

# **PLANNING YOUR SEASONAL WORKFORCE**





## **DISCLAIMER:**

This is a guide only. Any decisions made for your business should be based on research into your individual circumstances.

You should adopt a common-sense approach to this guide and interpret or adapt relevant information subject to the size of your individual business.

Please make sure you are connected to the internet. Click on any of the [blue](#) text to visit the relevant website.

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## **WHERE WILL YOUR SEASONAL WORKERS COME FROM?**

COVID-19 has made it evident that much of what once just ticked along, like having an available local and backpacker workforce, can no longer be taken for granted. To survive and prosper we need to expect the unexpected and be flexible. That is why it is so important that you start to think more broadly and forward plan now for next year's harvest workforce.

There are several different options for finding seasonal workers and navigating the system can be confusing, so we have tried to make it simpler for you. Before you delve deeper into this document have a look at the [Seasonal Workforce Planning Matrix](#) which explores a range of options to help you find the best solution for you.

Once you have considered your needs and identified your options, have a read through this document to find out more. We have expanded on each option and tried to break the information down to simplify it.

It is recommended that you click on the [blue](#) text to be taken to the available links to read about the more complex requirements where applicable.

The information provided is not definitive but will provide you with a good starting point to base your next steps on.

Consider your needs and the best solution for you.

Whatever you do, do not leave planning for labour until the last minute.

It is important to plan ahead.

If you would like to have a chat about your seasonal workforce needs, feel free to reach out to our Seasonal Workforce Industry Support Officer, Jackie, on 0456 628 560 or [jackie.heaysman@citrusaustralia.com.au](mailto:jackie.heaysman@citrusaustralia.com.au).



## **PLANNING YOUR SEASONAL WORKFORCE**

### **Workforce planning**

Workforce planning is about having the right people in the right roles at the right times to meet the strategic objectives of your business.

A focus of workforce planning is on understanding and preparing for changes in your business environment (e.g. COVID-19) which could impact on your workforce needs. Check out the key steps for [workforce planning](#) provided by Harvest Trail.

This article also provides some good tips – [Harvest Trail Talk GOOD PLANNING = GOOD WORKERS](#)

### **Labour market testing (advertising)**

Do not leave sourcing your seasonal labour to the last minute – plan ahead.

You should start your labour market testing (advertising) as soon as possible so you have a clear picture of available and interested workers before you need them. Collate data and evidence to prove:

- how many people apply for a role
- how many people attend an interview
- how many people accept a position
- how many employees arrive for a shift
- how many days they are employed (particularly if they resign before the work is complete)

If you are having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, please share this information with Citrus Australia, so that we may use this data when lobbying for government assistance with labour options.

We recommend you conduct exit interviews with any workers who resign, to record why they are leaving and note how long they were employed for, for further evidence.

Business Victoria provide some useful information, including a free [exit interview template](#) that you can customise to suit your business.

### **Understanding your legal obligations and workplace requirements**

Before starting your recruitment, make yourself familiar with the information on the [Fair Work Ombudsman Horticulture Showcase website](#) so that you fully understand your legal obligations and workplace requirements regarding:

- pay and piecework rates
- workplace health and safety
- hours of work and overtime
- deductions for accommodation, transport and job finding
- ending employment
- migrant workers



## **PACIFIC AUSTRALIA LABOUR MOBILITY**

The [Pacific Australia Labour Mobility](#) (PALM) scheme is the Australian Government's new, streamlined approach to its highly valued Pacific labour mobility initiatives.

The PALM scheme allows eligible employers to recruit workers from nine Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste when there are not enough Australian workers available.

The PALM scheme connects unskilled, low-skilled and semi-skilled workers from Pacific Islands and Timor-Leste via the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) and the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) with rural and regional Australian businesses.

The PALM scheme supports the economic prosperity of nine Pacific Islands and Timor-Leste and comprises of two initiatives; the one that is best suited to you will depend on whether you have a short-term or long-term labour need.

### **Seasonal Worker Programme**

Short-term labour needs.

The [SWP](#) allows employers to recruit unskilled workers for up to nine months.

### **Pacific Labour Scheme**

Long-term labour needs.

The [PLS](#) provides a longer-term labour solution to recruit low-skilled and semi-skilled workers for between one and three years.

