

Almost one million visits every month seeking workplace relations information and advice

22 October 2014

The Fair Work Ombudsman's website recorded 11.7 million visits last financial year.

The site visits are up 14 per cent on the 10.3 million recorded over the previous 12 months.

Pay tools designed to assist employers and employees calculate wage rates generated more than 1.57 million visits.

And fact sheets, templates and other advisory materials were downloaded more than two million times.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the results show the importance of the agency investing in self-help technologies.

Ms James says a mobile-friendly pay tool will be launched next year to make accessing pay rates even easier.

Underpinning the website, the Fair Work Infoline responded to more than 595,500 customers seeking advice and information.

Almost 50 per cent of inquiries related to wages and conditions.

Fair Work inspectors recouped more than \$23 million for 15,483 underpaid employees throughout the 2013-14 financial year.

Of this, just over \$4 million was recovered as part of the agency's proactive education and compliance campaigns, which involved mostly random auditing of more than 4500 employers.

The results are contained in the Fair Work Ombudsman's 2013-14 Annual Report tabled in Federal Parliament.

The report reveals that more than half-a-million visitors logged onto the agency's new website within the first 17 days of it going live in June.

My Account, a new facility which allows users to personalise their workplace information, save it and access it at their convenience, registered more than 10,500 subscribers in less than three weeks.

Over 13,700 people undertook courses provided on the Fair Work Ombudsman's new Online Learning Centre, which now hosts five learning modules.

Employer subscriptions to the agency's E-newsletter grew by 62 per cent to 9945 and email alerts about workplace relations issues were up 45 per cent to 32,500.

More than a quarter of the 24,000 complaints the agency received came from young employees aged 25 or under, almost 20 per cent of them from the accommodation and food services sector.

Industries generating the most complaints from employees were accommodation and food services (12 per cent); construction (10 per cent); retail trade (nine per cent); administrative and support services (seven per cent) and manufacturing (seven per cent).

More than \$2.3 million in underpaid wages and entitlements was recovered for 1355 young workers nationally.

Fifty-eight per cent of all employees seeking help were male and of these, 41 per cent were aged between 31 and 50. Of the female employees requesting assistance, 37 per cent were aged between 21 and 30.

A breakdown of employees seeking the agency's help with workplace issues shows that 29 per cent were from NSW, 27 per cent from Victoria and 24 per cent from Queensland.

Western Australia accounted for nine per cent, South Australia seven per cent, Tasmania two per cent and the Northern Territory and the ACT one per cent each.

Throughout the course of the year, the Fair Work Ombudsman filed 37 penalty litigation matters before the courts in response to serious, wilful and repetitive non-compliance with workplace laws.

Other enforcement measures included the issue of 116 Infringement Notices (on-the-spot fines), 65 Compliance Notices (compelling employers to take action on specific matters) and entering into 15 Enforceable Undertakings as an alternative to legal proceedings.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says in her foreword to the report that she is pleased with the agency's progress and

achievements, noting it delivered on its core responsibilities.

“We are balancing the need to ensure people comply with the need to reduce the cost and burden of compliance,” she said.

“In order to influence and change behaviors in major sectors of the economy, we are looking at the drivers of systemic non-compliance and addressing the barriers that industries face.

“We are creating partnerships with business through our Proactive Compliance Deeds and giving them the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their responsible and ethical behaviour.

“We will continue to work collaboratively with industry and individuals to identify and address issues that can impair the workforce, with a focus on those most vulnerable to exploitation.”

Employees or employers seeking assistance can visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

Download

[Fair Work Ombudsman annual report 2013-14 \(DOCX 9.5MB\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/710/fair-work-ombudsman-annual-report-2013-14.docx.aspx) (www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/710/fair-work-ombudsman-annual-report-2013-14.docx.aspx) (PDF 4MB) (www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/710/fair-work-ombudsman-annual-report-2013-14.pdf.aspx)

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

Need language help?

Contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50

Hearing & speech assistance

Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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