

New England workers back-paid \$34,000

16 February 2012

Twenty-seven workers in the New England region of NSW have been back-paid a total of \$34,400 following recent intervention by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The largest recovery was \$9900 for a worker in the hospitality industry at Armidale who had been underpaid for three years.

The male employee, a long-term staff member, complained to the Fair Work Ombudsman that he started performing managerial duties in 2008 but had not been reclassified and paid accordingly.

After a Fair Work inspector contacted the business and explained its obligations, the employee was promptly reimbursed all money owed without the need for further action.

Other recent recoveries include:

- \$7400 for an Inverell tradesman not paid penalty rates for three years,
- \$6100 for a labourer near Tamworth underpaid the minimum hourly rate and penalty rates,
- \$6000 for 23 Tamworth cleaners underpaid the minimum hourly rate and penalty rates, and
- \$5000 for a station-hand near Inverell who was not paid accrued annual leave entitlements and who had unauthorised deductions made from his wages.

The Fair Work Ombudsman recovered a total of \$8.215 million back-pay for 4182 underpaid workers in NSW last financial year. Nationally, the Agency recouped \$26.7 million for 17,360 employees.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says that when Fair Work inspectors identify a problem and contact a business, most employers check their records, realise a problem has occurred, and fix it immediately.

"We're here to assist and give practical advice to employers on how to voluntarily resolve issues," Mr Wilson said. "These New England businesses have now corrected the errors that led to the underpayments and put processes in place to ensure they will not happen again."

Mr Wilson says the Fair Work Ombudsman's Assisted Voluntary Resolution (AVR) team is now achieving resolution of about half its referrals within the first month.

Workers or employers seeking unsure of their workplace rights and obligations should contact the Fair Work Ombudsman via the website - www.fairwork.gov.au - or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

The website has a number of tools and resources, including PayCheck Plus and an Award Finder, to assist business-owners to calculate the correct pay for their employees.

An 'Industries' section on the website provides extra, specialised information for employers and employees in the retail, cleaning, vehicle, clerical, hair and beauty, security, horticulture, fast food and hospitality industries.

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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.