

## Surfers Paradise retail worker paid \$12 an hour

3 June 2016

A young Surfers Paradise worker has been back-paid almost \$18,000 after being paid just \$12 an hour for nearly a year.

The 22-year-old female employee should have been getting a minimum hourly rate of \$23.74, rising to \$25.64 on Saturdays and up to \$37.98 on Sundays.

However, she told the Fair Work Ombudsman that when she asked to be paid her lawful entitlements, the business offered her an extra \$1 an hour.

The employer allegedly told the worker that this was “on a par” with wages being offered by other similar businesses in the area.

After receiving a phone call from the Fair Work Ombudsman to point out its workplace obligations, the employer is now paying correct wage rates applicable under the General Retail Industry Award.

It has also reimbursed her all outstanding entitlements dating back to February, 2015, when the employee was recruited.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James says the employer has been appropriately educated about its obligations and given information about the free tools and resources on offer at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)

“Employers in Surfers Paradise need to be aware that there are minimum wage rates, they apply to all workers, and they are not negotiable,” Ms James said.

She says that because the retail employer has co-operated, agreed to repay all money owed and ensure ongoing compliance with its obligations, it has avoided enforcement action.

“Our focus is on educating employers about their obligations and assisting them to put processes in place to ensure that any errors we find don't occur again,” Ms James 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 said the Fair Work Ombudsman was striving to build a culture of compliance with workplace laws in Australia by providing practical advice that is easy to access, understand and apply.

Employers and employees seeking assistance can visit at [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) or phone the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94. A free interpreter service is available by calling 13 14 50. Small businesses calling the Infoline can opt to receive priority service to assist with their inquiries.

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>).

Sign up to receive the Fair Work Ombudsman's media releases direct to your email inbox at [www.fairwork.gov.au/mediareleases](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/mediareleases) ([www.fairwork.gov.au/mediareleases](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/mediareleases)).

Media inquiries:

Lara O'Toole, Media Adviser

Mobile: 0439 835 855

[lara.otoole@fwo.gov.au](mailto:lara.otoole@fwo.gov.au) (<mailto:lara.otoole@fwo.gov.au>)

## Contact us

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

---

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing advice that you can rely on. The information contained on this website is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or workplace relations professional. Visitors are warned that this site may inadvertently contain names or pictures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have recently died.