



4 April 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Supporting agricultural businesses and ensuring food supply

The Tasmanian Government welcomes the Australian Government's announcement to make temporary changes to visa arrangements to help farmers access the workforce they need to secure Australia's food and produce supply during COVID-19.

The priority for the Tasmanian Government is ensuring this state has the food we need and we are working with industry to guarantee supply.

Tasmanians can be proud that we are self-sufficient with low-cost reliable clean energy and produce a ready supply of food, including world class meat, wild and farmed fisheries and a sufficient variety of fruit and vegetables to meet dietary requirements.

These changes will mean Tasmanian farmers can continue to operate, harvesting and producing food rather than letting it rot on the ground or waste on the branch.

Seasonal worker supply gives certainty to Tasmania's \$1.6 billion agriculture sector so they can get food from farms to our shops and ensure critical services continue.

Currently, seasonal workers are helping Tasmanian farmers harvest apples, pears, potatoes, wine grapes, broccoli and berries.

The Australian Government's action means workers within the Pacific Labour Scheme, Seasonal Worker Program and working holiday makers can continue to work in agriculture and food processing during the coronavirus pandemic.

The agriculture sector relies on an ongoing workforce and the Australian Government's changes allows that to continue while ensuring strict health and safety measures are adhered to, including visa holders following self-isolation requirements when they move between regions.

The Tasmanian Government will continue to be the strongest supporter of our primary industries which are even more important at this challenging time when food security is a priority for Tasmania and the nation.

For more information go to: <https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/davidcoleman/Pages/supporting-agriculture-workforce-covid-19.aspx>