

## Regulator joins Fair Day to help raise awareness about unlawful workplace discrimination

11 February 2011

The Fair Work Ombudsman has launched a national campaign aimed at helping workers avoid discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Michael Campbell says instances of employees being discriminated against may be going unreported because of a lack of awareness of workplace rights.

“We want employees to be aware that discrimination in the workplace is unlawful and that they can turn to the Fair Work Ombudsman for help if they experience it,” Mr Campbell said. “Every worker has a right to a supportive workplace free of discrimination.”

The Fair Work Ombudsman will host a stall at Fair Day - which kicks off Sydney’s Mardi Gras Festival - on Sunday, February 20.

Fair Work Ombudsman staff will talk to event-goers about workplace issues and distribute 50,000 educational brochures on unlawful workplace discrimination.

To promote its participation in Fair Day, the Fair Work Ombudsman has created a Facebook fan page to create a two-way discussion about relevant workplace protections.

A further 40,000 educational postcards will be distributed in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Hobart, Adelaide, Darwin and Perth over the next month through retail outlets, cafes, bars, galleries, museums, universities and other venues.

“We have had few complaints about discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but this may be due to a lack of awareness, and it is our role to educate the community about its workplace rights and obligations,” Mr Campbell said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has received a total of 21 complaints from workers in Victoria, NSW, Queensland and WA. “Workers have complained about having their hours reduced, being dismissed and being treated in a hostile manner at work.

Mr Campbell says other behaviour which could constitute discrimination includes changing an employee’s job to their disadvantage, reducing their pay or refusing to hire them on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. “Any worker who has been subjected to this type of conduct should contact the Fair Work Ombudsman for free advice and assistance,” he said.

Fair Work inspectors can also investigate allegations of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, pregnancy, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer responsibilities, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

The new campaign also aims to raise awareness among same-sex couples that they can be eligible for workplace entitlements such as parental, adoption, carer’s and compassionate leave.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has information about discrimination and various workplace entitlements available on its website at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) or people can call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 from 8am to 6pm weekdays.

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## Contact us

Fair Work Online: [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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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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