

Guy Barnett MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Energy
Minister for Resources
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Liberal Member for Lyons



TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water
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Seasonal workers boosting harvest efforts

With seasonal farm work well underway, the Tasmanian Government has been working closely with growers and industry groups to ensure Tasmania attracts and retains harvest workers.

We have prioritised local jobs this year and it's been encouraging that many Tasmanians have taken up the opportunity to fill the gap.

The industry is aiming to double the number of local workers this year from around 3000 last year to more than 6000 this year, which, if achieved, would be a fantastic effort.

We have also opted into the Australian Government's Seasonal Worker Programme to ensure our world-class agriculture industry has the workforce it needs for harvest this year.

At the same time, we will not risk the health and safety of Tasmanians which is why we have been actively working with industry and Public Health to determine a safe pathway for these seasonal workers to enter Tasmania under stringent COVID safety conditions.

I can confirm that a cohort of seasonal workers from Tonga completed their mandatory quarantine period this morning, and have all returned negative tests. They will begin working to support Tasmania's important harvest season as soon as practicable.

I'd like to thank all the workers and those who have facilitated their stay in quarantine for following the rules and keeping Tasmanians safe.

The next flight of seasonal workers will arrive tomorrow night from Vanuatu, and will receive COVID tests in quarantine. They will be subject to all the same safeguards as their counterparts.

We are advised Vanuatu has only had one recorded case of coronavirus, and that was an international arrival who was quarantined upon arrival last year. There have been no reported cases of community transmission in Vanuatu.

Just like the cohort released today, this new cohort of workers will each need to return a negative test result before joining the local workforce in harvest, packing and processing roles.

Additionally, there will be 29 French Antarctic expeditioners arriving in the early hours of Thursday morning who will undertake two weeks' hotel quarantine and return two negative COVID tests before embarking on their journey to Antarctica.

I want to assure Tasmanians that while we continue to support important operations for key sectors in our state, we are doing so with robust systems in place to protect the health and safety of our community.