

\$24,000 penalty for short-changing teenage apprentice hairdresser \$6400

10 March 2015

A Sydney hair and beauty salon's attempt to cut costs by short-changing a teenage apprentice hairdresser \$6400 has back-fired – with the operators being fined almost four times that amount for their conduct.

Jack Younes, the former owner-operator of a Lattouf Hair and Day Spa franchise outlet at Castle Hill, has been penalised \$4080, and his company Viper Industries Pty Ltd, a further \$20,400.

In addition, the Federal Circuit Court in Sydney has issued Orders that the apprentice be back-paid all outstanding entitlements in full.

An apprentice hairdresser at Younes's business was underpaid a total of \$6471 - including minimum wages, penalty rates and leave entitlements - between July, 2012, and October, 2013.

The apprentice was aged 18 and 19 at the time.

Fair Work inspectors discovered the underpayment when they investigated a complaint from the young employee.

In April last year, the Fair Work Ombudsman issued a Compliance Notice to Younes and his company requiring the underpayment to be rectified within 21 days.

However, there was no response to the Notice or a follow-up letter in June.

Under the Fair Work Act, business operators must comply with Compliance Notices issued by Fair Work inspectors or make a court application for a review if they are seeking to challenge a Notice.

The Fair Work Ombudsman was left with no option but to launch legal action, resulting in the Court imposing fines against Younes and his company.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has previously received several complaints from young workers employed by Younes - and had contacted him on at least 35 occasions.

Judge Sylvia Emmett said the company had demonstrated a reckless disregard for its workplace obligations to its staff.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says her Agency seeks to work with employers to resolve issues co-operatively, but will consider enforcement action when employers refuse to engage with inspectors.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can visit www.fairwork.gov.au 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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Contact us

Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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Call through the National Relay Service (NRS):

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

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