

Fair Work inspectors set to scrutinise employers in North-East Victoria

4 November 2010

The Fair Work Ombudsman has announced plans to step up scrutiny of employers in North-East Victoria.

The workplace regulator has put businesses in Wangaratta, Tallangatta and Corryong on notice that they will be subject to random audits.

A team of inspectors from the Agency's Bendigo office will visit retail, hospitality, hairdressing and farm supply businesses.

They will doorknock about 35 businesses over three days from November 9 - 11.

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

Audits will focus on record-keeping and pay slips to ensure regional employers are complying with their legal obligations.

Inspectors will also provide advice to employers about the free tools and resources available to them at www.fairwork.gov.au and explain the benefits of calling the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says the face-to-face contacts are part of a rolling education and awareness campaign throughout Victoria.

Similar targeted, local campaigns have recently been conducted in Wodonga, Echuca, Hamilton and Wonthaggi.

"We are very serious about our job of ensuring the community understands its rights and obligations in the workplace," Mr Campbell said.

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

"Where we do identify issues, our first step is to assist employers to comply and seek their co-operation to voluntarily rectify any problems," Mr Campbell said.

"If they do not, or if we suspect deliberate underpayments or other serious contraventions, we may launch a full audit, which could lead to court proceedings."

Mr Campbell says the campaign also aims to ensure more country employers understand the role of the Fair Work Ombudsman and how it can assist them comply with workplace laws.

"Also, we find workers in regional areas are sometimes reluctant to complain about their terms and conditions of employment for fear they may put their job at risk," he said.

"Similarly, they worry that if they make a complaint, it could impact on their personal life, particularly in small communities.

"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 Campbell says small to medium-sized businesses without human resources staff can also ensure they are better equipped by accessing free employment documentation on the Fair Work Ombudsman website.

Online resources also include payslip and record-keeping templates, a self-audit checklist and fact sheets.

The Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94 operates from 8am - 6pm weekdays.

Media inquiries:

Richard Honey, Adviser, Media & Stakeholder Relations,
(03) 9954 2716, 0457 924 146
richard.honey@fwo.gov.au

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.