

Cairns cafes allegedly underpaid workers almost \$120,000

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The Fair Work Ombudsman has launched a prosecution against the operator of two cafes in Cairns for allegedly underpaying 181 staff almost \$120,000.

Facing court is Sanada Investments Pty Ltd, which operates the Sushi Trains cafes at Cairns Central and City Place.

Most of the workers were Japanese and Korean nationals who were in Australia on working holiday visas.

Documents lodged in the Federal Magistrates Court in Brisbane allege they were underpaid their minimum hourly rate, allowances for hours worked between 8pm and midnight and penalty rates for overtime and weekend work.

Fair Work inspectors discovered the alleged underpayments after investigating a tip off from another Federal Government department.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says 36 of the underpaid employees were back-paid a total of \$29,739.

After it was unable to locate the other 145, largely because most had returned overseas, the company paid a further \$90,021 to the Collector of Public Monies, where it will be held in perpetuity until claimed.

Mr Campbell says the decision to prosecute Sanada was made because of the significant amount involved and the need to ensure specific and general deterrence.

The Fair Work Ombudsman alleges the company committed four breaches of workplace relations laws. The maximum penalty per breach is \$33,000.

Workers who believe they may have been underpaid in a previous job can go to www.fwo.gov.au to check whether the Fair Work Ombudsman has recovered unpaid wages owing. Currently, the Collector of Public Monies is holding \$1.2 million for almost 5000 people.

The Agency is proactively trying to locate underpaid workers owed money, including those who have returned overseas.

Employers or employees with workplace relations questions should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. 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

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.