

Court action over alleged underpayment of Melbourne childcare workers

8 August 2011

The Fair Work Ombudsman has launched a prosecution against the operators of two Melbourne childcare centres for allegedly underpaying nine employees a total of almost \$120,000.

Facing court is La Kosta Childcare Centre & Kindergarten Pty Ltd, which operates childcare centres at Branton Drive, Hampton Park, and Heatherton Road, Noble Park.

Also facing court are Snezana Sterjov, the company's sole owner, and her husband Kosta Sterjov, the company's sole director, of Keysborough, who jointly manage the two childcare centres.

Documents lodged in the Federal Magistrates Court in Melbourne allege Mr and Mrs Sterjov were centrally involved in La Kosta Childcare Centre & Kindergarten underpaying nine employees a total of \$118,747 between July, 2005 and February, 2010.

The employees were all women aged mainly in their 20s and 30s.

It is alleged the employees were underpaid the minimum hourly rate, annual leave entitlements, overtime pay and shiftwork loading.

The largest amount allegedly owing to an individual is \$30,866.

Fair Work inspectors discovered the alleged underpayments when they investigated complaints lodged by the employees after they resigned.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says the decision to prosecute was made because of the significant amount involved and the employer's failure to rectify the alleged underpayments.

Mr and Mrs Sterjov were allegedly involved in La Kosta Childcare Centre & Kindergarten committing several breaches of workplace laws.

Mr and Mrs Sterjov face maximum penalties of \$6600 per contravention and the company faces maximum penalties of \$33,000 per breach.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is also seeking a Court order for the company to rectify the alleged underpayments.

Employers or employees seeking assistance should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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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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