



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 27 May 2015

Chair: Mrs Louise Markus MP
Deputy: Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

New inquiry into Seasonal Worker Program

Individuals or organisations who have participated in the [Seasonal Worker Program](#) are encouraged to share their experiences in a new inquiry into the employment scheme.

The Seasonal Worker Program contributes to the economic development of Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste by assisting Australian employers to access overseas seasonal workers to satisfy labour shortages.

Established in 2012, the Program now provides over 3,000 seasonal workers to horticulture sector employers including growers, contractors, labourers and accommodation providers.

Through this new inquiry, the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration will examine the Seasonal Worker Program and its scope for expansion.

Committee chair Louise Markus MP said the Seasonal Worker Program is an important mechanism that supports development in the Pacific while also meeting identified labour shortages.

"The Seasonal Worker Program benefits Australia's horticulture industry, increasing productivity in areas of labour shortages. It also provides potential benefits to the participants of the program through skills development, knowledge transfer, and poverty alleviation," she said.

"As part of the inquiry, we will be focusing on the role of seasonal workers in the horticulture industry and investigate whether the program should be expanded to include other countries and sectors."

The committee will also focus on:

- how new sectors can benefit from the program;
- how the program affects Australian jobs;
- increasing access for overseas women and youth workers;
- how the program supports development in the Pacific; and
- issues with attracting seasonal workers, including the granting of visas.

The committee would like to hear from all individuals or organisations interested in the inquiry. Submissions will be accepted until Friday 10 July 2015.

Further details about the inquiry, including the full terms of reference and how to make a submission, can be obtained from the committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/mig> or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or emailing jscm@aph.gov.au.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Mrs Louise Markus MP on (02) 4577 2631 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 2371 (Parliament House)

For further information: please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4560, via email at jscm@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/mig>