

Darwin cleaners focus of new education campaign

15 May 2014

Cleaning businesses in Darwin will come under the spotlight this month as part of the Fair Work Ombudsman's latest pro-active education and compliance campaign.

Fair Work inspectors will make face-to-face visits to about 20 employers to assist businesses to understand their rights and obligations and ensure they are paying correct wages.

Employers will be asked to open their books, allowing inspectors to view their records, with a particular emphasis on minimum hourly rates, penalty rates and allowances.

Compliance with pay-slip and record-keeping obligations will also be monitored.

Inspectors wrote to employers ahead of the site visits providing information about free resources available to them from the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The education pack includes a copy of the Cleaning Services Award 2010, industry-specific fact sheets and a link to pay tools available on the Agency's website.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says it is important that employers in Darwin understand their workplace obligations.

She says the cleaning industry was selected for attention because it continues to be a persistent source of complaints from employees.

In one case last year, the Fair Work Ombudsman found one Darwin cleaning company had underpaid 12 employees about \$34,000. Another cleaning company was found to have short-changed its staff \$17,000.

In a national campaign in 2010, the Fair Work Ombudsman found that 149 of 376 cleaning businesses (40 per cent) breached workplace laws and recovered almost \$500,000 for more than 900 workers.

"The cleaning industry employs large numbers of young, migrant and overseas workers who can be vulnerable if they are not fully aware of their workplace rights, so it's important we are proactive about ensuring they are paid their full entitlements," Ms James said.

Inspectors will start their site visits on May 26.

Ms James says that where inspectors identify errors, they will work with employers to assist them rectify mistakes and put processes in place to ensure they are not repeated.

Inspectors will make return visits to these employers within a month to ensure they have followed through with any commitments they give to address their issues.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is currently finalising audits of around 1000 cleaning contractors nationally. The results will be available later this year.

People seeking assistance can visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Infoline on 13 13 94.

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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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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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