

FWO recovers \$40 million for workers

22 October 2019

The Fair Work Ombudsman's 2018-19 Annual Report reveals a significant increase in recovered wages, record visits to our resources and firm enforcement of workplace laws.

Fair Work Inspectors recovered more than \$40 million for 18,000 underpaid employees during the financial year - the highest total recoveries figure in the regulator's history.

In 2018-19, the FWO resolved more than 29,000 workplace disputes between workers and businesses. There was a record 17.8 million visits to www.fairwork.gov.au to access our information and the Fair Work Infoline answered 380,000 calls from workers and employers.

The agency announced its annual compliance and enforcement priorities (www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/2019-media-releases/june-2019/20190603-aig-pir-media-release) earlier in the year, and also strengthened its [compliance and enforcement policy](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/our-policies) (www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/our-policies) .

Fair Work Ombudsman Sandra Parker said the agency's achievements show its commitment to promoting harmonious, productive, cooperative and compliant workplace relations.

"I am extremely proud of the agency's work resolving employment disputes throughout the year, which has helped return wages to workers and kept employment relationships intact."

"In line with our priorities, we will continue our important work educating employers and employees, targeting high-risk industries, protecting vulnerable workers and improving compliance across Australian workplaces in the year ahead," Ms Parker said.

"We urge employers to actively check they are paying their staff correctly and access our free resources for help. We will take enforcement action against employers who break the law."

The FWO had 67 matters before the courts as of 30 June 2019, in many cases alleging exploitation of vulnerable workers. Over 80 per cent of new litigations involved protecting migrant workers, with the agency securing court penalties of \$1.8 million in matters including this cohort.

The FWO secured more than \$4.4 million in court-ordered penalties, including a record penalty of \$105,000 (www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/2018-media-releases/august-2018/20180820-macquarie-penalty) for a business's failure to comply with Fair Work Commission Orders.

Over 50 per cent of litigations filed involved businesses in the fast food, restaurants and cafe sector. The FWO secured \$1.6 million in court penalties against employers in the sector.

Inspectors issued \$479,900 in on-the-spot fines for pay slip and record-keeping breaches.

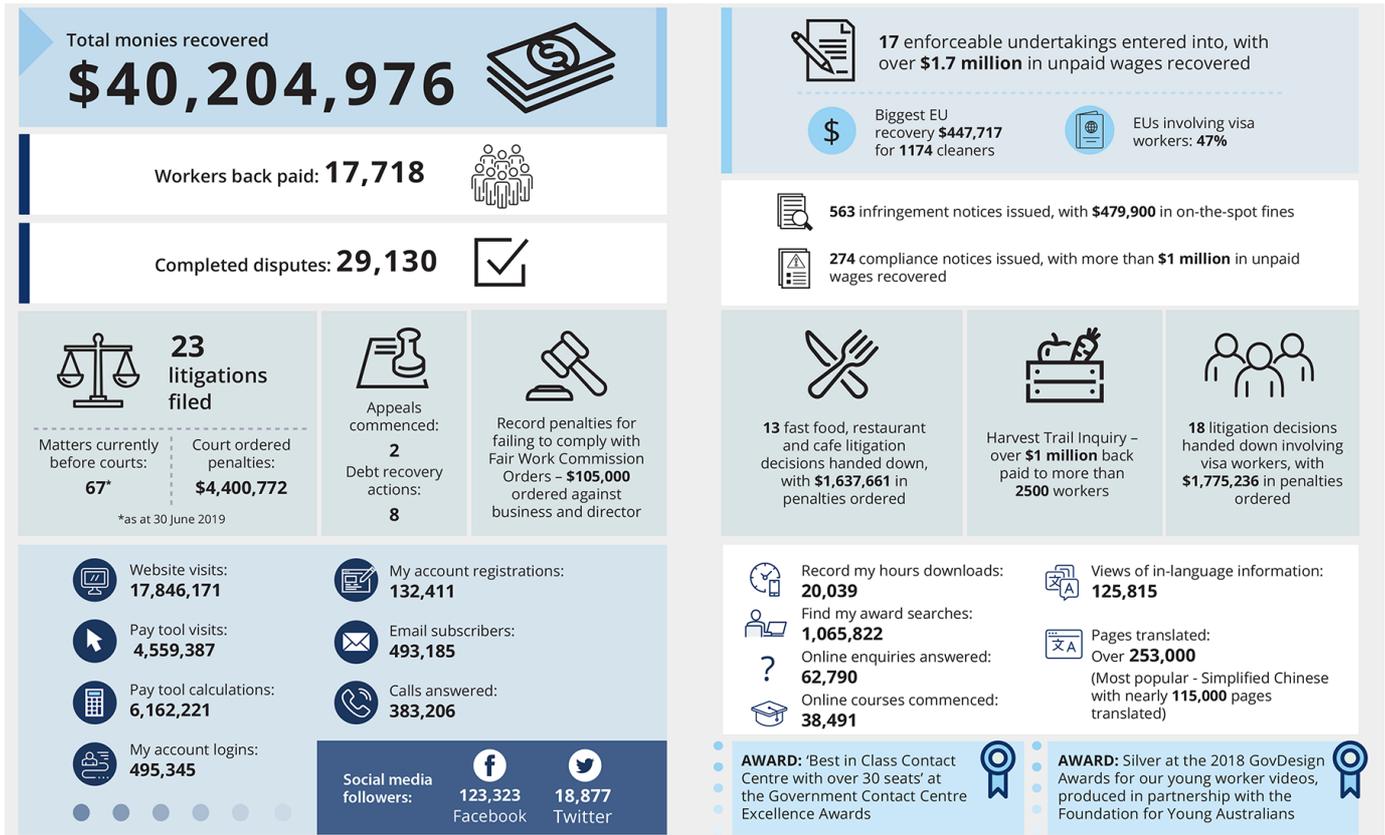
Anonymous reports (www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/how-we-help-you/anonymous-tipoff) to the FWO increased, with over 16,000 reports received, which included over 1200 reports made in languages other than English. Inspectors conducted more than 2800 workplace audits, strategically targeting sectors at high risk of non-compliance.

More employees and employers accessed the agency's [Pay and Conditions Tool](https://calculate.fairwork.gov.au/) (<https://calculate.fairwork.gov.au/>) , which assists users in calculating pay rates and other entitlements, with 500,000 calculations each month.

In line with its focus on non-compliance in the fast food, restaurant and café sector, the FWO launched [new interactive tools](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/fast-food-restaurants-cafes) (www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/fast-food-restaurants-cafes) to make it easier for employees and employers to access information about key entitlements such as pay, hours of work, leave and termination.

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