

Retail Sector Targeted for National Campaign

The Fair Work Ombudsman will write to almost 50,000 retailers across the country as part of a national campaign to encourage greater compliance with workplace laws.

The retail sector generates more complaints than any other industry – 4200 last year, or almost 20 per cent – and the Agency has prosecuted 39 retail employers in four years.

The focus of the retail campaign will be to check that employers are paying workers correct minimum rates of pay, penalty rates, loadings and allowances.

Fair Work Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson said in a recent media release:

“Some businesses think it is okay to require staff to arrive early to prepare a store for opening and stay late to clean up afterwards without paying them for that time – but it’s not, it’s unlawful,” he said.

“We are mindful that this is an industry which employs large numbers of young people and low-paid workers who may be vulnerable if they are not fully aware of their workplace rights.

Fair Work inspectors will randomly select 1500 retail outlets throughout Australia who will be asked to supply employment records for audit.

They will include furniture, floor covering, houseware, manchester and textile, electrical and gas, computer, hardware and building supplies, garden supplies, sport and camping equipment, entertainment, toy, book, marine, clothing, footwear, watch and jewellery, department and antique stores, as well as newsagents, pharmacies and florists.

Mr Wilson said his Agency had recouped more than \$100 million for underpaid workers since 2006 and 98 per cent of it had been recovered without the need for litigation.