

## Brisbane employer fined for threatening worker who queried pay

31 May 2010

A Brisbane physiotherapy clinic and its secretary have been fined a total of \$15,700 for threatening to dismiss an employee who queried her pay.

Maleha Newaz Pty Ltd, which trades as Physio Plus Physiotherapy and sports Clinic in Carindale, has been fined \$13,000.

Company secretary Saba Ahammad - who is involved in running the business and is the husband of sole director Maleha Newaz - has been penalised a further \$2700.

Following a prosecution by the Fair Work Ombudsman, Federal Magistrate Michael Burnett imposed the fines in response to threats to dismiss a casual receptionist at the clinic if she pursued an underpayment complaint.

Federal Magistrate Burnett also ordered Maleha Newaz Pty Ltd to pay compensation of \$5482 to the receptionist for loss of wages she experienced after she resigned following the threat.

The issue arose after the receptionist obtained information from authorities which suggested she was being paid below what she was entitled to. She forwarded the information to her employer and asked that her wages be re-evaluated.

Ahammad sent the receptionist an email stating that her wages would not be increased and threatening to dismiss her if she pursued the matter with authorities to secure back-pay.

The receptionist resigned and lodged a complaint with the Fair Work Ombudsman. Inspectors investigated and negotiated for Maleha Newaz Pty Ltd to voluntarily back-pay her \$7090.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says adverse action by employers against employees who query their entitlements or threaten workers who complain to his Agency is unacceptable behaviour.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a range of user-friendly resources on its website, including PayCheck, at [www.fwo.gov.au](http://www.fwo.gov.au) to assist employees and employers check minimum rates of pay. The Fair Work Infoline (13 13 94) is also operative from 8am-6pm weekdays. For translations, call 13 14 50.

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Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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

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