

Sydney cleaners allegedly underpaid \$130,000

7 March 2012

The Fair Work Ombudsman is prosecuting a national cleaning company, alleging it underpaid 32 Sydney cleaners - including many foreign workers - more than \$130,000.

Facing court is the Glad Group Pty Ltd, which holds cleaning contracts for more than 100 office buildings around the country, including Deutsche Bank Place on Phillip Street, Sydney.

It is alleged Glad Group underpaid 32 night-shift workers it employed to clean Deutsche Bank Place a total of \$133,845 from October, 2008 to August, 2009.

The employees - who included international students, working holiday visa workers and recent immigrants - spoke little English. Six were aged under 21 at the time.

The employees generally worked four-hour shifts at night.

It is alleged the majority of the underpayments were the result of the Glad Group purporting to outsource employment of the cleaners for the fourth hour of their shifts to another company - LJ & LJ King - which paid them only \$13 to \$15 an hour, when they were entitled to more than \$17 an hour.

However, it is alleged that because Glad Group continued to control and direct the employees for their whole shift, it was the true employer and was responsible for paying the cleaners for all work performed.

It is alleged Glad Group was therefore ultimately responsible for underpaying the employees the minimum hourly rate, as well as overtime rates and toilet-cleaning allowances.

One employee - a recent immigrant from Asia aged 23 at the time - was allegedly underpaid more than \$20,000.

In prosecution documents lodged in Court, the Fair Work Ombudsman alleges that Glad Group has admitted to underpaying the workers and has reimbursed all those employees it has been able to locate. A small number cannot be found.

Fair Work inspectors discovered the alleged underpayments in 2009 when they audited the Glad Group during a campaign focussing on Sydney cleaning companies.

Glad Group allegedly also failed to keep proper employment records.

The Fair Work Ombudsman alleges Glad Group committed several breaches of workplace laws. The maximum potential penalty per breach is \$33,000.

The case is listed for a hearing on May 9 in the Federal Magistrates Court in Sydney.

Employers or employees seeking assistance should contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au. A free interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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