



MAJOR FRESH PRODUCE EMPLOYERS COMMIT TO SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

6 AUGUST 2019

With the release today of data which shows Australian Fresh Produce Alliance members employ in excess of 22,000 people across more than 100 different production locations, the Alliance has committed to working with retailers, suppliers, government and their grower networks to ensure that industry complies with relevant laws and standards of sustainable and ethical employment.

“As a major employer in regional and rural Australia of both local and temporary migrant workers, it is vitally important that we create a culture of active management by improving the sector’s employment practices and reputation, including proactively meeting all employment and duty of care obligations”, said Alliance CEO, Mr. Michael Rogers.

The Alliance also has a significant grower supplier network responsible for the employment of more than 25,000 additional people. According to ABS data, Australian horticulture employs 72,800 people across 11,490 businesses.

“Due to the time sensitive and seasonal nature of harvesting fresh produce, it is vitally important that growers have access to a workforce that is mobile and readily available to harvest crops to optimise returns based on the seasonal nature of fresh produce production”, said Mr Rogers.

Alliance member data shows most full-time roles are filled by Australian citizens, while many harvest and temporary roles are more likely to be filled through specific programs and visas, including the Pacific Seasonal Worker Scheme and Working Holiday Makers visa.

“We are focused on improving the sector’s employment practices and reputation. This is particularly important under the new Modern Slavery Act 2018, which addresses responsibility throughout the supply chain,” said Mr Rogers.

The Alliance is also seeking greater integration between ethical auditing programs to reduce duplication and cost associated with multiple audits, record keeping requirements and compliance criteria.

“While farmers are working to meet all requirements, it is also essential that consistent regulation and certification of labour hire companies is implemented. This will make sure all industry players are meeting the required standards. It should be accompanied by an increase in the number of approved third-party auditors to ensure compliance” said Mr Rogers.

The release today of the workforce data and position on ethical sourcing demonstrates the commitment of the Alliance to work with industry and government to provide a sustainable workforce for the fresh produce industry.

ENDS

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Australian Fresh Produce Alliance – Workforce Data

WORKFORCE (NUMBER OF PERSONS) ¹				
Australian Citizen or Permanent Residents	Seasonal Worker Program	Working Holiday Makers	Other ²	Persons Total
5,717	2,924	12,379	1,030	22,049
26%	13%	56%	5%	

WORKFORCE (FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS) ³				
Australian Citizen or Permanent Residents	Seasonal Worker Program	Working Holiday Makers	Other	Persons Total
5,717	2,249	3,177	412	11,555
49%	19%	27%	4%	

Australian Fresh Produce Alliance – Employment Locations

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance is made up of Australia’s key fresh produce growers and suppliers. Alliance members have more than 100 production locations nationally and are significant regional employers.



¹ Data provided by members of the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance at April 2019

² Other category refers to employees who hold other visa types including New Zealand citizens and students

³ Data converted to FTEs based on following employment lengths converted to 12 months employment; Citizens: 12 months, SWP: 9 months; WHM: 3 months; Other: 2.5



Position Statement: Integrated Systems and Harmonised Auditing for Ethical Sourcing

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance is supporting a workforce that is sourced and employed legally and ethically to enable the long-term sustainable growth of the fresh produce industry. The Alliance collectively employs more than 22,000 people in more than 100 locations across Australia, while the Alliance's 1,500 supplier growers also employ an additional 25,000 people.

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance is committed to:

- Creating a culture of pro-active management by improving the sector's employment practices and reputation, through proactively meeting all employment and duty of care requirements and obligations,
- Working with retailers, suppliers and growers to ensure that industry can adopt and maintain management systems required to comply with relevant laws and standards of sustainable and ethical employment, and
- Collaborating to mitigate the risks of modern slavery and poor labour practices in member businesses and their supply chains, and reporting under the Modern Slavery Act 2018.

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance is seeking:

- Increased integration between commonly used ethical sourcing compliance programs including Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX), GLOBAL GAP Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP) and Fair Farms,
- Consistent regulation and certification of labour hire companies to ensure all industry players are meeting required standards,
- Greater integration between ethical auditing programs to reduce duplication and cost associated with multiple audits, record keeping requirements and compliance criteria, and
- An increase in the number of approved third party auditors to undertake required audits, when and where required to ensure compliance.