



Volume 1- August 2007

Welcome to our very first edition!

I am very pleased to bring you the first edition of the bi monthly Newsletter from the Essentials team. While I know that we are faced with keeping up with the latest in technology namely email newsletters, I still prefer the old style hands on newsletter that you can read over a cup of coffee and keep handy for future reference.

With so much going on in the ever changing and somewhat "Political" Industrial Relations Environment, our newsletter is aimed at keeping you updated and informed and well as providing ongoing, helpful and practical human resources solutions to implement in your business.

Industrial Relations Update

As you may be aware, there have been a number of changes in the federal workplace relations system such changes to department names, higher powers given to the Workplace Ombudsman and the new fairness test that came into effect from the 7th of May 2007.

The fairness test applies to workplace agreements lodged after the 7th of May 2007 that remove or change certain protection conditions. Believe me when I say that you will be asked after lodgment to provide additional information (separate to your statutory declaration paperwork) and they will ask you to upload copies of timesheets to substantiate your information.

The Office of the Employment Advocate is now known as the Workplace Authority. Please be aware that the information statements and statutory declaration paperwork for both Australian Workplace Agreements and Collective Agreements has been updated and previous versions will not be accepted. These are accessible on the website of the Workplace Authority or give Rose or myself a call if you are unsure of what paperwork will apply to you when lodging agreements.

In an effort to help employees understand their entitlements and protections, the Workplace Authority has produced the Workplace Relations Fact Sheet. It is a legal requirement for employers in the federal system to supply this fact sheet to their employees. This legal obligation took effect from the 20th of July 2007. You must have provided this fact sheet to your staff by the 20th of October 2007. In addition to your existing staff, when you have new employees commence with you, you must provide this fact sheet to them within 7 days. For your convenience, I have included a copy of this fact sheet however; you can download this from www.workplaceauthority.gov.au.

The office of the Workplace Ombudsman is a new independent Commonwealth Agency responsible for compliance with federal workplace law. The Ombudsman has appointed Workplace Inspectors empowered to investigate and enforce compliance with workplace laws such as pay slip and time and wages record-keeping requirements, freedom of association, right of entry by unions, post-termination entitlements, coercion in agreement -making, transmission of business and sham contracting arrangements.

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I recently attended a workshop delivered by the Office of the Workplace Ombudsman who advised us that they have already conducted industry audits of the cleaning industry resulting in prosecutions as well as industries such as café's and restaurants. They will be expanding their audits to cover all industries and have increased manpower. We have included for your review, detailed information sheets on record keeping and pay slip requirements. Please check and make sure you are fully compliant as they are very serious about enforcing the changes and issuing fines for breach's and non compliance.

Introducing



In response to client demand I am proud to introduce you to WageSmart the Payroll and Compliance Specialists. Whilst WageSmart is a stand alone entity, it works in synergy with Essentials offering clients complimentary services in the area of payroll administration. In conjunction with my colleague Tracie Bucknall we have developed a payroll administration organisation that offers clients fast, cost effective, efficient and compliant payroll processing services. Contact our office today if you would like more information on how WageSmart can give you back precious time in your business!

Mobile (04) 1894 7296

Phone: (07) 5438 0797

Fax: (07) 5491 9217

www.essentials4business.com.au