

\$30,000 back-pay for Northern Rivers workers

4 February 2011

A number of workers in the Northern Rivers region of NSW have been reimbursed a total of \$33,000 after recent investigations by the Fair Work Ombudsman found they were underpaid.

The biggest underpayment was \$7500 for a Grafton transport worker.

The employee - who worked for the same company for three years - was underpaid his hourly rate and penalty rates.

After Fair Work inspectors contacted the employer and explained its obligations, the company agreed to back-pay the worker in full.

In a separate case, a Coffs Harbour retail manager has been back-paid \$7000 after he was underpaid penalty rates, leave loading and not paid for all hours worked.

Other recent recoveries include:

- \$6900 for a Casino clerk underpaid the minimum hourly rate
- \$6400 for a Murwillumbah truck driver underpaid the minimum hourly rate and who had unauthorised deductions from wages, and
- \$5200 for a worker at Tenterfield underpaid the minimum hourly rate, penalty rates and annual leave entitlements.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says that given the employers co-operated with inspectors and agreed to voluntarily rectify the underpayments, there will be no further action against the companies involved.

"We have a flexible, fair approach and our preference is always to work with employers to help them resolve any non-compliance issues we identify," he said.

Mr Campbell says that the Agency places a strong focus on educating and assisting employers to understand and comply with workplace laws.

"We are serious about our job of ensuring regional communities understand their rights and obligations in the workplace," he says.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a number of tools on its website - www.fairwork.gov.au - to assist employees and employers to check minimum rates of pay.

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.

The 'Industries' section on the Fair Work Ombudsman's website provides information specifically tailored for employers and workers in the retail, cleaning, clerical, hair and beauty, security and horticulture industries.

Employers or employees seeking assistance or further information can also contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 from 8am-6pm weekdays. 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.