

Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration

QUESTION ON NOTICE Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000229

Senator Raff Ciccone on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 2

Number of temporary migrants

Question

CHAIR: Thank you for that. What was that date you mentioned?

Ms Jensen: 31 July. That's post the COVID impact.

CHAIR: Do you have any more recent figures?

Ms Jensen: Not with me. I could take that on notice.

CHAIR: It would be great to get figures pre COVID and post COVID as well, if you could provide that to the committee.

Answer

The following table shows temporary visa holders from 29 February 2020 to 31 August 2020 (with February 2020 provided as the pre-COVID data point).

Visa Category	29/02/2020	31/03/2020	30/04/2020	31/05/2020	30/06/2020	31/07/2020	31/08/2020
Special Category	677,583	672,432	671,001	669,364	667,288	664,242	660,293
Student	597,481	567,924	559,755	559,536	555,310	538,853	498,251
Working Holiday Maker	143,042	119,266	98,830	91,648	85,691	79,030	71,884
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	138,918	139,331	136,192	132,122	128,145	124,074	120,796
Temporary Protection	16,857	17,223	17,397	17,541	17,647	17,714	17,750
Temporary Activity Visa (Subclass 408)	13,139	8,851	7,640	7,709	8,773	9,786	10,790
Temporary Resident (Other Employment)*	127,665	128,773	130,600	127,360	125,426	127,614	128,485
Total with Right to Work	1,714,685	1,653,800	1,621,415	1,605,280	1,588,280	1,561,313	1,508,249
Total Temporary Visa Holders**	2,353,879	2,172,832	2,095,191	2,061,844	2,029,890	1,986,204	1,942,286

*Temporary Resident (Other Employment) consists of the remaining visas with the right to work that are not listed - Visa Subclasses 400, 402, 403, 405, 407, 410, 430, 461, 476, 485, 870 and 995.

**Total Temporary Visa Holders is the total temporary visa holders with the right to work plus total temporary visas without the right to work (including Bridging (Subclass 010), Crew and Transit (Subclass 771), Visitor (Subclass 600) and Other Temporary visa categories).

Note: This data has been provided to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment by the Department of Home Affairs.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000230

Senator Raff Ciccone on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 3

Displacement effects

Question

Ms Jensen: As I think I mentioned earlier, both the Productivity Commission and the Treasury have conducted research into the overall economic impact of migration. They may have also looked at displacement effects. But, if you have an opportunity, it is probably best to refer that to the Treasury department.

CHAIR: Now that the number of temporary visa workers in Australia has significantly reduced, have you done any analysis to ascertain the size of the labour force deficit?

Ms Jensen: The department hasn't.

Mr Neville: The Skills Commission hasn't either.

CHAIR: Do you know if anyone else has?

Ms Jensen: It's probably best if you ask the other agencies. We could take it on notice. We'd certainly be happy to consult with other agencies and come back to you on that question.

CHAIR: That would be great. I just want to know which industries have been particularly affected. Do you have concerns about shortages over the next six to nine months in semiskilled labour in the agricultural and horticultural industries in particular.

Answer

The website of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) includes the findings of its surveys on the extent to which labour markets are meeting the needs of the Australian farm sector (www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/labour).

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

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Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000231

Senator Raff Ciccone on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 4

Job placement 2020

Question

CHAIR: How many people have been placed into jobs during 2020, yes.

Ms Jensen: How many have been placed into jobs, okay. The information I have here may not quite answer your question, but with Jobactive, the mainstream employment service, from 1 July 2015 to 31 July 2020 Jobactive providers recorded over 1.6 million job placements, and that includes over 82,500 employees in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries. I think you were wanting slightly more recent data. We could take that on notice. I don't have the most recent.

CHAIR: You can take it on notice. If you're able to provide figures for the rest of the year and the cost per placement as well. How many Australians do you expect the job network agencies will place specifically into agriculture, hospitality and retail? And if there are any other measures that you're able to provide for the committee as well that would be great.

Ms Jensen: Okay.

Answer

Over the period 1 January to 31 August 2020, jobactive has achieved 141,055 job placements. Of these placements, 7,246 were in agriculture, forestry, fishing, 15,317 were in accommodation and food services, and 11,434 were in retail trade.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment does not have any projections on how many Australians will be placed by jobactive providers into agriculture, hospitality and retail jobs.

The table below outlines the cost per placement of job seekers placed by jobactive providers in 2019-20.

Cost per placement (2019-20)
\$1,762

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

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Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000232

Senator Jess Walsh on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 8

Additional free and low-cost training places

Question

Senator WALSH: It was announced that as part of the JobTrainer package that the government would fund over 340,000 additional free and low-cost training places in areas of identified skills need. How many of those training places have been delivered so far?

Ms Jensen: The JobTrainer program is still under negotiation. Unfortunately, we don't have people at the table with that specific responsibility, but we can take on notice any particular questions you have about the status of that.

Senator WALSH: Could you take on notice how many of those announced 340,700 additional places have been delivered so far?

Ms Jensen: Sure.

Answer

The JobTrainer Fund will deliver up to 340,700 additional training places, which are low fee or free, in areas of skills need for job seekers and young people, including school leavers. The final number of places delivered will depend on the mix of short courses and full qualifications selected by the states and territories to deliver.

The JobTrainer Fund is delivered via an intergovernmental agreement with States and Territories. Under the agreement, the first subsidised training places will be made available by the states and territories, commencing in October 2020, unless the jurisdiction is implementing COVID-19 restrictions which prevent delivery.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000233

Senator Jess Walsh on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 8

Training

Question

Senator WALSH: How many people are currently undertaking training as part of that announced package? How much of the \$500 million in funding committed by the federal government to JobTrainer has been delivered so far? If you could take those JobTrainer questions on notice, that would be great.

