

Migrant workers can now anonymously report workplace issues in their own language

31 July 2017

The Fair Work Ombudsman is making it easier for migrant workers to report workplace concerns to the agency by launching its popular Anonymous Report function in 16 languages other than English.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James said that the new tool was developed to overcome some of the barriers that migrant workers face when dealing with workplace issues.

“Factors such as limited English skills, cultural barriers and a lack of awareness of workplace rights mean that migrant workers can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace,” Ms James said.

“These same factors also make it difficult for migrant workers to know where or how to seek help.

“We have also commissioned research showing that when it comes to international students in the Australian workplace, 60 per cent believe that if they report a workplace issue to their employer the situation will either remain the same, or get worse.

“My agency is aiming to break down these barriers and make it as easy as possible for migrant workers to report their concerns to us. Being able to make an anonymous report in languages other than English is a key step in enabling migrant workers to readily engage with the Fair Work Ombudsman,” Ms James said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman originally launched the Anonymous Report function in May 2016 to allow the community to report potential workplace breaches, in recognition that some employees are reluctant to complain about workplace issues.

“Since the launch of the Anonymous Report function, the Fair Work Ombudsman has received more than 10,000 tipoffs with 15 per cent of these coming from visa holders,” Ms James said.

“To make it easier for people from a non-English speaking background we have now launched this tool in 16 languages other than English, including Chinese, Korean, Arabic and Spanish,” Ms James said.

“Now migrant workers can tell us their concerns, in their own language, without being identified.”

High profile inquiries by the Fair Work Ombudsman into matters such as 7-11, Woolworths trolley collectors and 4 and 5 star hotel cleaners highlight the prevalence of often deliberate and systematic exploitation of migrant workers.

Intelligence gathered via the anonymous report tool enables the agency to target its compliance and education activities.

“Improving the employment experience of migrant workers in Australia is a priority for my agency,” Ms James said.

“We understand that it can be hard to speak up if you are facing issues at work, but we hope that our new translated Anonymous Report function will encourage more migrant workers to do so.”

The Anonymous Report tool can be accessed at: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/workplace-help-in-other-languages/report-a-workplace-issue-in-your-language> (www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-problems/fixing-a-workplace-problem/workplace-help-in-other-languages/report-a-workplace-issue-in-your-language) .

The tool is available in the following languages:

- Chinese Simplified
- Chinese Traditional
- Korean
- Hindi
- Arabic
- French
- German
- Italian
- Japanese
- Spanish

- Vietnamese
- Indonesian
- Filipino
- Portuguese
- Thai
- Nepali.

The Fair Work Ombudsman also knows that visa holders working in Australia may be reluctant to seek assistance if they think that doing so will lead to adverse consequences, such as damaging future job prospects or cancellation of their visa.

“I would like to reassure visa holders that in line with an agreement between my agency and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, you can seek our assistance without fear of your visa being cancelled” Ms James said.

Find information about the [Fair Work Ombudsman’s agreement with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection \(www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/visa-holders-and-migrants#your-visa\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/visa-holders-and-migrants#your-visa) .

Employers and employees seeking assistance can visit www.fairwork.gov.au or contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. An interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

Information on the Fair Work Ombudsman website is available in 30 different languages.

The Fair Work Ombudsman also recently released the ‘Record My Hours’ app aimed at tackling the persistent problem of underpayment of young workers and migrant workers around the country. The app equips workers with a record of the time they spend at their workplace by using geofencing technology to register when they arrive at work and when they leave. The app is available for download from iTunes or Google Play stores and can be accessed in 18 languages.

Follow Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James on Twitter [@NatJamesFWO](https://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO) (http://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO) , the Fair Work Ombudsman [@fairwork_gov_au](https://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) (http://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) or find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au (http://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au) .

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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