

Academics to research unpaid work practices

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The Fair Work Ombudsman is teaming with two leading academics to identify opportunities for increasing public awareness about laws relating to unpaid work.

University of Adelaide Law School academics Andrew Stewart and Rosemary Owens will undertake a research project into unpaid work arrangements, focusing on internships, work experience and trial work.

Both are leading researchers in the field of labour law.

The academics will investigate the range, nature and prevalence of unpaid work arrangements in Australia and will examine international best practice for dealing with these arrangements.

The academics will interview various key stakeholders including industry groups, unions, government and non-government bodies, universities and schools.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says the project will help to inform his Agency's education and compliance processes in relation to the issue of unpaid work arrangements.

"We want to make sure we are doing everything within our power to ensure the relevant workplace participants are aware of laws relating to unpaid work arrangements," he said.

"A basic principle of workplace laws that business operators can overlook when considering taking on an unpaid intern is that generally when a person performs work for a business, they are lawfully entitled to be paid for it.

"While there are some legitimate internship arrangements available, business operators who view unpaid interns as a source of free labour are at the greatest risk of breaching workplace laws."

A fact sheet on workplace laws relating to internships, vocational placements and unpaid work is available for free download at the Fair Work Ombudsman's website www.fairwork.gov.au.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can also contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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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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