Ms Jensen: Certainly.

Answer

The JobTrainer Fund is delivered via an intergovernmental agreement. The agreement requires that training places under the JobTrainer Fund will be made available as soon as possible, with the first subsidised training places made available in October 2020, unless the jurisdiction is implementing COVID-19 related restrictions which prevent delivery.

The Australian Government's payments to participating states and territories will occur following signature of the intergovernmental agreement and in accordance with Treasury's Federal Payments Management System for payments. The first payments to participating states and territories, excluding the Northern Territory, were made on 7 October 2020. The 7 October 2020 payments totalled \$145.95 million (refer to [Table 1](#) below for breakdown). Payment to the Northern Territory will be made on 9 November 2020.

Table 1

Jurisdiction	Date of Signature	Value of payment to date (\$m)
South Australia	29 August 2020	13.79
Western Australia	1 September 2020	20.68
Australian Capital Territory	10 September 2020	3.35
New South Wales	15 September 2020	63.71
Tasmania	21 September 2020	4.21
Queensland	22 September 2020	40.21
Total		145.95
Northern Territory	25 September 2020	1.92*

*Not included in total. Payment to be made on 9 November 2020.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

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Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000234

Senator Jess Walsh on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 9

Protections for workers

Question

Senator WALSH: Okay. So those questions are for DFAT. The assurance framework for the program involves protections for workers, including an email mailbox and an information line. Are you able to provide, on notice if you like, numbers of how many workers have accessed the email inbox and the information line—say, in the last 12-month period.

Ms Kidd: Yes, we can take that on notice.

Senator WALSH: And is the after-hours worker welfare phone line operated by the department directly or is it now operated by the PLF?

Ms McCormack: Yes, it's operated by the PLF—the after-hours number.

Senator WALSH: Yes. Is that different from what is referred to as the information line?

Ms McCormack: Yes, it's a phone line which enables workers to contact the government at any time—24/7. They take it over after hours, and if a call is received they refer it to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

Senator WALSH: In relation to the questions that I just put on notice, I would like to know how many workers have accessed the email inbox, the information line and the after-hours line which you just described. I'd like to know how many concerns relating to approved employers have been received through those three facilities—the email, the information line and the after-hours line. I'd also like to know—and you may tell me, which would be fine, that this is a question for DFAT—how many people are employed by the PLF on that after-hours line—or is that a question for DFAT?

Ms McCormack: Yes.

Ms Kidd: Yes.

Senator WALSH: And are you able to take all those questions that I asked on notice, apart from the one that I just asked?

Ms McCormack: Yes, we are.

Answer

In the last 12 month period to 24 September 2020, workers in the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) have made the following contacts:

- 19 calls to the Seasonal Worker Information line
- 10 emails to the Seasonal Worker mailbox
- six emails to the Pacific Labour Facility welfare mailbox
- 96 calls to the Pacific Labour Facility welfare hotline
- 607 calls made directly to Pacific Labour Facility Case Managers.

The emails and calls received from workers in the SWP have raised varied queries related to their respective personal circumstances.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

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Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000235

Senator Claire Chandler on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 5

Industries utilising Seasonal Worker Programme

Question

Senator CHANDLER: While we're on the seasonal worker program, I'll ask a couple of questions about that before I move on to a few broader questions. Do you have any fears or indicators on how many Australian jobs, more broadly, are linked to industries which utilise the Seasonal Worker Programme?

Ms Jensen: Senator, you might need to repeat the question. We didn't quite—is it the number of Australian jobseekers in the areas where the program is?

Senator CHANDLER: I'm trying to get an idea of what the employment multiplier effect is, so to speak, in these industries where we're utilising seasonal workers. How many seasonal workers are working in each industry, and then how many Australian workers are there as well? Just to get the mix, I suppose. It might be a question for the department of agriculture.

Ms Kidd: Yes, I don't think it's something we could answer here. We certainly know the number of seasonal workers we have in the country in the agriculture sector, and at the moment that's around, I think it's 6,600 in the country now. But we don't have the rest of the equation.

Senator CHANDLER: That's alright. If you could take that on notice, that would be fantastic.

Answer

According to Australia Bureau of Statistics survey data, as at August 2020 there were an estimated:

- 73,600 people employed in Australia in the horticultural sector (including Australians and long-term temporary entrants).
- 83,500 people employed in Australia in the Accommodation sector (including Australians and long-term temporary entrants).

Under the Seasonal Worker Programme, as at August 2020 there were:

- 6,600 workers in the horticultural sector.
- three workers in the Accommodation sector.

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Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000236

Senator Raff Ciccone on 10 September 2020, Proof Hansard page 11

Deaths or injuries for Seasonal Worker Programme participants

Question

CHAIR: And lastly, do you have any data about how many people unfortunately pass away or get injured while under such programs as the seasonal worker program?

Ms Kidd: We do. Every incident is recorded. There have unfortunately been a number of deaths of workers in Australia since the program commenced. We have had 22 in total. None of them have been workplace accidents; they've all happened outside of the workplace—car accidents, for example, heart attack, natural causes.

CHAIR: Would you be able to provide a breakdown by financial year of the number of deaths or injuries?

Ms Kidd: Sure, we can do that.

Answer

The above evidence was as at 10 September 2020.

As at 23 September 2020, the reported injuries and deaths under the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) are outlined in the following table:

	2012-13	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Total Deaths*	2	2	4	4	2	5	4	23
Total Injuries including workplace and non-workplace injuries	0	0	14	67	132	225	66	504

*No deaths in the SWP have been as a result of a workplace incident.