

Albury-Wodonga businesses undergo check from workplace regulator

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Businesses across Albury-Wodonga are being audited by the workplace regulator with the Fair Work Ombudsman this week making unannounced visits to approximately 60 establishments in the region.

In addition the Fair Work Ombudsman has requested records from approximately 140 other businesses, taking the overall number of audits to approximately 200.

Fair Work Inspectors are checking wage and time records of a cross-section of businesses to ensure that they are complying with their workplace obligations.

As home to a number of tertiary education institutions the region is being targeted as part of the Fair Work Ombudsman's focus on regional areas with high student concentrations. Similar campaigns were launched in Ballarat and Wollongong earlier this year.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says inspectors speak with both workers and employers to ensure compliance with industrial laws and provide information on rights and obligations in the workplace.

"Proactively visiting businesses and conducting unannounced checks of time and wage records is one of the many ways we aim to promote compliance with workplace laws," Ms James said.

"The Fair Work Ombudsman analyses intelligence and data from a range of sources and regularly conducts proactive campaigns in areas and industries where we believe there is a heightened risk of non-compliance."

While the audit campaign will focus on a broad range of businesses, Ms James said there would be a focus on the types of operations that are more likely to hire students on a part-time or casual basis.

"These include take-away outlets, restaurants, cafes, bars, retail outlets and accommodation services," Ms James said.

"A key part of our campaign will be ensuring that employers are well aware of the wealth of information and resources that are freely available to help them comply with their workplace obligations.

"When we find examples of non-compliance they can often be resolved through early intervention processes, however examples of deliberate and systemic conduct may require the use of more serious enforcement tools, including potential litigation," Ms James said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman offers a range of free tools and resources for employers at www.fairwork.gov.au, including the Pay and Conditions Tool (PACT) to assist business owners to calculate applicable pay rates and templates for pay slips and time-and-wages sheets.

Employers and employees can visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 for free advice and assistance about their rights and obligations in the workplace. A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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