

Geelong hairdresser paid less than \$7 an hour

4 February 2016

A Geelong hair salon paid an adult apprentice hairdresser less than \$7 an hour, inquiries by the Fair Work Ombudsman have revealed.

The 29-year-old female employee was short-changed a total of \$17,400 between August, 2014 and September, 2015.

For most of her employment, the employee was paid an hourly rate of just \$6.67 on weekdays and \$8.83 on Saturdays.

However, as a first-year adult apprentice she was entitled to \$11.75 on weekdays and \$20.89 on Saturdays.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the employee told inspectors the low wage caused her to struggle financially.

"Before contacting our office for assistance, she asked her employer to increase her pay rates, but was rebuffed," Ms James says.

When contacted by Fair Work inspectors, the business said it could not afford to pay the entitlements under the Hair and Beauty Industry Award.

However, the salon was informed the minimum Award rate was not optional, and is now repaying all outstanding entitlements on a plan agreed to by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Ms James says that because the businesses co-operated, agreed to repay all money owed and ensure ongoing compliance with its obligations, it has avoided further enforcement action.

She reminded Geelong employers of the importance of ensuring that they understand the wage rates applicable to their workplace.

The employee has since resigned to continue her apprenticeship elsewhere.

Anyone with uncertainty about their workplace practices can call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au.

The Fair Work Ombudsman's new online [Hairdressing Assist tool](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/hairdressing-assist) (<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/ending-employment/notice-and-final-pay/hairdressing-assist>) at www.fairwork.gov.au/hairdressingassist provides resources and links to information about pay, unfair dismissal, superannuation, bullying and long service leave to assist employers and employees with workplace issues.

Small businesses calling the Infoline can opt to receive priority service. About 290,000 small businesses have already received help since it was launched.

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Contact us

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

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