

Melbourne labour-hire operator faces Court over alleged exploitation of overseas worker

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The Fair Work Ombudsman has commenced legal action against a Melbourne labour-hire operator who allegedly paid an overseas worker nothing for almost three months of work.

Facing the Federal Circuit Court is Leonard Greenan, of Mount Martha, whose business trades as 'United Consulting' and places employees in the automotive industry.

Fair Work Ombudsman inspectors investigated after receiving an underpayment allegation from a Pakistani worker Mr Greenan had employed.

The employee, aged 26, was in Australia on a subclass 572 vocational education visa.

Mr Greenan supplied the employee to work as a mechanic at a Renault dealership in Richmond between January and March last year.

It is alleged that inspectors determined that despite the dealership paying Mr Greenan for supplying the worker, Mr Greenan failed to pay the worker any wages.

In documents filed in Court, the Fair Work Ombudsman alleges Mr Greenan failed to comply with a Compliance Notice issued by an inspector requiring him to back-pay the worker a total of \$7066 in outstanding wages.

Under the Fair Work Act, business operators must adhere to Compliance Notices or make a Court application for a review if they are seeking to challenge a Notice.

Record-keeping laws were allegedly also contravened.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says inspectors made extensive efforts to resolve the matter by agreement, but did not receive sufficient co-operation.

"We are prepared to take legal action against employers who refuse to engage with us and we treat matters involving overseas workers particularly seriously," Ms James said.

Mr Greenan faces maximum penalties of up to \$5400 per contravention for two alleged contraventions of the Fair Work Act.

In addition to the penalties, the Fair Work Ombudsman is seeking Court Orders requiring Mr Greenan to comply with the Compliance Notice by back-paying the worker in full and to register with the Fair Work Ombudsman's My Account portal and complete all education courses for employers.

A default judgment hearing is listed in the Federal Circuit Court in Melbourne on June 14.

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.

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