

From: Jim Stanford [<mailto:Jim@tai.org.au>]
Sent: Wednesday, 18 October 2017 11:37 PM
To: Jim Stanford
Subject: Go Home On Time Day Nov.22, + Updates from Centre for Future Work

Dear Friends;

Every year the Centre for Future Work hosts the annual “Go Home On Time Day” project, which encourages Australian workers to draw a line in the sand regarding hours of work ... and make a full claim to the time off they are entitled to. Leisure time is under pressure from all sides: the expansion of insecure work and “gigs,” excessive workload, and the pressures of balancing work and family life. We are pushing back by encouraging people to go home on time: this day, and other days too!

This year Go Home on Time Day will occur on Wednesday November 22. We will use the day to highlight the need for employers, policy-makers, and – yes – workers to treat “time” with all the importance and respect it deserves. Watch our website <http://gohomeontimeday.org.au/> where we will post announcements, shareable materials, resources, and research.

In the meantime, our Centre has been busy as always with lots of new research, commentary, and resources on the challenges confronting work and workers. Here are some highlights:

Wage Suppression and Superannuation

We recently analysed the flow-through impact of various forms of wage suppression (including pay freezes, penalty rate cuts, wage theft, and the termination of enterprise agreements) on the superannuation savings of affected workers. The math is simple, but the results were shocking: workers can lose tens of thousands (or even hundreds of thousands) of dollars in superannuation benefits from even temporary wage reductions. The implications are serious, and not just for workers and retirees. We estimated that up to \$100 billion in superannuation savings are at risk – and the Commonwealth government will pick up a significant share of that cost (over one-third) due to reduced taxes and higher Age Pension payouts. So the increasingly aggressive efforts of Australian employers to suppress and roll back wages should be a concern to all Australians – including the trustees of superannuation funds.

Here is our full report:

<http://www.futurework.org.au/wage-suppression-a-time-bomb-in-superannuation-system>.

And here is just [some of the front-page coverage](#) it generated in newspapers and the electronic media.

The Economics of Wages: Viral Video

Speaking of wages, the creative (and perhaps slightly disturbed!) communications staff at the AMWU have produced a short video featuring the Centre’s Director Jim Stanford, explaining why wage increases are actually good for Australia’s economy. Their offbeat video has now been watched 75,000 times! See it (and share it) at

<https://www.facebook.com/TheAMWU/videos/1961952193818826/>.

Workers’ Rights: Take the Quiz:

The Centre recently partnered with the *Guardian Australia's* awesome columnist Van Badham to develop a hilarious skill-testing quiz on just how badly Australian workers are faring in the face of poor labour laws and aggressive employers. Take the quiz, and see how you score (a perfect 10?), here: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/21/take-the-quiz-how-much-do-you-really-know-about-todays-workplace/>.

Robots, Automation, and the Future of Work:

There continues to be intense public and policy interest in the effects of technological change and automation on employment, and the Centre for Future Work is an important voice in the dialogue. There are many reasons why fears of mass unemployment resulting from automation are not likely to be realised: the pace of labour productivity growth (which should be accentuated by automation) has actually been slowing not accelerating; and new technology tends to stimulate some new jobs (although not usually enough) in associated and subsidiary tasks (including designing, manufacturing, operating, and maintaining new machinery and programs; and filling new jobs by the implementation of the new technology). But that is no reason to be sanguine about the problem: there is never any guarantee that a deregulated competitive labour market will “create” enough work, nor facilitate necessary adjustments, to reallocate displaced workers to new tasks. Personally, I am more worried about the impact of technology – and its lopsided application by employers – on the quality of work, than on the quantity, including through less-discussed channels such as electronic surveillance and monitoring in workplaces.

Here are some recent interventions we have made in this ongoing public debate:

- Director Jim Stanford participated in an [ABC Lateline debate](#) on the impact of automation on jobs.
- UTS Associate Professor Sarah Kaine (a member of the Centre’s Advisory Committee) and Jim Stanford co-wrote an [article on the future of work](#) (and possible policy responses) for the Fabian Society.
- Jim was also [interviewed by Green Agenda](#) on robots, work, and basic income.

We will continue to follow this issue closely. After all, we are called the Centre for Future Work ... so the future of work is our core business!

Economic Literacy: Take a Walk Around Your Neighbourhood

Another major priority of our Centre is supporting economic literacy initiatives to enhance the confidence and skills of union leaders and delegates, and other progressive activists, in confronting phony economic arguments about trickle-down policies, austerity, and more. This includes offering (in conjunction with the ACTU Organising Centre) continuing installments of the “Economics for Unionists” course (including upcoming sessions in [Adelaide](#) and [Hobart](#)).

We were thrilled that Elizabeth Humphrys (Assistant Student Ombud at UTS) has adapted some of our curriculum for a fascinating and innovative student project, based on exploring and analysing the concrete economic functions and relationships of everyday life. Building on Chapter 1 of our textbook [Economics for Everyone](#), Dr. Humphrys has her students take a walk in their neighbourhoods. They are asked to document features of the mundane, “everyday” economy – as a way of challenging the needlessly abstract, financialised vision of economics that is usually taught. Dr. Humphrys describes her experiment and its results in a [fascinating blog post](#).

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As always we are grateful for your interest and support of our work. You are invited to share any of this material with your friends and colleagues. If you would like to be removed from our list, just let me know. And best wishes!


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