

\$48,000 in back-pay for Wodonga and Wangaratta workers

17 April 2013

Underpaid workers at Wodonga and Wangaratta have been back-paid a total of \$48,400 following recent intervention by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

In the largest case, a Wodonga cleaner was back-paid \$37,600 after her employer failed to pay her penalty rates for weekend and public holiday work between 2005 and 2011 after she initially agreed not to receive the rates.

Fair Work Ombudsman Group Manager, Michael Campbell, said employers cannot pay an employee less than the minimum wages and penalty rates in the award or industrial agreement that applies, even if the employee agrees to it.

"Employers must be aware that it is not lawful to try to avoid paying minimum wages and entitlements by negotiating them away with staff," Mr Campbell said.

Fair Work inspectors have also recovered \$5,600 for a Wodonga tradesman who was underpaid wages and a tool allowance while employed as an apprentice and then a qualified tradesman between 2007 and 2012.

In another case, a sales manager at Wangaratta was back-paid \$5,200 after not receiving wages in lieu of notice upon termination of employment in 2012.

In all cases, after Fair Work inspectors contacted the businesses and explained their obligations the employees were reimbursed all money owed without the need for further action against the employer.

"When we find mistakes, we're here to assist and give practical advice to employers on how to voluntarily resolve issues," Mr Campbell said.

"These businesses have now corrected the errors that led to the underpayments and put processes in place to ensure they will not happen again."

Last financial year the Fair Work Ombudsman recovered over \$7.7 million in back-pay for more than 3800 workers in Victoria.

The Fair Work Ombudsman's website - www.fairwork.gov.au - contains 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.

Employers and employees seeking information and advice should visit the website or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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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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