

North Queensland workers back-paid more than \$100,000 after regulator intervenes

12 January 2011

A number of workers in Queensland's Tropical North have been back-paid \$107,800 after intervention by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The biggest underpayment amounted to \$76,600 owed to two electricians at a remote mining site in the State's Far North.

The workers lodged complaints with the Fair Work Ombudsman after they were not paid wages or their termination entitlements.

After the Fair Work Ombudsman contacted the company and explained its obligations, the workers were reimbursed \$39,000 and \$37,600 respectively.

Inspectors discovered the underpayments through a combination of routine audits and investigations into complaints from workers. Other recent recoveries include:

- \$11,200 for a Townsville educator not reimbursed travel costs,
- \$8600 for an Innisfail maintenance worker not paid overtime,
- \$8400 for a Cairns apprentice underpaid the minimum hourly rate for six months, and
- \$5000 for a Hamilton Island tourism worker underpaid accrued annual leave.

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

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

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 - www.fairwork.gov.au - to assist employees and employers to check minimum rates of pay, including PayCheck and Payroll Check.

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.

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 by accessing a series of Best Practice Guides.

Employers and employees seeking advice or assistance should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. Translations are available by calling 13 14 50.

Media inquiries:

Ryan Pedler, Senior Adviser, Media & Stakeholder Relations
(03) 9954 2561, 0411 430 902
ryan.pedler@fwo.gov.au

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.