Select Committee on Temporary Migration Attn: Lee Katauskas, Committee Secretary

Dear Lee,

RE: SSC on Temporary Migration Public Hearing on 14 October 2020: Hansard transcript and further evidence – Development Policy Centre submission

Please find below further evidence to evidence provided by the Development Policy Centre to the *Inquiry into the impact temporary migration has on the Australian economy, wages and jobs, social cohesion, and workplace rights and conditions* on 14 October 2020.

Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) reforms

A collated list of reforms proposed to help strengthen and improve the SWP are detailed in Annex 1. As background, please see the attached report "Governance of the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia and sending countries".

SWP and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) participation

Pacific island country participation for both schemes current at 30 June 2020 for the PLS and 30 January 2020 for the SWP is included in Annex 2.

In addition to this further evidence, research by Prof Stephen Howes on asylum seekers/on-shore protection visa applicants is forthcoming and can be shared once finalised, if useful to the Committee.

If you require any further information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Holly Lawton cc Prof Stephen Howes, Dr Ryan Edwards

Development Policy Centre Crawford School of Public Policy Australian National University

Annex 1

Proposed Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) reforms

Proposed reform	Detail	Reference
Improve awareness of the SWP	Improve advertising of the SWP through targeted industry groups, rural	Doyle, J & Howes, S 2015, 'Australia's seasonal
	media, and an expanded social media presence.	worker program: demand-side constraints and
	Implement a targeted campaign to address common misperceptions about	suggested reforms', Discussion paper, World
	the SWP, drawing on experiences of current AEs and results from existing	Bank Group, Washington, DC.
	studies.	
Changes to Approved Employer	Cover new workers' costs through a revolving fund, rather than relying on	Curtain, R, Dornan, M, Doyle, J & Howes, S
contributions to worker	employers to cover costs. Remove the AUD500 employer contribution to the	2016, <u>Labour mobility: the ten billion dollar</u>
mobilisation costs	international airfare of returning workers to ease cost concerns, and remove	<i>prize</i> , Pacific Possible series, Background Paper
	employer contributions to domestic travel.	No. 1, World Bank, Washington, DC.
		Doyle, J & Howes, S 2015, 'Australia's seasonal
		worker program: demand-side constraints and
		suggested reforms', Discussion paper, World
		Bank Group, Washington, DC.
Streamline administrative	Streamline processing times for the employer applications to participate in	Doyle, J & Howes, S 2015, 'Australia's seasonal
processes and requirements	the scheme and Approved Employer government reporting requirements.	worker program: demand-side constraints and
	Review labour market testing requirements and remove testing requirements	suggested reforms', Discussion paper, World
	for postcodes that qualify for Working Holiday (subclass 417) second-year visa	Bank Group, Washington, DC.
	extensions.	
Build in greater flexibility for	Reduce the minimum 14 week work requirement and allow workers to move	Doyle, J & Howes, S 2015, 'Australia's seasonal
workers and Approved Employers	between Approved Employers (NB: portability is currently being trialled in	worker program: demand-side constraints and
	response to COVID-19 labour shortages and restrictions on movement of	suggested reforms', Discussion paper, World
	seasonal labour).	Bank Group, Washington, DC.
Improve bilateral relationships and	Roll out of an annual bilateral monitoring mechanism to address operational	Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of
interactions	issues at a sending-country level. This would complement PLMAM and other	the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia
	existing fora.	and sending countries. ¹
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¹ Report to be launched 9 December 2020 (via <u>webinar</u>).

	Australia and New Zealand should initiate (separately or preferably jointly)	
	bilateral or trilateral monitoring mechanisms with each sending country to address a range of operational issues in private.	
	New COVID-19 bilateral agreements should be established with willing sending countries.	
Most sending countries need to provide increased resourcing to the governance of labour mobility as numbers grow, both at home and abroad.	Critical government functions which are often under-resourced include: record-keeping; pre-departure briefings; enforcement of punitive measures in response to worker misconduct; and troubleshooting when problems arise abroad. Feedback from employers and workers should be collected and published by major sending countries.	Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia and sending countries.
Visa changes to incentivise backpackers to work on farms should be reversed.	Either the second year visa extension should be done away with, or it should be made available in return for three months of work in any sector.	Curtain, R, Dornan, M, Doyle, J & Howes, S 2016, Labour mobility: the ten billion dollar prize, Pacific Possible series, Background Paper No. 1, World Bank, Washington, DC. Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia and sending countries.
Improving industry-wide compliance. Introduction of a national licensing scheme for labour hire companies, with the resources needed to monitor compliance.	Increased funding for compliance activities to reduce the number of illegal workers in horticulture and agriculture would help to incentivise uptake of the SWP and improve worker welfare outcomes.	Curtain, R, Dornan, M, Doyle, J & Howes, S 2016, Labour mobility: the ten billion dollar prize, Pacific Possible series, Background Paper No. 1, World Bank, Washington, DC. Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia and sending countries
A reference group consisting of approved employers (growers and labour hire operators), and key industry associations should be	Closer engagement between DESE and Approved Employers in the program, and a decision making role for Approved Employers. Establishment of a reference group that represents growers, industry and intermediaries would	Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia and sending countries.