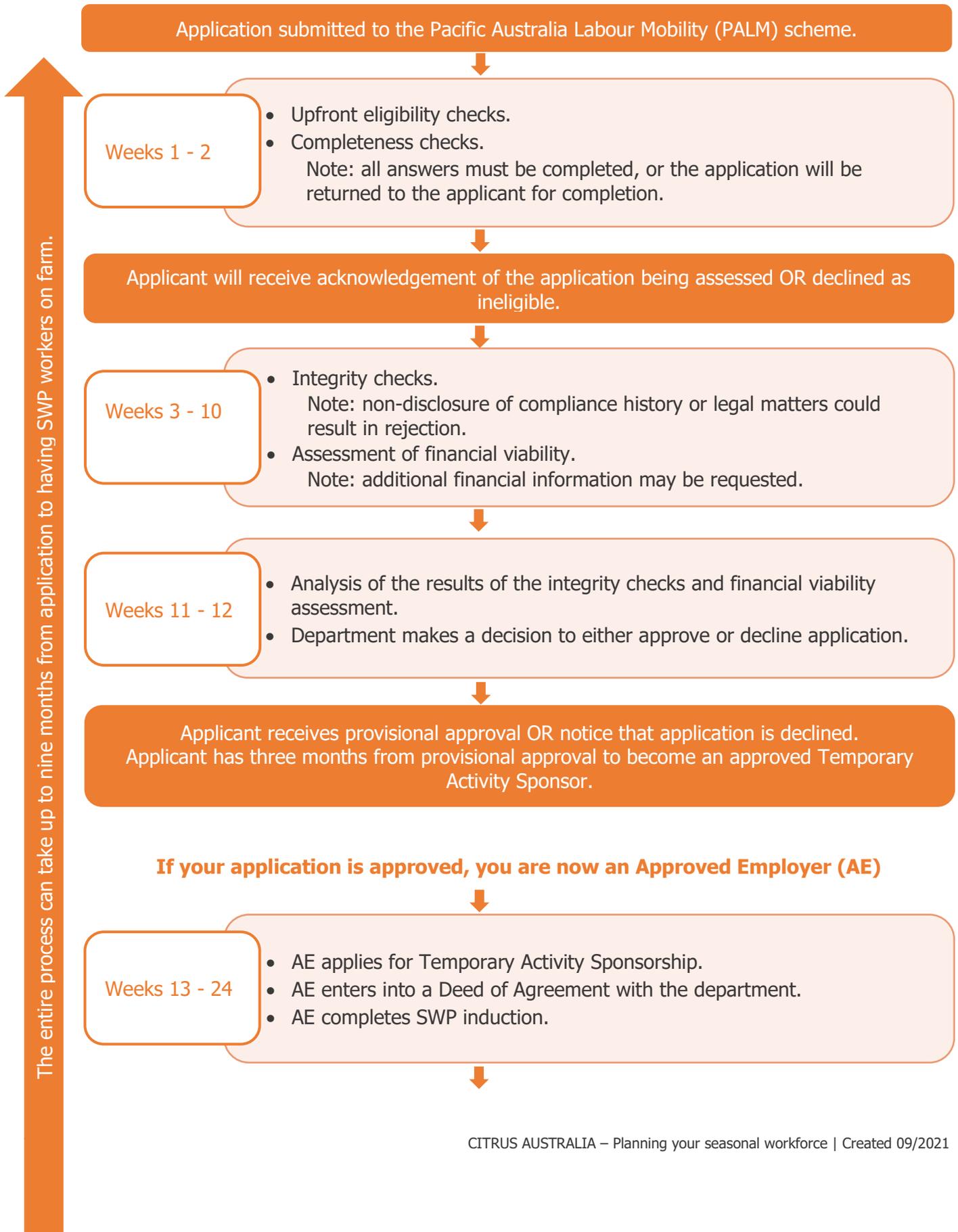
The PLS differs to the SWP in that the PLS workers can stay in Australia for one to three years, so there is value in teaching and upskilling them, and they in turn can teach other new workers. You can see a comparison of the two programs [here](#).

