

Article:	Immigration Warns Of Crackdown
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Employers have been issued a stern warning by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship - severe penalties will be imposed for employing illegal workers.

The warning comes after a two-day blitz in Bundaberg, central Queensland, where seven illegal retail and horticultural workers were detained.

A spokesman for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship said liable individuals could face fines of up to \$13,200 and two years' imprisonment for employing an illegal worker, and businesses as much as \$66,000 per illegal employee.

"The department's compliance operations serve as a warning to the community that they can face severe consequences for remaining in Australia without a valid visa, or for employing illegal workers," the spokesperson added.

The spokesman said illegal worker warning notices would be issued to employers or labour supply companies who had employed or referred illegal workers.

"The notices advise employers that they have employed an illegal worker and warn of the possibility of prosecution," he said.

Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers chairman Geoff Chivers said it was an "onerous" task for employers in the horticulture industry to chase up employee paperwork, but employers should be aware of the penalties they face.

The Department of Immigration has provided a range of work scenarios for Australian employers on their website, including:

- 'Allows to work' scenarios
- 'Refers for work' scenarios
- 48 hour grace period scenarios
- Checking work entitlements scenarios
- How the department can assist employers

Additionally, Growcom has a fact sheet for HR professionals, outlining the responsibilities of checking work entitlements.
