

Wollongong targeted for unannounced audits

31 March 2017

The Fair Work Ombudsman has conducted a series of unannounced audits in Wollongong in response to concerns young workers in the town are being exploited.

Over the past three days, Fair Work inspectors have visited approximately more than 80 businesses in the Wollongong central business district.

Inspectors interviewed business operators and workers and assessed records to check workers are receiving their lawful entitlements, including minimum hourly rates, penalty rates, overtime and allowances.

Compliance with record-keeping and pay slip laws was also checked.

Acting Fair Work Ombudsman Michael Campbell says the auditing campaign is being conducted in response to intelligence and public concerns that young workers in Wollongong are being underpaid and treated unfairly.

The Fair Work Ombudsman contacted a number of young workers identified in recent media reports to obtain intelligence that assisted with selecting businesses for audit.

The campaign has also included audits of a number of businesses selected at random.

Inspectors this week focussed on industries that employ many young workers, including retail, take-away food and restaurants.

Mr Campbell says the Fair Work Ombudsman treats allegations of underpayments of young workers particularly seriously.

"Wollongong is a tertiary education hub with a high a number of young students who work in casual jobs and the reports of underpayments have been concerning," he said.

"Young workers can be vulnerable if they are not fully aware of their rights or reluctant to complain, so it's important we are proactive about checking they're being paid correctly."

Mr Campbell says a number of this week's audits could lead to full investigations and businesses with serious non-compliance issues could face formal enforcement action.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. An interpreter service is available on 13 14 50. The community can provide intelligence anonymously at www.fairwork.gov.au/tipoff (www.fairwork.gov.au/tipoff).

Resources for employers available on the website include templates for pay slips and time-and-wages sheets and the Pay and Conditions Tool (PACT), which provides advice about pay and other entitlements.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

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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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