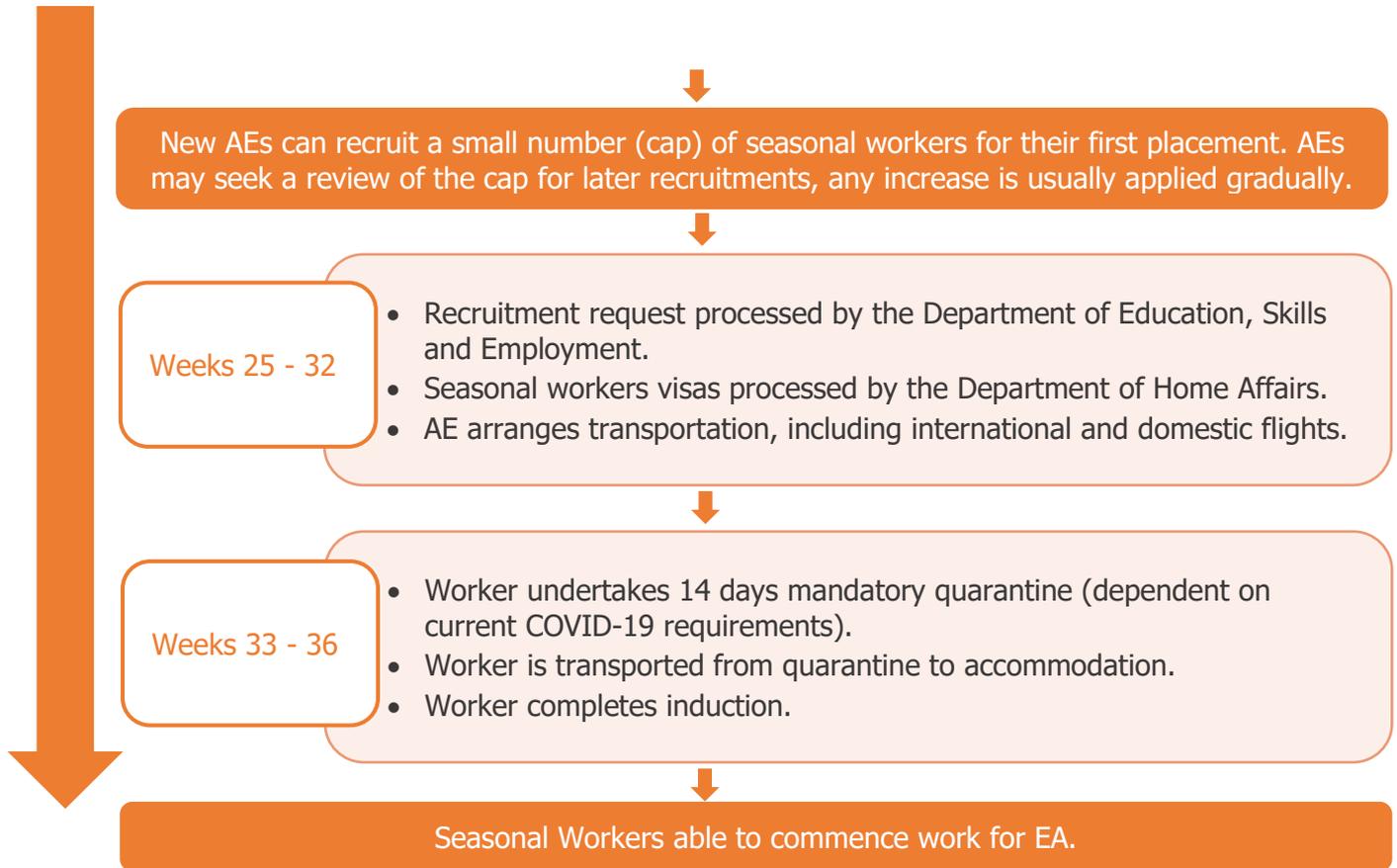
### **Eligibility**

To learn more about the eligibility criteria for either the SWP or the PLS check out the **Seasonal Workforce Planning Matrix**.



## **PROCESSING TIMELINE – FOR SWP AND PLS APPLICATIONS**







## **SEASONAL WORKER PROGRAMME**

### **Becoming an Approved Employer (AE)**

In September 2021 the Australian Government announced the launch of a single application for new employers when applying to participate in either, or both, the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) or the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). This is called the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme.

If you are an employer who has the capacity to employ seasonal workers on your property for a **up to nine months**, you may be eligible to participate in the [Seasonal Worker Programme](#) (SWP). To participate in the program, you must first apply for approval from the Australian Government to become an Approved Employer (AE) through the [Pacific Australia Labour Mobility \(PALM\)](#) scheme.

The SWP recruits unskilled or low-skilled workers from Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste and is managed by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE).

