

Back-pay for Canberra workers

1 April 2016

Dozens of workers in Canberra have been underpaid more than \$22,000, recent investigations by the Fair Work Ombudsman have revealed.

In two cases, the underpayments came about after two local eateries changed hands and the new owners continued to pay staff the same wages.

The previous owners had been underpaying their employees and the new employers failed to check on the applicable minimum entitlements.

As a result, the new owners were liable for a combined back-payment bill of more than \$13,000 for 32 of their staff.

The largest underpayment occurred at a fast food outlet in Belconnen where 10 employees were short-changed \$8700. Most of the employees were paid flat rates between \$14.50 and \$17.98 an hour but should have been paid up to \$22.12 under the Fast Food Industry Award.

At a Yarralumla restaurant, 22 employees were underpaid a total of \$5200 as a result of being underpaid minimum hourly rates and weekend penalty rates.

In a separate matter, four casual workers at an Ngunnawal fast food outlet were also recently found to have been underpaid \$8350. The workers were paid a flat rate of \$16 an hour but should have received a minimum of \$22.12 under the Fast Food Industry Award.

On Wednesday, the Fair Work Ombudsman revealed that \$22,698 had recently been recovered for 27 workers at fast-food outlets in the ACT who were found to have been underpaid.

The underpayments were identified as part of a national campaign targeting more than 565 take-away food shops. A total of \$582,410 was recouped for 929 employees across Australia who had been short-changed.

Acting Fair Work Ombudsman Michael Campbell says businesses need to ensure they understand the wage rates applicable to their employees, including penalty rates, and the Agency can assist small business operators.

“When we find errors, our preference is to educate employers about their obligations and assist them to put processes in place to ensure the mistakes are not repeated,” Mr Campbell said.

Tools and resources available at www.fairwork.gov.au include a Pay and Conditions Tool (PACT) that provides advice about entitlements. Employers and employees seeking assistance can also call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

Media inquiries:

Annie Lawson, Media Adviser

Mobile: 0466 522 004

annie.lawson@fwo.gov.au (<mailto:annie.lawson@fwo.gov.au>)

Lara O'Toole, Media Adviser

Mobile: 0439 835 855

lara.otoole@fwo.gov.au (<mailto:lara.otoole@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

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing advice that you can rely on. The information contained on this website is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or workplace relations professional. Visitors are warned that this site may inadvertently contain names or pictures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have recently died.