established. Together with	help to ensure the SWP better meets stakeholder needs. Establishment of	Doyle, J & Howes, S 2015, 'Australia's seasonal
government representatives, this	Approved Employers Association a positive step.	worker program: demand-side constraints and
group would be tasked with		suggested reforms', Discussion paper, World
developing a more collaborative	Approved Employers should be granted a greater role in worker selection and	Bank Group, Washington, DC.
approach to identifying and	better represented in the scheme.	
resolving key problems.		
	The reference group should be established now, with an initial mandate to	
	solve SWP-related problems arising from the closure of international and	
	state borders.	
The SWP should be managed by	Positioning of the SWP under the Department of Agriculture, Water and the	Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of
the federal Department of	Environment rather than DESE. The Department of Agriculture is better	the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia
Agriculture, Water and the	positioned to identify industry needs and to address them.	and sending countries.
Environment.		
The Australian Government should	Management of the SWP needs to be decentralised, with a greater role for	Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of
place relationship managers, with a	regions. Relationship managers, based in the regions, need to be engaged to	the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia
brief to resolve problems close to	facilitate risk mitigation and more targeted response.	and sending countries.
where they occur, in each of the		
main horticultural areas where	Recent budget announcements have seen an additional AUD9m allocated to	
SWP workers are most	support such roles over the next three years.	
concentrated.		
Approved employers, either		Curtain, R and Howes, S 2020, Governance of
individually or jointly, should have		the Seasonal Worker Programme in Australia
an ongoing presence in the three		and sending countries.
main sending countries, and should		
take more responsibility for		
compliance in relation to the		
recruitment and preparation of		
workers.		

Annex 2

Pacific Labour Scheme

PLS visas granted and currently in Australia to 30 June 2020

	1 25 that Braines and carrelly in Mastrana to 50 June 2020											
	Gender	Fiji	Kiribati	Nauru	PNG	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Timor- Leste	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	Grand Total
Vice grants	Female	38	87	8	2	13	13	22	12	4	41	240
Visa grants	Male	226	50	16	48	186	128	87	58	51	141	988
	Total	264	137	24	50	199	141	109	70	55	182	1231
							Solomon	Timor-				Grand
	Gender	Fiji	Kiribati	Nauru	PNG	Samoa	Islands	Leste	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	Total
Currently employed in Australia	Female	28	60	4	2	11	8	15	10	3	32	173
(including redeployed workers)	Male	193	33	9	46	165	113	56	54	33	109	811
	Total	221	93	13	48	176	121	71	64	36	141	984

Data supplied: DFAT

Seasonal Worker Programme

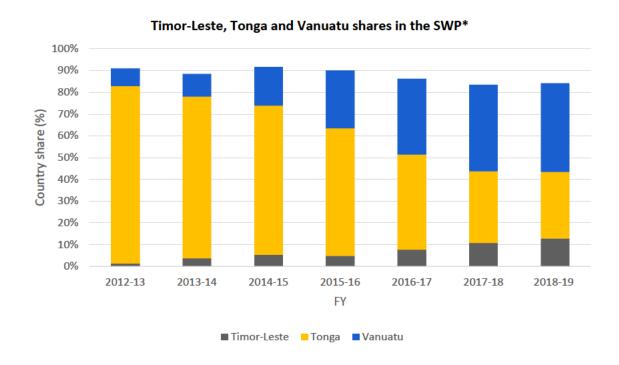
SWP participation by country and financial year for life of scheme to 31 January 2020

	Jiii pe	ii ticipation	by country	y ana ma	iciai yeai	101 1110 01 30	neme to 5.	L Juliuui y L	.020		
Financial Year of Visa				Papua							
				New		Solomon	Timor-				
Grant	Fiji	Kiribati	Nauru	Guinea	Samoa	Islands	Leste	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	Total
2007-08											
2008-09								50		6	56
2009-10		11						56			67
2010-11		18		9				384		12	423
2011-12		22		73	39		12	825		95	1,066
2012-13	0	34	10	26	22	42	21	1,199	0	119	1,473
2013-14	0	14	0	26	162	9	74	1,497	20	212	2,014
2014-15	<5	11	0	35	185	21	168	2,179	7	567	3,177

	1,232	1,097	27	663	2,493	899	4,818	20,057	31	16,868	
31/01/2020	195	102	0	93	432	190	1,360	2,025	0	4,197	8,594
2019-20 to	195	102	0	02	122	100	1 260	2 025	0	4 107	0 E04
2018-19	436	377	0	128	677	314	1,567	3,737	0	4,964	12,200
2017-18	247	364	0	92	527	175	915	2,790	0	3,349	8,459
2016-17	190	124	0	139	309	87	477	2,691	0	2,149	6,166
2015-16	160	20	17	42	140	61	224	2,624	<5	1,198	4,490

Data supplied: DESE

The SWP is <u>dominated by three countries</u> – Timor-Leste, <u>Tonga</u> and Vanuatu – that have maintained approximately 85 per cent of the market, or higher, since the scheme started.



Data supplied: DESE

^{*} The SWP (2012 to current) was preceded by the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (2008-2012).

^{*}Complete data for the 2019-20 financial year not currently available.