

FWO audits La La Bar Group venues

1 August 2019

The Fair Work Ombudsman conducted surprise audits on a number of bars in Melbourne's popular Chapel Street district last night to check the businesses were complying with Australia's workplace laws.

The bars are part of the La La Bar Group and include: Electric, Holy Grail, Wonderland, Lucky Liquor, La La Land (Windsor), Jane Doe Bar.

The Fair Work Ombudsman undertook the audits in response to allegations that workers at the venues are being underpaid hourly wages, denied workplace entitlements such as overtime and penalty rates, and being paid cash-in-hand off the books. The allegations came from nearly 20 enquiries, six anonymous reports and other complaints made about the La La Bar Group.

As part of the audits, Fair Work Inspectors interviewed staff and management of the bars, and reviewed documents including staff pay slips, rosters and employment records.

Fair Work Ombudsman Sandra Parker said the audits would help determine if there are workplace issues within the La La Bar Group that need addressing.

"The intelligence we have received about potentially unlawful treatment of staff at the La La Bar Group is concerning which is why we have taken this action," Ms Parker said.

"Targeting underpayments in the hospitality sector is a priority for the Fair Work Ombudsman. We regularly conduct surprise audits as part of our investigations to help us get to the bottom of serious allegations."

"We will carefully review the evidence we have gathered, including during last night's audits, to determine if there are any breaches of Australia's workplace laws."

"If we do uncover breaches, we will work to recover any entitlements owed to staff and also consider what enforcement action is necessary," Ms Parker said.

A report on the audit's findings will be published once the investigations are completed.

The broader hospitality industry, including restaurants, fast food outlets and cafes, was again over-represented in contacts to the Fair Work Ombudsman last financial year, with 18 per cent of workplace disputes recorded, a third of court actions and almost 40 per cent of all anonymous reports, despite representing just seven per cent of the workforce. More than \$4 million was recovered by the FWO for workers from fast food, restaurant and café businesses.

Investigating allegations of workplace law breaches in the fast food, restaurant and café sector is a priority for the Fair Work Ombudsman and businesses in this sector should check if they are paying their staff correctly.

The FWO has developed [new interactive tools \(www.fairwork.gov.au/frac\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/frac) for the hospitality sector to make it easier to access information about key entitlements such as pay, hours worked, allowances, leave and termination. Employers and employees can call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 for free workplace assistance.

Concerned someone isn't following workplace laws but don't want to get involved directly? Make an anonymous report to the Fair Work Ombudsman online (www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/how-we-help-you/help-us-keep-workplaces-fair).

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