

Media Release

28 March 2022

Industry welcomes partnership with Vietnam to deliver Ag Visa

The horticulture industry today welcomes the formal agreement with Vietnam to participate in the Agriculture Visa. The Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and Vietnam is a significant achievement, and the industry congratulates the Coalition Government on their efforts in securing the outcome for industry.

The Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) has consistently called for the introduction of a dedicated agriculture visa which will allow workers from overseas to travel to Australia and work in agriculture. The Australian Agriculture visa will complement existing initiatives to recruit Australians, and the Pacific Mobility programs.

“As some of the largest employers in the horticulture sector, AFPA members have been working towards developing a productive and returning harvest workforce. Workers from Vietnam participating in the Ag Visa program will form an important part of this future workforce” said AFPA CEO, Michael Rogers.

The Ag Visa will form an important part of the horticulture workforce, where the largest number of roles are short term, seasonal roles supporting the harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables.

“Importantly, the Ag Visa will be critical to both allowing the industry to develop a productive and returning workforce and restructuring the sector’s harvest workforce. We are very clear in how the Ag Visa fits within the horticulture industry’s employment options - that is specifically targeting seasonal harvest work peaks. This perfectly complements the ongoing employment of Australians, Pacific workers and other skilled migration pathways available” said Mr Rogers.

The AFPA has been working closely with Government to develop an Ag Visa program that supports industry, has high standards for employers and supports worker welfare.

“The Ag Visa that the AFPA has been working with Government on has high standards, including labour market testing, employer sponsorship and a range of worker welfare mechanisms. We continue to support high standards within the Visa. We consider high standards within the program vital to ensuring that we can develop a highly productive workforce with an incentive to return to work on farms year on year” said Mr Rogers.

Following the signing of an MOU with Vietnam, industry and Government will continue to develop and implement the Australian Agriculture Visa Program.

“We are looking forward to continuing to work with other sectors of agriculture and the Australian and Vietnamese Governments and all other parties on implementing the Ag Visa program. It will be important that recruitment under the program is managed closely to ensure that we are working to get the best outcomes for workers and employers” said Mr Rogers.

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***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.*