

\$20,000 back-pay for Hobart cafe employees

22 September 2015

Four workers at a café in Hobart have been back-paid almost \$20,000 following recent intervention by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Three female and one male employee were being paid a flat rate of \$14 an hour.

Under the Fast Food Industry Award 2010 they should have received an hourly rate of \$23.15 and up to \$27.79 on Saturdays.

The employees were short-changed a total of \$19,256 between February, 2014 and March this year.

Individual underpayments ranged from \$770 to \$9674.

The café, the Royel Bakehouse in the Centrepoint Shopping Centre, back-paid the workers all their outstanding entitlements after an investigation by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Royal Bakehouse owner Boon Seah told Fair Work inspectors he was unaware of minimum wage rates applicable to his workplace.

In an effort to encourage behavioural change, Mr Seah has been asked to sign an Enforceable Undertaking (EU) committing to future compliance.

The EU requires Mr Seah to issue pay-slips (which he previously was not doing) and to engage an external accounting professional to audit the company's compliance within 12 months.

Mr Seah has expressed his "sincere regret" and apologised for his contraventions.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the case study is a timely reminder to businesses in Tasmania of the need to ensure they take the time to understand and comply with the laws applicable to their workplace.

"This matter demonstrates how lack of awareness of minimum wages and conditions can lead to a hefty bill which can potentially have a negative financial impact on the business," she said.

"We are committed to helping employers understand and comply with workplace laws, but operators also need to make an effort to get the basics right in the first place."

Ms James encouraged employers who had any uncertainty about whether their workplace practices were appropriate to visit www.fairwork.gov.au or call the Small Business Helpline for advice on 13 13 94. Overseas workers can call 13 14 50 if they need interpreter services.

Online tools include pay rate calculators to help employers determine the correct Award and minimum wages for employees and free templates for pay slips and time-and-wages records.

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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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

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

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