

Regional workers back-paid \$190,000

([twitter](#)) 25 January 2019

Fair Work Ombudsman audits of 600 workplaces in remote and regional locations across Australia have recovered \$191,125 for 268 workers.

Fair Work Inspectors visited towns across five states and the Northern Territory, including Kununurra, Katherine, Longreach, Roxby Downs and Broken Hill, to check compliance with workplace laws.

The FWO selected regions for audit based on intelligence, such as requests for assistance from workers, as well as broader information such as census data. Employers were randomly selected.

Over 60 per cent of businesses audited in this campaign were fully compliant with workplace laws. Inspectors found 80 per cent of employers complied with payslip and record-keeping obligations, and 76 per cent were paying their employees correctly.

Most workplace breaches discovered related to underpayment of hourly rates and failure to meet payslip requirements. The FWO issued 45 formal cautions, 14 infringement notices (on-the-spot fines) and nine compliance notices to rectify these breaches and improve future compliance.

Back payments made by businesses ranged from \$36 to a worker in Coober Pedy, South Australia, to \$11,946 to two employees of a business in Stawell, Victoria. While findings varied by region, most industries audited in this campaign achieved higher than average compliance rates.

Acting Fair Work Ombudsman Kristen Hannah said the workplace visits enabled inspectors to educate and engage with employers and employees, who may not otherwise seek help.

“Employees in smaller communities may be reluctant to raise workplace concerns where employment options may be limited. As a result of our workplace audits, tens of thousands of dollars have been put back in the pockets of workers in remote and regional Australian towns,” Ms Hannah said.

“All businesses have the same responsibility to comply with their workplace obligations if they choose to employ workers, regardless of location. The Fair Work Ombudsman is available to provide free advice and assistance to employers and employees, and to help resolve workplace issues quickly so employment relationships can stay intact,” Ms Hannah said.

The FWO has a range of resources available to help employers, including the [Small Business Showcase \(www.fairwork.gov.au/small-business-showcase\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/small-business-showcase) , and supports third-party intermediaries located outside capital cities and major regional areas, such as accountants, HR specialists and business chambers, to assist their clients.

“Fair Work Inspectors will continue to promote workplace compliance in remote and regional Australia by visiting workplaces, and we will check businesses have improved their workplace practices through our National Compliance Monitoring program,” Ms Hannah said.

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.

Download the [National Remote and Regional Locations Campaign Report \(DOCX 1.2MB\) \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/557/national-remote-and-regional-locations-campaign-report.docx.aspx\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/557/national-remote-and-regional-locations-campaign-report.docx.aspx) ([PDF 763.3KB\) \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/557/national-remote-and-regional-locations-campaign-report.pdf.aspx\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/557/national-remote-and-regional-locations-campaign-report.pdf.aspx)

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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

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