

Accommodation providers, pubs, bars and taverns focus of new national campaign

26 September 2012

The Fair Work Ombudsman is writing to more than 25,000 accommodation providers, pubs, taverns and bars as part of a new national education and compliance campaign.

The campaign is promoting the range of free tools, templates and advice accessible on the Fair Work Ombudsman's website at www.fairwork.gov.au/hospitality (www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/helping-the-community/campaigns/national-campaigns/hospitality-campaign).

Detailed, user-friendly information is available on the Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010, including the types of businesses covered, apprenticeships and traineeships, pay rates, terminations and redundancies, classifications, hours of work, breaks and leave entitlements.

Key stakeholders, including employer groups and unions, have been briefed on the campaign and are assisting to promote its objectives to their members.

Early next year, the Fair Work Ombudsman will contact more than 1000 accommodation providers, pubs, taverns and bars throughout Australia and ask them to supply employment records for audit.

Fair Work inspectors will check that employers are paying workers correct minimum rates of pay, penalty rates, loadings and allowances and are complying with their record-keeping and pay slip obligations. Employers in every State and Territory will be audited.

The focus on accommodation providers, pubs, taverns and bars is the first stage of a wider three-year campaign focussing on the hospitality industry.

As part of the campaign, the Fair Work Ombudsman plans to focus similar education and compliance activities on cafes, restaurants and caterers in 2013, and on take-away food operators in 2014.

The Fair Work Ombudsman conducted a national education and compliance campaign in the hospitality industry in 2008, auditing 664 employers nationally.

At that time, Fair Work inspectors found that 36 per cent of employers were non-compliant with workplace laws and recovered a total of \$1.6 million in back-pay for 4679 underpaid employees nationally.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson says the hospitality industry has again been selected for a national campaign because it employs hundreds of thousands of workers and generates a large number of complaints each year.

"We are conscious that the hospitality industry employs a significant number of young workers who can be vulnerable if they are not fully aware of their workplace rights or are reluctant to complain," Mr Wilson said.

"It is important we ensure these workers are receiving their full entitlements."

Mr Wilson says the campaign provides an opportunity for employers to improve their understanding of, and compliance with, workplace laws.

"We have excellent resources available to assist employers in the hospitality industry to ensure they provide employees their full entitlements," Mr Wilson said.

"If inspectors find minor or inadvertent contraventions, our preference will be to educate the employer and assist them to voluntarily rectify the issues.

"Obviously, in those cases where a contravention is blatant or employers are not willing to promptly resolve an issue, we may escalate the audit to a full investigation."

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.

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

Free documentation is available Online for employers to use when hiring, managing and dismissing staff, including letters of engagement and probation, timesheet and pay slip templates, leave application forms and a self-audit check list.

Employers and employees can sign up to receive the Fair Work Ombudsman's eNewsletter at www.fairwork.gov.au/enewsletter (www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/newsletter/default) .

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