

Lodging a complaint against an Employer has never been easier.

The new federal industrial relations landscape has made it easier than ever before for employees to lodge formal complaints against their employer with the national industrial watchdog – Fair Work Australia. Employees who feel they have been badly treated by their boss can now lodge their complaints with the new national tribunal - Fair Work Australia – without even leaving their desk.

The new tribunal's website provides employees with all the information they need to complete on-line complaint forms which can be lodged by email.

More worryingly, employees can also access a 'live-help' function on the website which allows them to speak with an officer from Fair Work Australia via live web chat, similar to MSN Messenger. According to Carolyn Tate, Senior Industrial Consultant at SME Assistance Group, this is a worrying development, 'Employees don't even need to pick up the phone and talk with anyone anymore in order to make a complaint. You might think your employee is working away quietly at their desk when actually they're filing a complaint against you during business hours with the assistance of an officer from Fair Work Australia'.

Employees who have been dismissed can also submit their unfair dismissal claims online with Fair Work Australia. Ms Tate warns employers that applications for unfair dismissal can cost employers a lot more than cash alone, 'While employees might receive up to 6 months pay in compensation, employers will also spend a huge amount of time and energy defending themselves against the claim. That's time few employers can afford these days.'

Employers should ensure they are fully up to speed with the new federal industrial laws which are now in effect and binding on almost every business in Australia.