

Campaigns recover \$750k for underpaid NSW/ACT workers

7 November 2011

A total of \$751,885 was recouped for underpaid workers in NSW and the ACT last financial year as a result of the Fair Work Ombudsman's targeted campaign activity.

Fair Work inspectors scrutinised the employment records of 1892 NSW/ACT businesses as part of their pro-active compliance work.

Four national campaigns focused on horticulture, cleaning services, insulation installers and sham contracting and one regional campaign in NSW/ACT was based around the Fair Work Information Statement.

A total of 28 regional campaigns in NSW/ACT, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia recovered \$585,843 for 1316 underpaid workers.

Nationally, the Fair Work Ombudsman randomly audited 6779 businesses and recovered a total of \$4.7 million for 7613 employees.

Campaign audits were up 84 per cent from 3413 in 2009-10 and the money recovered for underpaid employees was up 11 per cent from \$4.2 million.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says the targeted compliance work aims to ensure workers are protected and receive their full pay.

"Many employers underpay as the result of a lack of information or they make mistakes interpreting the information they have," he said.

"However, some deliberately take the opportunity to keep for themselves what is rightfully owed to their employees, and our proactive work helps improve understanding among employers of their workplace responsibilities."

The Fair Work Ombudsman's compliance activities are both pro-active – working with specific industry sectors to educate and improve the level of compliance - and re-active, responding directly to complaints.

"We aim to improve compliance with workplace laws through an integrated approach that combines positive motivators, such as advice and education, with deterrents such as investigation and litigation activities," Mr Wilson said.

Results of Fair Work Ombudsman campaign activities are posted Online at www.fairwork.gov.au.

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