

## Help us keep workplaces fair

27 May 2016

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James today appealed to the general community for help in combatting the exploitation of workers by rogue employers.

“Compliance with workplace laws isn’t just my business, it’s everyone’s business – when workers get ripped off, everyone is affected,” she said.

“I’ve had enough of hearing about workers getting paid \$10 an hour, so I am putting the call out to the whole community – workers, consumers, concerned citizens, businesses, everyone – to help us build a culture of compliance.

“If you suspect a business is exploiting its workers, or if something doesn’t seem right, we want you to tell us – we want to know.”

Ms James launched an “Anonymous Report” function to allow the community to alert the Fair Work Ombudsman to potential workplace issues.

Intelligence can be provided at [www.fairwork.gov.au/tipoff](http://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 new form,” Ms James said.

While the Fair Work Ombudsman expects to hear from employees, it also wants to hear from employers who are concerned that other businesses might be getting a competitive advantage by engaging in unlawful practices.

“Businesses that want to do the right thing by their workers, and they are the majority in my experience, can’t compete with those who are willing to give themselves a competitive edge by undercutting labour costs,” she said.

Ms James says the Fair Work Ombudsman already receives many requests to provide information anonymously, and the new service is a response to community demand.

“This creates a clear mechanism through which people can provide this information, with the comfort that they need not disclose their identity and that it will be put to good use,” she said.

“Of course we won’t be storming into a business on the basis of one anonymous tip off - we are looking for trends and patterns here.”

Ms James says anonymous tip-offs provided to the Fair Work Ombudsman in the past as part of its campaign and Inquiry work, including its 417 Working Holiday Visa Inquiry and national Harvest Trail program, have already provided valuable intelligence.

Since going live, the Anonymous Report site has received more than 500 tip-offs, three-quarters of them raising issues about wage rates.

“The information will be collated and analysed by our Intelligence Team, which will report on trends and generate leads for our compliance areas to follow up,” Ms James says.

“Our data and intelligence capability has evolved significantly in recent years and is now at the centre of our operating model, focusing our priorities and enabling us to direct our resources to where we will be able to have the greatest impact on the community.”

Ms James says the Anonymous Report is in its early days and will be refined over time to ensure that it meets the needs of the community and the Agency.

The Fair Work Ombudsman’s existing dispute resolution processes will continue to help employees and employers resolve workplace issues directly.

Last financial year, the Fair Work Ombudsman resolved more than 25,000 workplace disputes and finalised 94 per cent of requests for assistance through its assessment and dispute resolution processes.

In 2014-15, the Agency recovered more than \$22.3 million for over 11,600 workers.

The sectors generating the most requests for assistance last year were accommodation and food services (15 per cent), construction

(12 per cent), administration and support services (9 per cent), retail (9 per cent) and manufacturing (8 per cent).

Pro-active compliance and education campaigns and Inquiries undertaken by the Agency in recent years have provided valuable information and insight into areas of the national workforce where there are higher levels of non-compliance by employers.

The Anonymous Report tool adds to an already strong suite of online functions on the Fair Work Ombudsman website – [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) - which can assist both employees and employers build and maintain fair workplaces.

These include a dedicated Small Business, a Pay and Conditions Tool and an Online Learning Centre.

People seeking information and advice can also call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

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](https://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:

Bryan Littlely, Assistant Director, Media

Mobile: 0447 692 007

[bryan.littlely@fwo.gov.au](mailto:bryan.littlely@fwo.gov.au) (<mailto:bryan.littlely@fwo.gov.au>)

**Page reference No: 6115**

## 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.