

Almost \$175,000 recovered for underpaid Brisbane workers

4 April 2011

The Fair Work Ombudsman has recently recovered \$174,300 back-pay for a number of workers in suburban Brisbane.

The biggest recovery was \$27,000 for two Eight Mile Plains IT workers.

The pair, who worked for the same company, lodged complaints with the Fair Work Ombudsman after they were not paid wages in lieu of notice.

After Fair Work inspectors contacted the company and explained its obligations, the employees were reimbursed \$15,900 and \$11,100 respectively.

In a separate case at Clayfield, 37 cleaning industry workers were reimbursed \$23,100 after being underpaid the minimum hourly rate and penalty rates.

Inspectors discovered the underpayments through a combination of routine audits and investigations into complaints from workers.

Common non-compliance issues encountered by inspectors in Brisbane include underpayment of workers' minimum hourly rates, penalty rates, workers not paid for all hours worked and failure to pay full entitlements to workers upon termination of their employment.

Other recent recoveries include:

- \$17,900 for a Taringa executive underpaid redundancy entitlements,
- \$17,300 for an Albion manager not paid for all hours worked,
- \$16,000 for a Moorooka mechanic not paid accrued annual leave,
- \$14,500 for a McDowall designer not paid accrued annual leave entitlements or wages in lieu of notice,
- \$13,100 for a Brisbane engineer not paid redundancy entitlements,
- \$9500 for a Newmarket cleaner underpaid the minimum hourly rate for almost four years,
- \$8300 for a Jindalee apprentice underpaid the minimum hourly rate and penalty rates,
- \$7400 for a Wacol apprentice underpaid annual leave entitlements,
- \$7200 for a Virginia sales assistant not paid for all hours worked,
- \$7000 for a Greenslopes personal assistant not paid wages, and
- \$6000 for a Woollongabba business manager not paid penalty rates and who had unauthorised deductions from his pay.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says that given all the employers co-operated with inspectors and voluntarily rectified their matters, there will be no further action against any of the companies

"We place a strong focus on educating and assisting employers to understand and comply with workplace laws," he said.

"Our preference is always to work with employers to educate them and help them voluntarily rectify any non-compliance issues."

Mr Campbell says that employers need to regularly review their Award or agreement to ensure they are fully aware of their obligations to their workers.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a number of tools on its website at www.fairwork.gov.au to assist employees and employers to check minimum rates of pay, including PayCheck, Payroll Check and a Pay Rate Calculator.

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 and accessing a series of Best Practice Guides.

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

Employers or employees seeking assistance or further information can also contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 from 8am-6pm weekdays. A free interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50.

Note: we are unable to provide additional information on the cases listed above.

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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

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