

## Media Release

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### Coalition Government delivers visa for farmers

The Federal Liberal National Government have delivered an Australian Agriculture visa that will address the immediate workforce shortage facing Australia's farmers, and support the ongoing structural change in the agriculture workforce.

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 developing a 10-year outlook on their workforce requirements. From this work, we know that developing a productive and returning workforce is key for all horticulture employers and the new visa announced today delivers another important pathway for growers to tap into a returning workforce" said AFPA Chair, Anthony Di Pietro.

The Australian Agriculture visa will be available to all agriculture sectors, including horticulture where the largest number of roles are short term, seasonal roles supporting the harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables.

"It's pleasing to see that the new Australian Agriculture visa seems to have taken into account that the agriculture sector has a variety of different workforce needs and is looking to accommodate all of these. In horticulture, we have a number of short term, highly seasonal roles that often see workers move to follow work. This is different to other sectors, like meat processing, which may have work in the same processing facility throughout a year" said Mr Di Pietro.

Outlined in today's announcement is that a key component of the Australian Agriculture visa is the need for robust employer standards to ensure the welfare of future visa holders.

"Employers will be required to meet high standards to sponsor workers on this visa, and this is critical to the success of the Australian Agriculture visa. The AFPA have consistently advocated that this visa must focus on ensuring compliance with employment standards to ensure worker welfare and will continue to support this as a key part of the visa's design" said Mr Di Pietro.

An initial challenge in operationalising the Seasonal Agriculture Worker visa will be accessing the required additional quarantine capacity to support arrivals of critical harvest and agriculture workers into Australia.

"Queensland and Tasmania have led the way in supporting the agriculture industry with quarantine arrangements and capacity, including on-farm quarantine, to support the arrival of workers from the Pacific. Now that we have an agriculture visa and expansion of the Pacific programs, we need all states and territory governments to work with industry to develop quarantine solutions" said Mr Di Pietro.

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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.*