

## The Advertiser

Features

### Conditions forcing many to work longer, harder

JENNY DILLON

331 words

6 January 2009

The Advertiser

1 - State

39

English

Copyright 2009 News Ltd. All Rights Reserved

AUSTRALIANS are not only working some of the longest hours in the developed world, but as economic conditions tighten they are increasingly finding their working hours are becoming more intense.

The University of Sydney's Workplace Research Centre study found full-timers do an average of 44 hours a week with the self-employed working about 50 hours. More than half of all workers said "more and more" was expected of them for the same amount of pay, a condition that can only get worse as businesses are forced to reduce staff levels to maintain viability.

"There's a downside to losing good people," said Chris Jackson, an expert in organisation and management with the **Australian School of Business** at the University of NSW.

Professor Jackson said it could be false economy to let people go and expect those remaining to shoulder the extra burden.

"You lose their knowledge, which may go to a competitor, and other staff must work harder, creating consequent problems," he said.

"There will be stress and burnout more, which will have a knock-on effect into their home life, because they are not spending enough time with their partners and children.

"Then there is a lowering of morale in some circumstances. And if you're working long hours you can often make mistakes.

"At the same time it can be a positive experience, especially with people not working to their full capacity beforehand. It gives them more power. And because people want to avoid being made redundant, a better camaraderie among their colleagues then develops."

Queensland University of Technology business faculty director of research, Kerry Brown, said that down time during working hours was very important.

"Our team has found that with the long-hours culture, people have less time at home and less time with their family, and that time is not quality time but recovery time," Professor Brown said.

ADV-20090106-1-039-595910

Document ADVTSR0020090105e5160006d