### **Eligibility and process to become an AE**

Check out the [Seasonal Workforce Planning Matrix](#) to determine if this is an option for you and if you might be eligible.

You can learn more about the PALM scheme and to check your eligibility [here](#). You should work your way through the step-by-step process for businesses to join the scheme and submit your application [online](#).

Under the SWP, eligible AEs enter into an agreement with the Australian Government through DESE and enter into a sponsorship arrangement with the Department of Home Affairs.

Refer to the [application and processing timeline](#) provided earlier in this document.

### **AE responsibilities**

As an AE you are responsible for:

- testing the labour market, and trying to recruit workers already in Australia before seeking access to seasonal workers from overseas
- employing seasonal workers in accordance with Australian workplace legislation
- providing briefings to seasonal workers on arrival into Australia and before departing back home
- providing seasonal workers with a minimum average of 30 hours per week for up to nine months
- paying for the full cost of each seasonal worker's return international airfare and domestic transfers up front, and recouping from the combined cost any amount over \$300 from seasonal workers' pay over time
- organising and providing access to local council approved accommodation and transport to and from work for each seasonal worker (at the seasonal workers' expense)
- reporting to the Australian Government
- providing welfare and wellbeing for workers, including opportunities for recreation and religious observance, a 24 hour contact number, and assisting workers to access services in the local community.



Refer to the [Approved Employer factsheet](#)

## Accommodation

Seasonal worker accommodation **must** be provided by the AE. The AE is responsible for ensuring seasonal workers are aware of, and comply with, all relevant laws.

Refer to the [Seasonal Worker Programme Approved Employer Guidelines](#), in particular Chapter 4, for full details.

You can also find out more by reading the [SWP Minimum Accommodation Requirements Checklist](#).

In summary, accommodation for seasonal workers must meet the following minimum standards:

### *Fair and good value*

- The cost must be fair and provide good value for money.
- Any bond must be registered with the appropriate authority.

### *Costs are transparent*

- The basis for the rent charged must be provided in the Accommodation Plan including a breakdown of the costs.
- Where considering value for money, 'like for like' properties in the region will be considered, if possible. Accommodation must be provided at cost.
- The cost of the accommodation must be provided to seasonal workers in the Offer of Employment and show what the cost includes (eg: rent, utilities, cleaning).

### *Fit for purpose and in good condition*

The accommodation must:

- be fit for occupation and use
- comply with any regulations required by the state, territory or local government/council (for example fire safety, overcrowding)
- be clean, sanitary and tidy at the time of arrival of seasonal workers
- have water supply, including hot water, that is continuously available and safe for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing
- have adequate facilities to store food safely, cook and eat (including cooking utensils, crockery, cutlery and drink ware). Kitchen and dining facilities must be adequate for the number of seasonal workers and duration of stay (full kitchen facilities not required if catering is supplied)
- have suitable cleaning, disinfection and pest control where seasonal workers are required to clean the property
- have adequate heating, cooling and ventilation as required and dictated by the climate
- have access to adequate laundry facilities for the number of seasonal workers, and
- be maintained in a good condition.
- accessible, safe and secure



### *Safety*

The accommodation must:

- allow 24-hour access
- be lockable by the occupants
- any house rules are to be reasonable, non-discriminatory and clearly communicated
- where the dwelling will accommodate both male and female seasonal workers, provides separate bathroom facilities, with lockable doors, and separate sleeping areas for single men and women
- provide storage for each seasonal worker's belongings
- provide separate lockable storage for each seasonal worker's valuables

### *Other requirements*

The accommodation must:

- Have adequate bathroom facilities for the number of seasonal workers. As a minimum, there must be one toilet, hand basin, and shower (or bathtub) for every 10 seasonal workers (or part thereof). (Portable toilets cannot be provided to meet minimum requirements. Transportable toilet blocks may be acceptable, such as dongas).
- Provide uncrowded sleeping areas for all seasonal workers – there should be a reasonable walking space between beds, the exits and storage.
- Provide a separate bed with a base or bed frame, comfortable and clean mattress, pillow and linen for each seasonal worker (i.e. no mattresses on the floor). Bunk beds should be minimised, triple bunks are prohibited. Where bunk beds are provided, there must be enough clear space between the upper and lower bunks, and the upper bunk and the ceiling.
- Have window coverings installed, and in working order, in all sleeping areas to provide privacy and block-out sunlight; and
- Have an adequate communal lounge/living area with sufficient seating for the number of seasonal workers inhabiting the facility.

