

Fair Work Inspectors audit Ballarat businesses

16 December 2016

Fair Work Inspectors have undertaken 50 field audits in Ballarat this week and plan to audit a further 150 businesses in the regional Victorian town in coming months as part of a new campaign.

Fair Work Inspectors this week focussed on businesses in the Ballarat central business district in a range of industries, including retail, take-away food, restaurants, and accommodation, pubs and bars for a round of workplace compliance audits.

During the audits, conducted on Tuesday and Wednesday, Fair Work Inspectors assessed records and talked to employers and employees to check workers are receiving their lawful entitlements and to ensure businesses are complying with record-keeping and pay slip laws.

A public report on the campaign results will be published when it is concluded.

Ballarat, located west of Melbourne, is a tourist destination and tertiary education hub with a high student population, many employed in the town's retail and hospitality sectors.

More than 12,000 businesses are based in Ballarat, with almost 5000 of them considered small business operations.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the campaign is part of her Agency's national program of proactive audits.

"The majority of businesses want to do the right thing by their workers and it is unfair for them to compete with those who try to obtain a competitive edge by reducing their labour costs through undercutting minimum lawful entitlements," Ms James said.

In May, the Fair Work Ombudsman launched an Anonymous Report function to enable the community to alert the agency to potential workplace issues. Intelligence can be provided at www.fairwork.gov.au/tipoff (<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/tipoff>)

"If someone suspects something isn't right, but is unable or unwilling to get directly involved in resolving the issue, they can tell us about it using this function," Ms James said.

"The Anonymous Report function creates a clear mechanism through which people can provide us with information, with the comfort that they need not disclose their identity and that the information will be put to good use.

"We are striving to build a culture of compliance where businesses understand and comply with their lawful obligations."

The Fair Work Ombudsman offers a range of free tools and resources for employers at www.fairwork.gov.au including the Pay and Conditions Tool (PACT) to assist business owners to calculate pay rates applicable to their business and templates for pay slips and time-and-wages sheets.

Employers can also call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 between 8 am and 5.30 pm weekdays to obtain free advice and assistance from a team of expert advisers.

Follow Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James on Twitter [@NatJamesFWO](https://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO) (<http://twitter.com/NatJamesFWO>) , the Fair Work Ombudsman [@fairwork_gov_au](https://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) (http://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au) or find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au (<http://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au>) .

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Fair Work Online: www.fairwork.gov.au

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