

Newcastle campaign recoups \$65,000 for underpaid workers

14 January 2010

The Fair Work Ombudsman has released the results of a targeted campaign aimed at ensuring foreign students working part-time in Newcastle are being properly paid.

Fair Work inspectors randomly audited 18 businesses known to employ international students, including restaurants, cafes, take-away food outlets and car wash sites.

The campaign followed allegations received from Newcastle Trades Hall suggesting many students were being underpaid.

It included an information session at the University of Newcastle for international students interested in learning more about their workplace rights.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says 11 of the 18 businesses selected for scrutiny were found to have contraventions - including eight which had been underpaying their staff.

Inspectors recovered \$65,000 for 80 employees - an average of \$812 each.

However, Mr Campbell said only a small number of foreign students were among those employees found to have been underpaid.

“Our findings suggest that more work is required in the Hunter Valley to educate and assist employers to understand their legal obligations to their workforce,” he said.

“While we found that most employers want to do the right thing, there is still a lack of understanding by many of their responsibilities – and that’s where we can help.”

Employers seeking assistance understanding the appropriate pay rates they need to pay staff should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 from 8am to 6pm weekdays or visit www.fwo.gov.au.

The Fair Work Ombudsman promotes harmonious, productive, co-operative workplaces.

NSW Hunter Region International Student Education and Compliance Campaign - pdf 48KB

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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

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing advice that you can rely on. The information contained on this website is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or workplace relations professional. Visitors are warned that this site may inadvertently contain names or pictures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have recently died.