

Results of retail campaign in South Australia

13 January 2015

Almost three-quarters of retail businesses in South Australia are fully compliant with payment laws, random checks by the Fair Work Ombudsman have revealed.

However, Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the findings indicate that some employers still need to pay greater attention to their workplace obligations.

Fair Work inspectors checked the books of retailers throughout South Australia as part of a campaign that also focussed on Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Auditing has now concluded and the results are revealed in a report released today.

Of 113 audits completed in SA, 23 retailers - at locations including Adelaide, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie and Whyalla - were required to back-pay 75 employees a total of \$18,273.

A further seven employers had technical pay contraventions, but had not underpaid any staff.

In total, 73 per cent of SA retailers (83) were fully compliant with payment laws and 80 per cent (90) were compliant with record-keeping and pay slip laws.

Fair Work inspectors audited a total of 252 retailers throughout SA, WA and the NT. They found 69 per cent (175) were fully compliant with pay-related laws and 79 per cent (199) were compliant with record-keeping and pay slip laws.

Overall, inspectors recovered a total of \$60,088 for 238 employees at 48 businesses.

WA had the highest compliance rate for payment laws at 80 per cent. In the NT, just 51 per cent of the 45 retailers audited were fully compliant with payment laws.

Ms James says the underpayments indicate that some employers need to pay greater attention to the pay rates applicable to their workplace.

"However, it was pleasing to see all of the employers accept our assistance, voluntarily back-pay their workers and put processes in place to ensure ongoing compliance," she said.

Ms James says payment of flat hourly rates, resulting in non-payment of penalty rates, and employers failing to issue sufficiently detailed pay slips, were common non-compliance issues.

The retail sector was selected for attention because it employs a large number of workers and generates a significant number of requests for assistance to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Ahead of the campaign, inspectors wrote to almost 3000 retailers throughout SA, WA and the NT to inform them of the campaign and the free tools and resources available at www.fairwork.gov.au to help them comply with workplace laws.

Online tools include PayCheck Plus for calculating the correct wages for employees, fact sheets, Best Practice Guides and templates for pay slips and time-and-wages records.

Ms James says the Fair Work Ombudsman has a particular focus on assisting small businesses to understand and meet their obligations to employees.

"Small businesses often don't have the benefit of in-house human resources and payroll staff, so we place a high priority on assisting them," she said.

A dedicated webpage with resources for small business employers, including a Fair Work handbook, is available at our [Small business page \(http://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/small-business\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/small-business) .

Employers or employees seeking assistance are encouraged to visit the website or contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is also available on 13 14 50.

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Download:

- [SA/WA/NT retail campaign 2014 report \(DOCX 5.6MB\) \(www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/sawant-retail-campaign-2014-report.docx.aspx\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/sawant-retail-campaign-2014-report.docx.aspx) (PDF 305KB) (www.fairwork.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/714/sawant-retail-campaign-2014-report.pdf.aspx)

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