

Another 7-Eleven store faces Court for allegedly short-changing workers over \$82,000

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Another 7-Eleven store in Brisbane has allegedly been short-changing its workers tens of thousands of dollars.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has announced legal action against the operators of a 7-Eleven outlet on Boundary Road, West End.

Facing Court is franchisee Sheng-Chieh Lo and his company Mai Pty Ltd.

The Fair Work Ombudsman claims 12 staff, including international students, were underpaid a total of \$82,661 in the year to September, 2014.

The Boundary Road store was one of 20 7-Eleven stores targeted for surprise night-time visits as part of a tri-State operation in September, 2014.

The litigation takes to seven the number of 7-Eleven operators to face Court since 2009.

Earlier this month, the Fair Work Ombudsman announced legal proceedings against the operators of two other 7-Eleven outlets in the Brisbane CBD.

Read the media release:

- [More 7-Eleven store operators face Court for allegedly short-changing employees \(www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/archived-media-releases/2016-media-releases/january-2016/20160114-vipper-viplus-litigation\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/archived-media-releases/2016-media-releases/january-2016/20160114-vipper-viplus-litigation)

It is alleged that Mr Lo paid flat hourly rates as low as \$13 an hour and tried to conceal the underpayments by creating false employment records.

Mr Lo allegedly made false entries into the 7-Eleven head office payroll system.

He and his company allegedly also knowingly provided false time-and-wage records to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

When Fair Work inspectors confronted Mr Lo with evidence of the underpayments, he provided bank records to indicate he had back-paid the employees, according to documents filed with the Federal Circuit Court.

It is alleged that these documents were false or misleading because they did not show that many of the employees had allegedly repaid those amounts to Mr Lo.

In one instance, Mr Lo allegedly received money from an employee in advance, which he then transferred into their account.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the alleged breaches are extremely serious, as is the involvement of vulnerable overseas workers.

Ms James says 7-Eleven is the subject of a national Inquiry by the Fair Work Ombudsman into allegations of systemic underpayments and false record-keeping practices.

Ms James says a final report is expected in the first quarter of this year.

Mr Lo faces maximum penalties of up to \$10,200 per contravention and Mai Pty Ltd faces penalties of up to \$51,000 per contravention.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is also seeking Court Orders for Mai Pty Ltd to fully back-pay the workers any outstanding amounts.

It is alleged the employees were underpaid total amounts ranging from \$1673 to \$21,966.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is also seeking injunctions restraining Mr Lo and his company from underpaying workers in future and from seeking or accepting any back-payment of wages from current or former employees.

Orders are also being sought for Mai Pty Ltd to display an in-store notice informing employees of entitlements and to undertake an audit of its compliance with workplace laws and report the results to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

A directions hearing is listed in the Federal Circuit Court in Brisbane on February 29.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can visit www.fairwork.gov.au or contact the Fair Work Infoline on 1313 94.

An interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50 and information and helpful materials on the website is translated into 27 different languages.

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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