

Workers at Victorian general store allegedly underpaid \$19,000

29 August 2013

The Fair Work Ombudsman has launched legal action against the former operator of a general store in regional Victoria, alleging two workers were underpaid more than \$19,000.

Facing court is The Thirsty Farmer Pty. Ltd., which previously operated a general store at 2153 Ballan Road, Anakie, just north of Geelong.

Also facing Court is the store's former manager and part-owner, Renee Leeann Batty.

It is alleged that two employees at the general store were underpaid a total of \$19,445 between 2009 and September 2012.

The employees primarily worked as food and beverage attendants at a restaurant and take-away food shop contained within the general store.

They performed various duties, including taking food orders, cooking and serving food and alcohol, stocking shelves and cleaning.

It is alleged the employees were paid an hourly rate of \$15.86 for the majority of work performed, resulting in underpayment of their minimum hourly rates, casual loadings and penalty rates for overtime and weekend work.

They were allegedly underpaid individual amounts of \$8,028 and \$11,417.

Fair Work Inspectors discovered the alleged breaches when they investigated complaints lodged by the employees.

Fair Work Ombudsman, Natalie James, said the significant amounts involved and the failure to rectify the alleged underpayments were key factors in the decision to commence legal action.

Renee Leeann Batty was allegedly involved in The Thirsty Farmer Pty. Ltd. committing several breaches of workplace laws. She faces penalties of up to \$6,600 per breach and the company faces penalties of up to \$33,000 per breach.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is also seeking a Court Order for the company to back-pay the employees in full. A directions hearing is listed in the Federal Circuit Court in Melbourne on September 2.

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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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

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