# Underpayments 'could have been avoided

DAVID SWAN
TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

A Melbourne-based workforce software provider, which works with the likes of JB Hi-Fi and The Good Guys, says the payment scandals that plagued Coles, Woolworths and Bunnings last year could have been avoided if they'd had Australian-made software in place.

Speaking to The Australian, Nimbus chief executive Grant Custance said that the high-profile retailers had not adequately complied with the awards, an issue that could be fixed with tech.

Executives for both Wesfarmers and Super Retail Group earlier this year blamed software bought from offshore vendors as a key reason for their staff being underpaid, to the tune of millions of dollars.

"Australia has some of the most complex compliance rules in the world," Mr Custance said. "The application of old world, excel spread sheet tools aren't good enough. They don't scale, they can't be easily updated and they can leave organisations exposed."

According to Mr Custance, the mass shift towards remote work during COVID-19 has meant most Australian companies are now forced to remain compliant despite staff no longer being physically monitored, guided, or trained.

"How do organisations ensure they are paying staff properly and not abusing awards?," he said. "Organisations need to consider moving now, from old world,

inflexible and clumsy work-from-home systems to rigorous, customisable, cloud-based, scalable Australian systems which are built around a compliance heart.

"CFOs, CEOs and human resources leaders need to deploy work-from-home systems which optimise staff productivity, enable complete transparency of their remote workforces and, in turn, create trust and empowerment within their organisation."

The executive added that working from home often relies on an element of trust, for employees to do the right thing.

"The technology takes the guesswork out of it," he said. "We ensure the employee logs out, and then can't log on to their next shift unless they're being allocated to that shift. It's ensuring the employee abides by the rules and the employer meets their compliance needs."

Nimbus holds a patent and has been in business for about 20 years. Mr Custance said that working from home will likely stay with us in some form, and workers will be used in a more efficient, flexible way.

"Using Australian software can also allow staff to work and live in regional and remote parts of Australia and find work more often, a prospect which has profoundly positive economic and environmental implications," he said.

"We think we're in the right place at the right time with a lot of this stuff."