

Don't leave snowfields workers out in the cold

20 August 2014

NSW and Victorian snowfields employers face further checks over coming weeks to ensure seasonal workers in popular winter playgrounds are receiving their correct wages.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is sending a team of 10 inspectors back to the snowfields after finding employers underpaid their staff hundreds of thousands of dollars last season.

The Agency announced today that it had required 39 businesses to repay more than \$354,000 to more than 410 employees found to have been short-changed last year.

The largest underpayment was \$34,242 for 30 employees at a single business.

While employers co-operated and repaid all outstanding entitlements, the Fair Work Ombudsman issued 15 Letters of Caution to business operators.

Last year, Fair Work inspectors randomly visited more than 100 employers at Mt Buller, Falls Creek, Mt Hotham, Dinner Plains and Mt Baw Baw in Victoria and Jindabyne, Thredbo and Perisher in NSW.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the main reason for the underpayments was a widespread misunderstanding of Award coverage.

"Most employers were applying the provisions of the Alpine Resorts Award, when in fact they should have been applying the General Retail Industry Award, the Fast Food Industry Award, the Hospitality Industry (General) Award or the Restaurant Industry Award," she said.

The Alpine Resorts Award 2010 only applies to employers whose business activity involves the operation of ski lifts.

Ms James says Fair Work inspectors have planned return visits to resorts which were assessed last year, as well as additional businesses in and around Selwyn, Adaminaby, Cooma and Berridale in NSW.

They will check that employers are paying staff correctly, maintaining appropriate records and providing employees with pay slips.

"At this time of the year, many young people and many overseas workers head to the snowfields for seasonal work and it's important that if they don't fully understand their workplace rights, that their employers do," Ms James said.

"Again, where our inspectors identify issues, our first preference always is to work with individual employers to help them fix their mistakes by agreement and put processes in place to ensure they get things right in the future."

Snowfields employers are encouraged to access the comprehensive suite of free tools and resources available at www.fairwork.gov.au, including template documents for pay-slips and time-and-wages sheets.

Employers or employees seeking assistance can also contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94, or for those who need an interpreter, on 13 14 50.

Follow Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James on Twitter [@NatJamesFWO](https://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO) (<http://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO>), the Fair Work Ombudsman [@fairwork_gov_au](https://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) (http://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) or find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au (<http://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au>).

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