

\$100,000 back-pay for employees at NSW furniture and floor covering stores

2 December 2013

Retail workers at furniture and floor covering stores throughout New South Wales have been back-paid more than \$100,000 in wages, as part of a Fair Work Ombudsman campaign.

The Fair Work Ombudsman conducted a campaign focusing on furniture retailers and retailers of floor coverings, including carpet, tiles and curtains.

A total of 213 randomly-selected businesses were audited earlier this year and 131 (62 per cent) were found to be complying with workplace laws, while 82 (38 per cent) were in breach.

Of those in breach, 51 businesses were found to have underpaid 105 employees a total of \$103,500, while others had only pay slip, record-keeping and technical breaches.

Businesses found to have underpaid workers were at locations including Armidale, Ballina, Batemans Bay, Bowral, Coffs Harbour, Cowra, Dubbo, Goulburn, Griffith, Katoomba, Maitland, Nowra, Sydney, Wagga, Wollongong and Young.

Underpayments at individual businesses ranged from less than \$25 to more than \$36,000 for 18 employees at a Sydney CBD business who were underpaid annual leave and public holiday entitlements, weekend penalty rates and minimum hourly rates.

Another common non-compliance issue was employers failing to include the Australian Business Number (ABN) and employee superannuation details on pay slips, as required by workplace law.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James said furniture and floor covering retailers in NSW were selected for a campaign because they had been a persistent source of complaints in recent years.

"It was disappointing to find some significant underpayments but it was pleasing that all employers accepted assistance from Fair Work Inspectors to voluntarily rectify their issues, back-pay employees and put processes in place to ensure future compliance," Ms James said.

"A key role of the Fair Work Ombudsman is to educate employers about their obligations and assist them to get it right, particularly time-poor small business operators who don't have the benefit of in-house pay roll and human resources staff."

Ms James said the campaign provided a great opportunity for employers in the sector to improve their understanding of workplace laws and learn about the free tools and resources available at www.fairwork.gov.au/retail to help them comply as easily as possible.

Online resources include record-keeping and pay slip templates and tools for determining correct rates of pay for employees, such as PayCheck Plus and Award Finder.

Employers and workers seeking support should visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50.

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Find out more:

- [NSW furniture and floor covering retailers' audit program report Nov 2013 \(PDF 743.5KB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/NSW-furniture-and-floor-covering-retailers-audit-program-report.pdf.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/NSW-furniture-and-floor-covering-retailers-audit-program-report.pdf.aspx)
- [NSW furniture and floor covering retailers' audit program report Nov 2013 \(DOCX 5.6MB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/NSW-furniture-and-floor-covering-retailers-audit-program-report.docx.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/NSW-furniture-and-floor-covering-retailers-audit-program-report.docx.aspx)

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