

## Construction focus for new national campaign

15 October 2014

Hundreds of construction businesses will come under scrutiny as part of a new national campaign announced today by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Fair Work inspectors will check that employers are paying the correct minimum hourly rates, penalty and overtime rates and allowances.

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

Deputy Fair Work Ombudsman (Operations) Michael Campbell hopes the pro-active campaign will help improve compliance and drive behavioural change.

Construction is consistently one of the top industries generating requests for assistance from employees.

Last year, the Fair Work Ombudsman received more than 2000 complaints and identified workplace contraventions in about 50 per cent of cases.

"While our focus is on ensuring employees receive their lawful wages and entitlements, we want to understand the underlying causes of non-compliance in the construction industry," Mr Campbell says.

"Where we find problems, we will endeavour to identify the cause. This will help to inform our compliance and education efforts in the future."

Up to 700 businesses in every capital city and selected regional areas will be earmarked for auditing, with some site visits planned.

Both residential and commercial builders will be monitored, as well as electricians, plumbers, painters and decorators, tilers and carpenters, bricklayers, concreters, landscapers and plasterers.

Mr Campbell says Fair Work inspectors will work to assist any employers found to have workplace contraventions.

However, he warned that enforcement measures would be considered in cases of serious, or repeat contraventions, or where employers refuse to co-operate.

Inspectors can issue on-the-spot fines of up to \$2550.

In the event of a matter being so serious that it warrants legal action, companies can be penalised up to \$51,000 per contravention and individuals up to \$10,200 per contravention.

Mr Campbell says the campaign aims to ensure the wages and conditions of apprentices, in particular, are being upheld.

"We are conscious that the construction industry is one of the biggest employers of young, full-time workers in Australia and they can be vulnerable if they are not fully aware of their workplace rights or are reluctant to complain," he said.

Businesses included in the campaign will be selected at random.

However, some employers who have previously come to the attention of the Fair Work Ombudsman will also be included.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a range of tools and resources available to help employers understand and comply with their responsibilities.

Helpful online tools at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) include PayCheck Plus, which assists business owners and employees to determine the correct award and minimum wages for their industry, templates for pay slips and time-and-wages records and a range of fact sheets on workplace entitlements.

Dedicated website resources for small businesses include a Fair Work Handbook and tips for new employers about hiring staff.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can visit the website or contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

A free interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50.

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Media inquiries:

Ryan Pedler, Assistant Media Director

Mobile: 0411 430 902

[ryan.pedler@fwo.gov.au](mailto:ryan.pedler@fwo.gov.au) (mailto:ryan.pedler@fwo.gov.au)

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Fair Work Online: [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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