

Almost \$100,000 back-paid to workers in Melbourne's South and South-Eastern suburbs

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Dozens of workers in Melbourne's South and South-Eastern suburbs have shared in more than \$93,100 back-pay after recent inquiries by the Fair Work Ombudsman revealed they had been underpaid at work.

The largest recovery was \$41,800 for 50 staff at a Glen Waverley restaurant.

The Fair Work Ombudsman randomly audited the business and found the workers, including bartenders, kitchen hands, cooks and waiting staff, were underpaid their minimum hourly rates and weekend and late-night penalty rates.

The underpaid employees included a number of young workers and former staff, with underpayments for individual workers up to \$2600.

After Fair Work inspectors contacted the business and explained its obligations, the employees were reimbursed all money owed without the need for enforcement action.

The underpayments occurred because the employer had misclassified some workers and was not fully aware of the penalty rates that applied to late-night and weekend shifts.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the underpayments should serve to remind all employers about how important it is for them to take the time to ensure they are aware of the minimum pay rates applicable to their staff.

"A small mistake left over time can easily result in a hefty bill for back-payment of wages – so it is important employers get it right in the first place," she said.

Other recent recoveries include:

- \$14,000 for 25 cleaners at a South Yarra cleaning business underpaid their penalty rates for overtime and public holiday work,
- \$7700 for a spray painter at a Dandenong panel beating business underpaid his minimum hourly rate,
- \$7500 for five shop assistants at an Ashburton retail business underpaid their minimum hourly rates and penalty rates for overtime and weekend work,
- \$6400 for six workers, including bar, kitchen and wait staff, at another Glen Waverley restaurant underpaid their late-night and weekend penalty rates,
- \$5600 for a financial planner at Port Melbourne underpaid his accrued annual leave and outstanding wages upon termination of employment,
- \$5100 for a machine operator at a Seaford manufacturing business underpaid his redundancy entitlements on termination of employment, and
- \$5000 for a property manager at a Carrum Downs real estate agency underpaid her minimum hourly rate, overtime and vehicle allowances.

Ms James says the employees were reimbursed all money owed without the need for enforcement action after Fair Work inspectors contacted the businesses and explained their obligations.

"We accept that these underpayments were the result of genuine mistakes and it was pleasing to see all business owners accept assistance from Fair Work inspectors to put processes in place to ensure ongoing compliance with workplace law," she said.

The Fair Work Ombudsman's website – www.fairwork.gov.au – contains a range of tools and resources to help employers easily understand and comply with their workplace obligations.

Website resources include PayCheck Plus to assist employers determine the correct hourly rates, overtime and penalty rates for employees, templates for time-and-wages sheets and pay slips and a range of fact sheets workplace entitlements.

Ms James says her Agency is always looking for new and innovative ways to help businesses understand and meet their obligations, and acquire the knowledge they need to not only get it right, but work at best practice

An online learning course aims to equip business owners with the practical skills and knowledge they need to more effectively

manage the performance of their employees.

The course, *Managing Performance*, takes about 25 minutes to complete and is available in the Agency's Online Learning Centre at www.fairwork.gov.au/learning.

Other online courses cover topics including having difficult conversations in the workplace, starting a new job and hiring employees.

Employers and employees seeking further assistance can call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is also available on 13 14 50.

Small Business owners calling the Infoline can opt to be put through to the Small Business Helpline to receive priority service.

The Fair Work Ombudsman supports compliant, productive and inclusive Australian workplaces by providing practical advice that is easy to access, understand and apply.

Follow Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James on Twitter [@NatJamesFWO](https://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO) , the Fair Work Ombudsman [@fairwork_gov_au](https://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) or find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au .

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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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