

Tasmanian Liberal Government

MEDIA RELEASE



Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water
9 November 2020

Continuing to support our primary industries

Tasmania's successful seasonal worker campaign has resulted in a doubling of the local workforce, and to ensure all our State's produce can be harvested the Tasmanian Government is supporting the industry to access workers through the Seasonal Worker Programme and the Pacific Labour Scheme.

Our Tassie Harvest Jobs, Take Your Pick campaign aimed at attracting as many Tasmanians as possible fill these positions has been very successful so far, and I congratulate the hundreds of Tasmanians who have already signed up for seasonal work.

Industry is aiming to double the number of local workers this year from around 3000 last year, to more than 6000, which is a fantastic effort.

However, our consistent aim has been to ensure local crops are not wasted, and that's why we have worked with industry and Public Health to determine a safe pathway for the Seasonal Worker Programme and the Pacific Labour Scheme to ensure industry has confidence in a strong workforce.

Under the agreement, Pacific Island workers, who must be approved by the Federal Government to enter Australia, will undertake two weeks' mandatory hotel quarantine before commencing work on the farm, with appropriate support provided by Tasmania Police and the ADF.

During quarantine the workers will need to have a COVID test on days 1, 5 and 10, and return a negative result prior to leaving the hotel and commencing work.

The Tasmanian Government will cover the cost of quarantining these workers, as further support of this important work, which helps to feed our state and underpins Tasmania's economy.

We will also provide a one off payment of \$250 to each worker through our Pandemic Assistant Grants to assist with personal requirements.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has presented some unique challenges to our agricultural sector ahead of the planting, production and harvesting season, and this will ensure it has the appropriate workforce needed to complete the harvest.

We have been incredibly supportive of our industry through our \$1.9 million Agricultural Workforce Resilience Package that has assisted with getting Tasmanians into as many of these jobs as possible.

It is anticipated that around 700 Pacific Island seasonal workers will quarantine from November and into the New Year.

However, our top priority remains to get as many Tasmanians as possible to fill these positions, and we continue to urge Tasmanians in need of work to jump online to <https://jobsearch.gov.au/harvest/workers> and apply for work in these vitally important industries.

Our combined fruit, vegetables and wine sectors were worth around \$495 million at the farm gate in 2017-18, increasing to over \$1.6 billion once processed and packed.

These important agricultural sectors are key to our goal to increase the value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050 and we will do everything we can to ensure the fruit is picked, the vegetables harvested and the grapes crushed this harvest season.