

St Kilda retail store fined for underpaying 43 workers more than \$40,000

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The operators of a St Kilda retail store have been fined almost \$20,000 for underpaying 43 workers more than \$40,000.

Myst Oz Pty Ltd, which trades as The Grotto on Acland Street, has been fined \$16,500 and the company's sole director Rebecca Pearse, of St Kilda, a further \$3300.

The penalties – handed down in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court - are the result of a prosecution by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Magistrate Franz Holzer imposed the fines after the company admitted underpaying 43 workers a total of \$40,916 between 2006 and 2008.

The workers were variously employed on a full-time or casual basis as shop assistants, storage service workers and retail managers.

The workers were underpaid their minimum hourly rate, annual leave entitlements and penalty rates for weekend, public holiday and overtime work.

The Fair Work Ombudsman discovered the issue in 2008 when it audited the company after receiving complaints from workers.

Myst Oz back-paid the workers all money owed after the Agency launched its prosecution last year.

The biggest back-payment to an individual worker was \$3021.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says the case sends a message that failing to pay staff their full entitlements is a serious matter.

"The failure to promptly rectify the underpayments when we brought them to the employer's attention contributed to our decision to launch a prosecution," he said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman promotes harmonious, productive and co-operative workplaces. It also monitors compliance and investigates breaches of national workplace laws.

Employers or employees seeking assistance should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fwo.gov.au. For translations call 13 14 50.

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