

Help is at hand for the Top End

12 April 2016

No matter where you are, we can help.

That's the message Fair Work Ombudsman Executive Director Lynda McAlary-Smith has brought to Darwin and the Northern Territory today.

Ms McAlary-Smith, who leads the Agency's proactive compliance and education activities, has flown into the Top End to spread the word that the Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to assisting communities in remote and isolated areas understand their workplace rights and obligations.

She says educational and compliance activities are being planned for Katherine, Daly, Tiwi and Arnhem Land regions.

Ms McAlary-Smith says Fair Work inspectors are beginning a series of field visits to educate employers about their workplace obligations and how the Agency can assist them to understand and comply with their responsibilities.

"Across remote and regional Australia, employers, many of them small business owners, contribute to their communities by creating opportunities for workers," she says.

"While the majority of those employers strive to do the right thing, we realise they don't always have the time or resources to make sure they meet all their obligations.

"We want all employers across regional and remote Australia to know that, no matter where they are, we are here to help.

"It is important for our Agency to have a profile in rural and regional areas - this is spectacular country and home to a strong, caring community with a great work ethic.

"We believe the majority of employers in the regions want to do the right thing by their workers and community, and we want them to know that we can help them do that."

Ms McAlary-Smith says that Katherine, Victoria River and Elsey are towns with a median income of \$44,481 and a population where more than 35 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home.

She says requests for assistance received by the Fair Work Ombudsman from workers in the region increased by 14 per cent between 2011 and 2014.

The Daly-Tiwi-West Arnhem region, home to Jabiru, Pine Creek, Daly Waters and Batchelor, has also been identified as a focus for educational and compliance activities by Fair Work inspectors.

Last financial year, the Fair Work Ombudsman received more than 25,000 requests for assistance and recovered more than \$22.3 million for almost 12,000 workers across Australia.

Ms McAlary-Smith says the Agency offers a range of free tools and resources for employers at www.fairwork.gov.au including template documentation to use when hiring, managing and dismissing staff, letters of engagement and probation, timesheet and pay-slip templates, leave application forms and a self-audit check list.

The mobile-friendly Pay and Conditions Tool (PACT), which was last year accessed more than 2.2 million times, can assist business owners to calculate the correct pay for their employees and a series of Best Practice Guides is available on a range of topics, including 'small business and the Fair Work Act'.

Employers can also call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 between 8am and 5.30pm weekdays to obtain free advice and assistance from a team of expert advisers. A free interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50. Small business callers to the Infoline can opt to receive priority service through the Small Business Helpline.

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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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