

## Over \$100k recovered for Gold Coast workers

10 January 2011

The Fair Work Ombudsman has recently recovered \$105,500 for a number of workers on Queensland's Gold Coast.

The biggest recovery was \$40,800 for two Gold Coast travel agents.

The workers lodged complaints with the Fair Work Ombudsman after they were paid between \$6.95 and \$15 an hour over a four-year period.

After the Fair Work Ombudsman contacted the employer and explained that the business was underpaying the minimum hourly rate, the workers were back-paid \$20,600 and \$20,200 respectively.

In another local case, a Southport manager has been back-paid \$19,300 after she was not paid commission.

And again in Southport, a driver has been reimbursed \$16,400 after he was 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 include underpayment of workers' minimum hourly rates, penalty rates and failure to pay full entitlements to workers upon termination of their employment.

Other recent recoveries include:

- \$8400 for a team leader on the Gold Coast underpaid annual leave and who had unauthorised deductions from entitlements,
- \$8100 for a Yatala manager underpaid wages and annual leave,
- \$7500 for a Southport security worker underpaid long service leave entitlements, and
- \$5000 for a Coolangatta health industry worker underpaid the minimum hourly rate and overtime allowances.

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

In most cases, the Fair Work Ombudsman does not prosecute employers for inadvertent breaches of workplace laws.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a number of tools on its website - [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) - to assist employees and employers to check minimum rates of pay, including PayCheck, Payroll Check and a Pay Rate Calculator.

An '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.

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 or accessing a series of Best Practice Guides.

Further online resources 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. For translations, call 13 14 50.

Last financial year, the Fair Work Ombudsman recovered \$4.25 million for 3749 Queensland workers who were underpaid.

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](http://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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