

Fishing company faces court for allegedly underpaying Indonesian crew almost \$80,000

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An Australian fishing company is to face legal action for allegedly underpaying four of its Indonesian crew tens of thousands of dollars.

Three deckhands and an engineer were allegedly underpaid a total of \$77,390 between July, 2012 and June, 2013, according to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The male employees worked on the Santo Rocco, which primarily docked in NSW, and the Challenge, which primarily docked in Queensland.

According to the Fair Work Ombudsman, the 457 visa-holders were underpaid amounts ranging from \$14,705 to \$24,494.

It has commenced legal proceedings against the fishing company - Australian Wild Tuna Pty Ltd - in the Federal Circuit Court in Sydney.

Also facing Court is company director and manager Angelo Maiorana, of Sydney.

The Fair Work Ombudsman says the Indonesian crew were allegedly underpaid their wages while working in waters off the east coast.

It is seeking civil penalties against Australian Wild Tuna Pty Ltd and Mr Maiorana, alleging multiple breaches of workplace laws.

Contraventions relating to pay slips, record-keeping and frequency-of-pay are also being alleged.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says inspectors made extensive efforts to resolve the matter before legal proceedings were commenced.

Ms James says the employer's failure to rectify such a large alleged underpayment of vulnerable overseas workers is a significant factor in the decision to litigate.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has established an Overseas Workers' Team responsible for conducting Visa monitoring activities, as well as undertaking high-profile complaint investigations and proactive compliance activities relating to the employment of overseas workers.

Mr Maiorana faces maximum penalties up to \$10,200 per breach and the company up to \$51,000 per contravention.

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