

Fair Work inspectors to visit Kimberley and Pilbara businesses

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The Fair Work Ombudsman has signalled plans to step up scrutiny of employers in the Western Australian Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

The regulator has put businesses in Broome, Karratha and Port Hedland on notice that they will be subject to random audits.

A team of inspectors will make surprise visits to up to 80 businesses over the next few weeks.

Employers will be asked to open their books to inspectors so they can check if workers are being paid correctly.

The audits will focus on employers' record-keeping and pay slips to ensure they are complying with their legal obligations. Fair Work inspectors will also provide information and advice to employers.

Fair Work Ombudsman WA Director Leigh Quealy says the face-to-face visits aim to ensure the local community understands its workplace rights and obligations.

In cases where records are not up to scratch or indicate workers are being underpaid, inspectors may launch a wider investigation.

"Where we find records are not adequate or identify other non-compliance issues, we will provide information and assistance to employers and request they voluntarily rectify any problems," Mr Quealy said.

"In cases where they don't, or where we suspect deliberate underpayments or other serious breaches have occurred, we may launch a full audit which could lead to court proceedings."

The maximum penalty for a breach of workplace law is \$33,000.

"It is important regional workers, along with their city counterparts, understand there is an Agency they can turn to if they have workplace concerns. Complaints can be made confidentially," Mr Quealy said.

As well as online resources at www.fairwork.gov.au, the Fair Work Ombudsman has more than 200 highly-skilled advisers available to speak with employers and workers with questions on its Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 from 8am - 6pm weekdays.

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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