

Media Release

27 July 2021

Ensuring high standards key to success of a Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) are calling on the government to implement a trial of the Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa by the end of this year, with a focus on ensuring compliance with employment standards to ensure worker welfare.

An outline for a Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa proposed by the AFPA has recommended robust requirements including compliance with existing ethical sourcing programs, labour market testing and providing prospective visa holders with copies of employment contracts outlining relevant terms and conditions.

“There’s very little detail on the Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa that has been released, but our proposal has focussed on ensuring there are robust employer sponsorship requirements to ensure that only compliant employers are able to access the visa program” said AFPA CEO, Michael Rogers.

Standards proposed by the AFPA are similar to those required for Approved Employers under the Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme currently accessed by a number of employers in horticulture.

“What we’d like to see develop in line with a Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa is a network of best practice, registered employers that comply with high standards. In this type of setting, visa holders would be able to move between a known network of compliant employers. This complements the exiting Pacific Labour Mobility programs without compromising on standards” said Mr Rogers.

The AFPA’s Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa proposal also includes robust criteria for prospective visa holders including proficiency in English language and a completed a certificate in native language that demonstrates an understanding of the Australian agriculture industry, employment standards and complaints procedures.

“The objective of the Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa from industry’s perspective is to reduce reliance on backpackers and engage with a cohort of workers that want to perform agricultural work in Australia. As part of that, it is important that prospective visa holders have access to information and are educated and certified in various topics relevant to their work in Australia.

The Australian fresh produce industry is in the midst of a workforce restructure and adoption of new workforce planning and management. Strong and enforceable employment standards across both the Pacific programs and the Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa will support ongoing growth in the industry and help to further develop a productive and returning workforce” said Mr Rogers.

The AFPA proposed outlined for a Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa is available [here](#)

Media Contact: Michael Rogers - CEO, AFPA: 0409 648 911

About the AFPA - The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) is made up of Australia’s key fresh produce growers and suppliers. The AFPA represents half the industry turnover of the Australian fresh produce sector - \$4.5 billion of the \$9.1 billion total; 1,000 plus growers through commercial arrangements and more than 15,000 direct employees through peak harvest, and up to 25,000 in the grower network.