

## Fair Work inspectors target Pooraka market

13 June 2010

The Fair Work Ombudsman has announced plans to check that workers employed at Adelaide's fruit and vegetable market at Pooraka are being paid properly.

The regulator has put the market on notice that Fair Work inspectors will randomly visit 50 businesses later this month.

Employers will be asked to open their books so inspectors can check they are complying with their record-keeping and pay-slip obligations under workplace laws.

Fair Work Ombudsman South Australian Director Carey Trundle says the targeted campaign follows ongoing complaints about non-compliance at the market.

The most serious underpayment recently discovered involved a fruit and vegetable packer in his 50s being underpaid \$68,000 over nine years.

(See: Watchdog recovers \$65,000 for fruit and vegetable packer who "feared for safety" after complaining about pay)

Inspectors checked the record-keeping and pay slip practices of 27 employers at the Pooraka market in August last year and found 12 (44 per cent) had contraventions.

Ms Trundle says the Pooraka market employs many workers from a non-English speaking background who may be vulnerable because they are unaware of their workplace rights.

"It is appropriate that we ensure these workers are receiving their full entitlements," she said.

"Our preference will be to provide information and assistance to employers to help them voluntarily rectify any non-compliance issues we find.

"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.

Ms Trundle says the campaign aims to ensure employers understand their obligations to their employees and to raise awareness of the Fair Work Ombudsman's role.

"There are a range of user-friendly resources on the Fair Work website that can assist employers to comply with workplace laws and operate their workplace at best practice," she said.

Resources for small business at [www.fwo.gov.au](http://www.fwo.gov.au) include payslip and record-keeping templates, a self-audit checklist, template letters and fact sheets on dozens of topics including leave, industrial action, public holidays, enterprise bargaining, gender pay equality and family-friendly workplaces.

PayCheck can assist employers and employees to check their minimum rates of pay, and 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 with step-by-step instructions.

As well as online resources, the Fair Work Ombudsman has 300 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. For translations, 13 14 50.

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

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Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

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

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