

Question on Notice

No. 1654

Asked on Tuesday, 11 November 2008

MR MOORHEAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR MICKEL)—

QUESTION:

How many workplace wage audits were carried out in 2007-08 and how much unpaid wages were recovered for Queensland workers?

ANSWER:

I am advised that were 4,717 audits carried out of employers regarding wages and industrial obligations in 2007-08. A total of 7,373 audits were carried out in 2007-08 covering wages and industrial obligations, child employment laws and private employment agents.

More than \$4.8 million arrears of wages were adjusted for Queensland workers in 2007-08. This amount was in respect of audit activities, wage complaint resolution and legal actions.

The industrial inspectorate plays an important role in ensuring Queensland workers get their correct industrial entitlements.

In addition to the audit activity, 2,922 wage complaints were investigated and finalised by the inspectorate, resulting in almost \$3.2 million in adjusted wages for workers.

The audits targeted a broad cross section of workplaces and not just those where complaints were lodged.

Industries audited included hospitality/restaurant, retail, take-away/fast food, fruit and vegetable growing, transport, clothing, cleaning, baking and earthmoving.

Workplace audits are conducted to make sure employers comply with industrial and child employment laws and employees receive proper entitlements.

The audits looked at time and wage records, payslip regulations and compliance with employee entitlements.

The overall compliance rate with industrial laws was 82 per cent.

The predominant reasons employers stated as not complying with industrial laws were ignorance (25%) and confusion (27%).

Importantly, workplace audits help to educate employers and employees about the current industrial laws with 77 per cent of employers saying the audits increased their awareness of industrial laws.

The audits also help to ensure that workplaces comply with the *Child Employment Act 2006*.

2,624 employers covering 4,287 employees were audited with an overall compliance rate of 73 per cent for all child worker requirements.

Compliance activities including workplace audits will continue to ensure Queensland workers receive their proper entitlements and to educate workplaces about industrial legislation.

Both employers and employees should know their employment rights and responsibilities.

Workplace visits help employers understand the legislation and make sure that everyone is on a level playing field.