

Spotlight on Local Government security tenders

6 August 2015

Metropolitan and regional councils across Australia will be randomly audited as part of a Fair Work Ombudsman campaign to ensure local government procurement decisions are not undermining compliance with federal workplace laws.

“It is important that local councils understand that when they sign low-cost contracts to buy in security services, they are not contributing to the underpayment of employees working for their sub-contractors,” says Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has been working with the Australian Security Industry Association Ltd (ASIAL) and the United Voice union since May last year to educate local councils about their workplace obligations.

“Contracting out labour is a legitimate approach to doing business, but councils need to consider whether their procurement processes and subsequent governance of those arrangements create an environment where workers are open to exploitation,” Ms James says.

ASIAL chief executive Bryan de Caires says the campaign will benefit security service providers who are complying with workplace laws by helping to create a level playing field.

“If the price is too good to be true, it probably means somebody is not compliant with workplace laws,” he said.

“Operators who are gaining unlawful and unfair competitive advantage are profiting at the expense of the workers and the legitimate operators who are doing the right thing.”

United Voice national president Jo Schofield says the campaign will benefit the many security industry employees who rely on minimum award entitlements.

The Fair Work Ombudsman investigation is expected to take a year to complete, with a report on the outcomes anticipated by August, 2016.

In 2009, the Fair Work Ombudsman audited over 300 security businesses as part of a national campaign and found that less than half were compliant with workplace laws.

A follow-up campaign in 2012 saw a significant improvement, with 75 per cent of the 392 businesses audited found to meeting their obligations.

For more information on the Fair Work Ombudsman’s Local Government Procurement campaign, see: www.fairwork.gov.au/procurement (www.fairwork.gov.au/procurement)

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

A free interpreter service is also available on 13 14 50, and information on the website is translated into 27 languages.

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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Media inquiries:

Nicci de Ryk, Senior Media Adviser

Mobile: 0466 522 004

nicci.deryk@fwo.gov.au (<mailto:nicci.deryk@fwo.gov.au>)

Contact us

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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