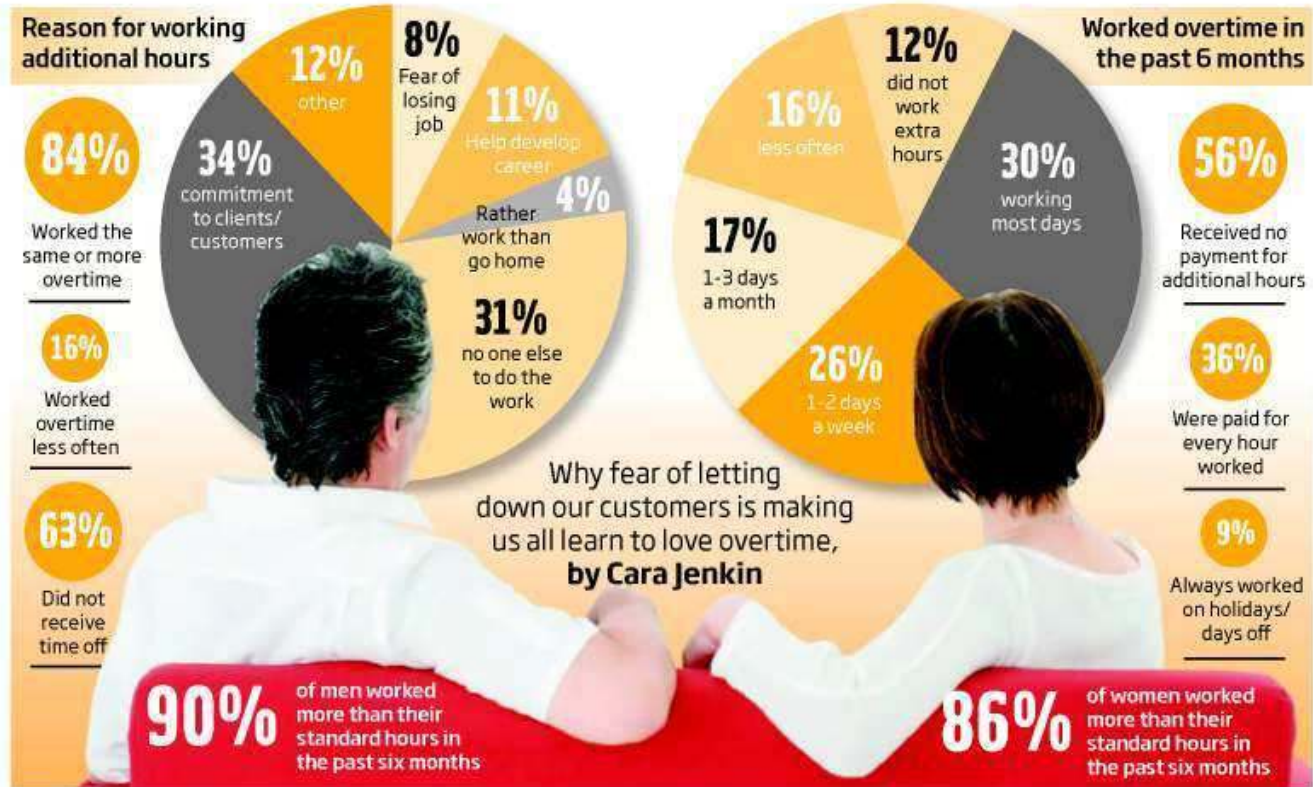




Miracle workers



Job focus 45 per cent of workers earning more than \$70,000 a year do overtime on most days of the week, compared with 18 per cent of workers with an annual income below \$50,000.

Whatever it takes



Why more of us just can't leave work in the office, **Cara Jenkin** writes

WORKERS are putting in more overtime than they did a year ago and it is all because they do not want to let down their customers.

Exclusive research, commissioned by CareerOne, finds the traditional stereotype of the hard-working and loyal Aussie is truer now than during the financial crisis, with workers volunteering to put in the extra hours just to get the job done.

The Galaxy poll, conducted last week in four capital cities, talked to more than 800 people about their work/life balance today.

The survey finds one in two employees is working overtime at least once a week, with only one in 10 clocking off on time each night.

Almost a third (31 per cent) of overtime workers are doing it more often than they did 12 months ago and 53 per cent are doing the same amount.

