



Fair Work  
OMBUDSMAN

# Tamworth / Armidale records and pay slips campaign 2013

Report – September 2014

# Contents

<b>Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Campaign objectives</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Why we conducted the campaign</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What we did</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What we found</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Other findings</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Concluding remarks</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>About the Fair Work Ombudsman</b>	<b>6</b>

## Campaign snapshot

Total of

177

businesses were audited

Almost

90%

were compliant with pay slip obligations

Over

95%

were compliant with record-keeping obligations

## Summary

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) commenced the Tamworth / Armidale records and pay slips campaign (the campaign) in November 2013.

The campaign aimed to promote and assess compliance with Australia's workplace laws, particularly in relation to record-keeping and pay slip requirements.

Fair Work Inspectors visited 177 businesses in the New South Wales (NSW) regional towns of Tamworth and Armidale. We spoke with employers about their obligations and provided them with tools and resources to help make compliance easier.

We also assessed a sample of the time and wage records of each of the business we visited. We reviewed pay slip and record-keeping practices and ensured that employers were aware of their obligation to provide employees with a copy of the Fair Work Information Statement (FWIS).

We found that:

- 157 (89%) employers were compliant with pay slip requirements
- 171 (97%) had met their record-keeping obligations
- 157 (89%) had provided a copy of the FWIS to new employees.

## Campaign objectives

We conducted the campaign to assess compliance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* (the Act) and the *Fair Work Regulations 2009* (the Regulations) amongst a sample of businesses in the NSW regional towns of Tamworth and Armidale. In particular we sought to:

- assess compliance with record-keeping and pay slip requirements
- ensure that employers were issuing new employees with a copy of the Fair Work Information Statement (FWIS)
- promote the role of the FWO and the tools and assistance freely available to businesses
- help employers to rectify any errors they had made

## Why we conducted the campaign

Correctly detailed pay slips and accurate record-keeping are important for employers and employees. They allow employers to meet their obligations and monitor important employee details, and enable employees to check that they have received their entitlements.

In many of our campaigns we find that some businesses fail to recognise what records they are required to keep and how to issue compliant pay slips. The correct maintenance and provision of payslips and time and wages records can contribute to a harmonious and productive workplace.

We conducted the campaign to ensure that employers in Tamworth and Armidale were aware of these obligations. We also sought to promote the FWO's role in helping businesses by providing the tools and resources freely available at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au). Small businesses often don't have the benefit of in-house human resources and payroll staff, so we place a high priority on assisting them.

By conducting 'face to face' visits to businesses, Fair Work Inspectors were able to engage

directly with employers, listen to their concerns, and help make compliance easier.

## What we did

Before commencing the campaign we engaged with the Armidale Business Chamber and the Tamworth Business Chamber.

We invited their feedback on the campaign and sought their assistance in promoting it amongst their networks and member organisations.

During November 2013, Fair Work Inspectors visited businesses in Tamworth and Armidale.

We spoke to employers about their obligations and we assessed a sample of their time and wage records to ensure compliance with the Act and the Regulations.

Where we identified pay slip errors we required employers to complete a written undertaking to issue compliant pay slips in the future.

Where we identified that employers had not provided new employees with a copy of the FWIS we required a written undertaking committing to issue a copy of the FWIS to all new employees.

When records were unavailable at the time of our visit we asked employers to forward the requested records to our office for assessment.

During our visits Fair Work Inspectors also provided employers with advice and resources to help them better understand and comply with their obligations.

In particular, where possible we demonstrated the online tools and resources available at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au), such as [Pay Check Plus](#), [Pay slip and record-keeping information](#) and

accessing a copy of the [Fair Work Information Statement](#).

## What we found

Of the 177 businesses we visited:

- 157 (89%) were compliant with pay slip requirements
- 171 (97%) were compliant with record-keeping requirements
- 157 (89%) had provided new employees with a copy of the FWIS.

Further analysis of our findings shows that:

- 137 (77%) employers were compliant with all requirements
- 40 (23%) had made at least one error, of which:
  - 15 (8.5%) related to pay slips
  - 5 (3%) related to record-keeping
  - 15 (8.5%) had not issued copies of the FWIS
  - 4 (2%) had errors which related to both pay slips and FWIS
  - 1 (1%) had errors which related to pay slips, record-keeping and the FWIS

The 40 businesses we found to have made errors had a collective total of 47 individual errors.

Nearly half (43%) of the errors were due to a failure to provide a copy of the FWIS, while 36% concerned pay slips which did not include all the required information.

## Other findings

Fair Work Inspectors found that most of the errors made by employers were due to their lack of awareness of their obligations.

Concerning payslips, this was most noticeable among employers who did not know what information was required to be included on a payslip. With regard to the issuing of the FWIS, those employers who had not issued a copy to new employees explained that they were unaware of the requirement to do so.

### Case study – Issuing complete pay slips

Bradley\* is the owner of one of the businesses we visited in Armidale. Fair Work Inspectors reviewed his time and wage records and noticed that the pay slips he was issuing did not contain all of the information required.

We raised this with Bradley, and he explained that he did not know that pay slips required inclusion of the amount of superannuation paid and the name of the fund into which it was paid.

We provided Bradley with information about [Pay slip requirements](#), including fact sheets and best practice pay slip templates.

We sought a written commitment from Bradley to issue compliant pay slips in future. Having come to understand his obligations, Bradley explained that future compliance would not be a problem for him.

*\*not his actual name*

## Concluding remarks

There were only a small number of errors identified in this campaign and in all of those cases the employers voluntarily rectified their errors upon our advice.

Most employers in both Tamworth and Armidale willingly engaged with Fair Work Inspectors. Several employers took the opportunity to seek advice on additional workplace issues of concern to them, such as termination of employment and flexible working arrangements for employees.

The positive engagement between the FWO and employers in Tamworth and Armidale was encouraging. We are hopeful that those employers we met will utilise our suite of free online tools and resources to help make compliance easier into the future.

## About the Fair Work Ombudsman

The Fair Work Ombudsman is an independent agency created by the Fair Work Act 2009 on 1 July 2009.

Our vision is fair Australian workplaces, and our mission is to work with Australians to educate, promote fairness and ensure justice in the workplace.

Our education and compliance campaigns target specific industries to assist them achieve compliance with national workplace laws. Our focus is usually industries that need assistance with compliance and employ vulnerable workers.

We like to work with relevant industry associations and unions to deliver our campaigns. We rely upon their 'real world' knowledge and communication channels to design and deliver our education activities and products.

This report covers the background, method and findings of the Tamworth / Armidale records and pay slips campaign 2013.

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