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WELLBEING BENEFITS UNCOVERED IN WORLD-FIRST STUDY INTO HANDWRITING

Deakin University and Officeworks have embarked on a world-first study to understand the role that handwriting plays in today's society, having identified a significant gap in personal wellbeing research associated with handwriting.

Combining a systematic literature review with quantitative and qualitative research, the Australian study has ventured beyond the cognitive learning benefits to uncover the impact putting pen to paper has on individual wellbeing.

It was extremely clear from the 2000 Australians who participated in the survey that there are positive benefits associated with handwriting, with those who handwrite notes, thoughts, ideas, feelings or memories being 2.5 times more likely to experience relief from anxiety, fear and worry.

A greater sense of general life satisfaction was also found among those who handwrite for personal purposes multiple times a day.

While overwhelmed with the insight gained from the study, it's the significant portion of Australians who are not putting pen to paper that concerns Helen Skouteris, Professor in Developmental Psychology and Head Researcher at Deakin University.

"The fact that one in three Australians never or rarely use handwriting as an outlet to express themselves is definitely a worry, considering the clear benefits afforded to those who do," she said.

"Seven in 10 people surveyed claimed handwriting helped them be more aware of their feelings and thoughts, which is crucial in maintaining a healthy state of mind."

"The research we've conducted in conjunction with Officeworks is truly significant from a wellbeing perspective, results showing that handwriting helps to reinforce the really positive aspects of our lives via the documentation of important life events, gratitude and reflection.

"Results revealed that spending just 15-20 minutes handwriting each day can result in a more positive state of being. The fact that such a simple, cost effective practise can have such powerful benefits is astounding," Helen concluded.

Inspired by the findings, Officeworks has committed to helping educate Australians on the positive impact handwriting has on wellbeing through a new initiative.

Kevin Allman, Officeworks Buying Manager Office Supplies said, "Officeworks has an important role to play in empowering people across the country with the tools they need to put pen to paper. We're so excited about our initiative *Time to Write*, which gives people the opportunity to reconnect with the art of handwriting with events in cafes, business hubs, co-working spaces, schools and wellness centres around Australia."

ENDS

Notes to editor

Overview of research findings:

- Over 1/3 of Australians never or rarely write about personal thoughts, notes, ideas, feelings or memories
- Those who handwrite their thoughts, notes, ideas, feelings or memories are 2.5 times more likely to feel relieved of anxiety, fear and worry than those who type out these feelings
- Australians who handwrite personal notes, multiple times a day, report a greater level of general life satisfaction than those who don't
- Based on Deakin's research, spending 15-20 mins putting pen to paper a day to write personal notes can result in a more positive state of mind and greater sense of life satisfaction
- Although 35-54 years expressed the greatest desire to handwrite as a therapeutic outlet, those aged 18-34 years were 23% more likely to feel less anxious after handwriting
- Over 7 in 10 Australians aged 18-34 years expressed a feeling of relief after handwriting
- Young people who do handwrite tend to write for longer periods of times than older age groups, with 24% of 18 - 34 year olds writing for 15 minutes compared with just 15% of 35-54 year olds
- Hand writers view using a pen/pencil to write personal thoughts as more important than non-hand writers view using other devices to write
- 7 in 10 people believe that handwriting helps them be more aware of their thoughts and feelings
- The greatest difference between men and women was in relation to the calming effect handwriting has - women are 15% more likely to express a sense of relief from anxieties, fears and worries than men
- 18 - 24 year olds feel that typing does not provide the same personal experience as handwriting
- 25 - 35 year olds use handwriting to support their parenting journey, sometimes for the purpose of coping and other times as a form of emotional expression to their children
- 35 - 44 year olds feel that typing does not provide the same creative experience as handwriting
- 45 - 54 year olds say it is important to use handwriting to document significant life events
- Over 55 year olds overwhelmingly described the use of handwriting as a means of making a personal connection to people

About #timetowrite:

Well-known Australians; Kate Langbroek, Taylor Henderson, Daniel Flynn and Bianca Cheah have offered their support and will be crafting bespoke handwritten pieces across the topics of opinion, creativity, positive difference and reflection. Officeworks will also be providing a platform for Australia to write with pop-up handwriting sites activated in key locations and free writing packs, which will be sent to schools and wellness centres across the country.

Members of the public are being asked to share their handwritten pieces via #timetowrite.

For more information about how Australians can get involved visit www.timetowrite.com.au

For further information, imagery or interview opportunities, please contact Haystac:

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About Officeworks:

Established in Richmond in 1994, Officeworks is Australia's leading retailer and supplier of office supplies, tech and furniture solutions for home, business and education needs. With three easy ways to shop - in store, online or by phone, you'll be sure to find exactly what you need with our widest range, when you need, and all at the lowest prices. Plus, you'll enjoy friendly expert advice and helpful services. Officeworks offers customers more than 20,000 products on its [website](#), operates a national customer service centre and has a growing team of expert business specialists to cater for micro, small and medium business customers. As part of the Wesfarmers' group, Officeworks has an extensive national footprint operating 159 + retail stores and employing more than 6,500 team members. Join Officeworks' online communities on [Facebook](#), [Linked In](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) as well as at its hubs [Work Wise](#) and [Work Style](#) for inspiration to help you make bigger things happen.