

# Media Release



NOVOTEL SYDNEY MANLY PACIFIC

25-28 JUNE 2009

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## Flexible work hours key to staff happiness

Almost half of Aussie employees are unhappy with their working hours, according to a study of 3,324 workers that found staff want to work less hours for a greater work-life balance.

The study found those employees who worked 44.8 hours a week were less satisfied with their jobs than staff who worked 36-hours per week.

Study author, Rosie Bauld from Griffith University will present the preliminary findings at the Australian Psychological Society's (APS) 8<sup>th</sup> Industrial & Organisational Psychology (IOP) Conference at the Novotel Sydney Manly Pacific from 25 to 28 June.

Ms Bauld said employees want shorter working hours and more flexibility in their jobs.

"If staff feel their work is negatively impacting their personal life, they are more likely to have higher absenteeism rates or look for alternative employment."

"Staff indicated they would use flexible working options such as a four-day working week with 10 hour days (52%); flexible start and finish times (47%); being able to work from home (36%) and the option of working part-time (12%).

"There are pay-offs for organisations who offer flexibility, including increased staff retention, employee engagement and reduced staff absenteeism. The benefits often outweigh the cost of replacing staff or managing overworked and stressed employees," she said.

"A challenge for organisations is to ensure employees understand that flexible work options are a viable alternative and not just lip-service, as many staff still feel there will be negative consequences for choosing to work from home or outside of traditional office hours.

"Managers and supervisors need to lead by example and demonstrate flexibility themselves, so employees feel more comfortable taking up alternative options."

For more information on the APS IOP Conference visit: [www.iopconference.com.au](http://www.iopconference.com.au)

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**About the study:** 3324 employees from a range of occupations participated in a self-report questionnaire. The study assessed how time demands, actual hours spent at work, hours spent caring for dependants, organisational time expectations and how access to flexible employment policies influenced levels of work-life balance, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This research is part of a larger project funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project research grant, and is overseen by chief investigator Associate Professor Paula Brough and Dr Carolyn Timms.

**About the IOP Conference:** The eighth biennial IOP Conference will explore contemporary issues in workplace psychology such as employee engagement, work/life balance and the impacts of new media. Keynote speakers include: *Professors Beryl Hesketh, Deniz Ones, Eduardo Salas, Sabine Sonntag, Phillip Taylor and Robert Wood.*

**Ms Brown is available for interview during the week of the conference. Please contact Elaine Grant on: 0412 683 068 or Ellise McLoughlan on 0428 445 097.**

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