

\$105,000 back-pay for workers in Melbourne's East

8 December 2014

Dozens of workers in Melbourne's East have been reimbursed more than \$105,000 after inquiries by the Fair Work Ombudsman revealed they had been underpaid at work.

The largest recovery was \$24,300 for 18 workers at a Camberwell café underpaid their penalty rates for shift work, weekends and public holidays and annual leave loading entitlements. Some employees were also underpaid their minimum hourly rates.

The underpayments occurred because the business was not fully aware of its workplace obligations. Inspectors determined that the underpayments were not deliberate.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the case highlights the importance of employers being diligent when it comes to understanding the wages and entitlements applicable to their workplace.

"It is important employers are fully aware of their responsibilities, otherwise they can end up facing back-payment bills they weren't budgeting for," Ms James said.

Other recent recoveries include:

- \$19,000 for a Mooroolbark phone consultant not paid for all hours worked while 'on call' during various periods in 2013 and earlier this year,
- \$18,900 for a property manager at Ringwood East underpaid her casual loading entitlements between 2010 and 2013,
- \$18,000 for nine workers at an East Melbourne serviced apartment underpaid their casual loadings and weekend and public holidays penalty rates in 2012-2013,
- \$13,100 for 20 cleaners at a Hawthorn cleaning business underpaid the minimum hourly rate and overtime, weekend and public holiday penalty rates over a 12-month period,
- \$6200 for 17 shop assistants at a Croydon bakery underpaid the minimum hourly rate and weekend penalty rates in 2013 and earlier this year, and
- \$5900 for 10 workers at a Camberwell café underpaid weekend penalty rates from July last year until May.

Ms James said the employees were reimbursed without the need for further action after Fair Work inspectors contacted the employers and explained their obligations.

"We're confident the underpayments were inadvertent and it's pleasing that employers accepted our assistance to put processes in place to ensure future compliance," she said.

Employers and employees seeking advice are encouraged to visit the Fair Work Ombudsman's website at www.fairwork.gov.au, or call the Infoline on 13 13 94.

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