

\$50,000 back-pay for Geelong workers

6 December 2010

A number of workers in the Geelong region are being reimbursed about \$50,000 after recent investigations by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The largest underpayment was \$13,100 for a transport worker at Lara.

The worker lodged a complaint with the Fair Work Ombudsman after he was not paid overtime entitlements for three years.

After Fair Work inspectors contacted the employer, the company agreed to voluntarily back-pay the worker in instalments without the need for further action against the company.

Other cases finalised recently include:

- \$8500 for a Belmont retail worker underpaid the minimum hourly rate, annual leave and long service leave,
- \$6700 for a Geelong cashier underpaid the minimum hourly rate and penalty rates,
- \$6000 for a young Norlane apprentice underpaid the minimum hourly rate,
- \$5800 for an Geelong apprentice butcher underpaid the minimum hourly rate,
- \$5400 for a Geelong operations manager not paid wages in lieu of notice or accrued annual leave, and
- \$5100 for a young Geelong apprentice underpaid the minimum hourly rate.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says that given the employers have co-operated and voluntarily rectified the underpayments, there will be no further action against the companies.

“Our preference is always to work with employers to educate them and help them voluntary rectify any non-compliance issues,” Mr Campbell said.

Mr Campbell says some of underpayments were caused by employers’ failure to promptly lodge apprenticeship agreements for young workers.

“Only registered apprentices can be paid apprentice rates, but we are finding some employers paying at this level despite not having officially registered their workers,” he said.

Mr Campbell says his Agency will not tolerate employers failing to register their apprentices, usually young workers.

He says it denies those starting out in the trade the recognition they deserve.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a number of tools on its website - www.fairwork.gov.au - to assist employees and employers to check minimum rates of pay.

Small to medium-sized businesses without human resources staff can also ensure they are better equipped when hiring, managing and dismissing employees by using free template employment documentation available online.

Employers or employees seeking assistance or further information can also contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 from 8am-6pm weekdays. For translations, call 13 14 50.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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

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