Thirty per cent are putting in extra hours on most days of the week and almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of workers performed work tasks or answered work calls when on holiday or on their day off.

Not wanting to let down clients and customers was listed as the most common reason for the extra hours (34 per cent) and secondary was the feeling there was no one else capable of doing the job (31 per cent).

Almost half (44 per cent) of workers volunteered the extra hours to get their work done

and more than half (56 per cent) were not being paid for their time.

While two-thirds (65 per cent) accept the overtime is affecting their family relationships, staff feel overtime now is just a way of life.

Social analyst David Chalke says contrary to some opinions, workers are not "slaves to the boss".

"Most people enjoy their jobs and they do it for the satisfaction they get for doing their jobs," he says.

"We do our jobs, like to do our job and want to do it well.

"They are conscientious and do their job properly." New technology also has made it easier for people to work from home and even away on their holidays.

Smartphones and tablets almost encourage staff to work additional hours, as they now have the ability to check emails and conduct tasks away from the workplace.

"It's not the technology causing it, it's the fact technology enabled us to do the thing properly and do it well," Mr Chalke says.

The poll results are in stark contrast to reports from the global financial crisis, when companies were forcing staff to do the same amount of work with less people, requiring them to do overtime.

The research comes as the unemployment rate six months ago reached its lowest point since January 2009, before the economic downturn.

Recruiters say many employers are hiring workers to boost staffing levels and intend to hire more staff this year.

Organisational development consultant Darryl Cross says Australians do have a particular work ethic, despite their laid-back reputation.

He says international labour

statistics show Australia is second to the US in terms of average hours worked throughout a year.

However, Mr Cross says workers are less confident now than during the global financial crisis because of economic uncertainty increasing in the past six months. This is spurring on employees to work harder and deliver to their customers.

"We dig in to get things done because it's the Australian way," he says.

"Since the GFC, people are conscious about employment.

"They are thinking they have got to look like they are putting in."

Mr Cross says there is greater economic strain on workers now than 12 months ago and they feel if their customers are not satisfied, their job may be in danger.

"People are not confident. They are saving like mad, they are worried about the future.

"Things are now tighter for Australians."

Robern Menz PR and sponsorship manager Polly Love Mannella, 32, works part time, "anywhere from 10 to 20 hours a week".

She is employed as a casual for a minimum of 10 hours a week, with one day in the office and the rest of the time at home, but can be called on to work two to eight hours of overtime each week.

She says she works overtime because of the nature of the job and her desire to be a full-time carer for her son. "Opportunities can arise anytime. I need to be able to act on these immediately. I need to be available seven days a week and flexible to accommodate a varying workload," she says.

Are you one of the nation's miracle workers? Talk with Kate Southam about your overtime experiences Monday at news.com.au



HARD YAKKA
88 per cent of all workers have worked overtime in the past six months



Doing it for the kids

NIVASINEE
 SREETHARAN

Speech pathologist, Cora
 Barclay Centre

OVERTIME is a way of life for Ms Sreetharan, who regularly works 10-hour days and weekends.

She helps provide auditory verbal therapy to children who are deaf or hearing impaired, with hearing aids,

cochlear implants or other devices. "Every week, I do more than I need to. It's my work. I need to get all these things done," she says.

"Because it's a charity organisation, if parents want therapy late in the day, I don't want to say no."

She says she always is on the lookout for toys and other tools she can use in her sessions with children.

"It's for the families," she says. "I wouldn't have it any other way."



HELPING OUT: Niva Sreetharan and Paul Cavuto. Picture: Patrick Gorbunovs.

Job snapshot

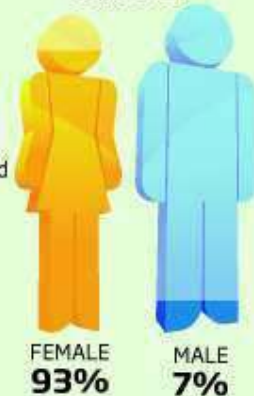
Speech Pathologist

Assesses and treats people who have a communication disability. They have trained to understand all aspects of communication, including speech, writing, reading, signs, symbols and gestures. They work with people who have difficulties swallowing food and drink. Are employed at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, nursing homes, hospitals, rehabilitation services, community health centres and in private practice.

PAY SUMMARY \$k



GENDER



QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor of Speech Pathology, Flinders University.

FIND OUT MORE: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au