

## Mid-North workers back-paid almost \$20,000

12 February 2016

Eleven workers on the NSW Mid-North Coast are sharing almost \$20,000 back-pay after Fair Work Ombudsman auditing found they had been underpaid.

The largest recovery was \$7900 for three employees at a Taree eatery who had not been paid weekend penalties for seven months.

The employees - two waiting staff and a cook - had been paid up to \$9 an hour less than they were entitled to for weekend work.

In another case, \$6100 was recovered for three casual salespeople at a Taree business who had been underpaid their minimum hourly rates and weekend penalty rates.

The employer had negotiated a wage with the employee that was less than their lawful minimum rates.

Five salespeople at a Harrington business received a total of \$5500 after it was revealed that their employer had not passed on the annual pay rise.

Fair Work inspectors discovered the underpayments at each of the three businesses during random audits.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says regional employers must ensure they are aware of the minimum rates that apply to their staff, including penalty rates, and that they are not optional.

Ms James urged employers to use the Fair Work Ombudsman's online pay tools at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) to check pay rates applicable to their workplace.

"Most underpayments are inadvertent and the result of employers not being fully aware of the minimum pay rates that apply," she said.

"Our online tools and resources can assist employers to determine their applicable Modern Award, as well as classification and pay rates, including base pay rates, allowances, overtime and penalty rates."

Ms James says it was pleasing that the employers agreed to promptly rectify the underpayments after being contacted by Fair Work inspectors.

"When we find mistakes, we're here to help and give practical advice to employers on how to voluntarily fix them," she said.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can also contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. Small businesses can opt to be put through the Small Business Helpline for advice. An interpreter service is available on 13 14 50.

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](http://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au)) or find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au](http://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au) (<http://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au>).

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## Contact us

Fair Work Online: [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)

Fair Work Infoline: 13 13 94

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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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