### **SWP workers may elect to arrange their own accommodation at their own cost.**

If a SWP worker chooses to arrange their own accommodation the following applies:

- AEs cannot make deductions from their wages for accommodation.
- The AE is not responsible for the quality of that accommodation. The Approved Employer does, however, retain the responsibility for providing welfare and wellbeing assistance to the seasonal worker.
- The AE must explain to them that they will be responsible for all costs which may include rent, electricity and other utility costs, transport costs, and other housing related costs.
- AEs may require that seasonal workers provide a minimum of two weeks' notice of their intention to move to their own accommodation and transport arrangements. If an AE seeks to impose this condition on the accommodation and transport this must be set out in the Offer of Employment.



- If the seasonal worker does not give two weeks' notice, where this is a condition they have agreed to in the Offer of Employment, the seasonal worker may be charged for the accommodation and transport provided by the AE for the two week period even if they have moved out.

For detailed information refer to Chapter 4 Accommodation – [Seasonal Worker Programme Approved Employer Guidelines](#).

## **Worker welfare and wellbeing**

AEs must provide welfare and wellbeing support to their seasonal workers and are required to submit a Welfare and Wellbeing Plan outlining the arrangements that they will put in place to manage the welfare and wellbeing of the seasonal workers they employ.

Welfare and wellbeing includes:

- Explaining how Australia's banking and tax systems work and ensuring they understand food requirements and the importance of proper nutrition and hydration.
- Helping seasonal workers to visit medical or health care services such as the dentist or the doctor, as appropriate.
- Ensuring seasonal workers have sufficient funds each week to meet reasonable costs of living. Some AEs set a minimum net pay for this purpose (where they do so, they may temporarily reduce deductions or provide an advance on pay, to be repaid through deductions in future pay periods, with the seasonal worker's approval in writing).
- Providing a 24-hour per day, seven days per week emergency contact number for seasonal workers to receive emergency assistance.
- Ensuring seasonal workers understand when they should call emergency services and that they know how to do so if required.
- Ensuring seasonal workers who are licensed, know the road rules and can drive on Australian roads safely. It is advisable to display road safety awareness posters in workplaces and workers' accommodation. Posters that have been translated in participating countries languages can be found [here](#).
- Organising health insurance coverage for their seasonal workers that provides for in-patient and out-patient care to the level specified by Home Affairs and assisting them to pay for this by taking authorised deductions from the seasonal workers' pay.
- Providing the seasonal workers with all necessary PPE at work.
- Ensuring that adequate and suitable facilities are provided or accessible to seasonal workers at the worksite, ahead of them commencing work and during work hours.
- Ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, that seasonal workers understand and comply with the requirements of the job to achieve the standards expected and to be safe. Information, instructions, training and supervision must be provided to seasonal workers in a format and language that can be understood by them.
- Ensuring seasonal workers have contact details for local community groups, which may include churches, Pacific Islander and Timor-Leste groups or other community fellowships and sporting groups.
- Ensuring that seasonal workers have clothing suitable for Australian conditions.



- Making seasonal workers aware of any risks when venturing out to local beaches, rivers or other areas that can pose potential risks.
- Clearly communicating any policies relating to alcohol and drug free accommodation or worksites, or working under the influence of alcohol or drugs and explaining the consequences of any breaches of those policies.

For detailed information refer to Chapter 3 Welfare and Wellbeing – [Seasonal Worker Programme Approved Employer Guidelines](#).

## Flights

Normally, flights are booked commercially for seasonal workers, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the closing and opening of state and international borders, and changing risks due to outbreaks, the flight situation for the SWP and PLS is quite fluid and changes depending on what Australian state the workers will be located.

In 2021, there are two ways to bring workers into Australia from the Pacific – via a charter flight, or via a DFAT supported commercial flight (if available). See regularly updated flight information on our website [here](#).

It is recommended that AEs work with travel agents who are experienced in coordinating flights from Pacific countries.

### ***Charter flights***

Flights can be chartered solely by AEs into Australia. Alternatively, AEs can work together (growers or labour hire contractors) to share the cost of a flight from the same country. Each AE must complete an application form with DFAT, and if sharing the cost, one AE must be nominated as the coordinator.

Charter flights generally have 162 seats and quarantine facilities must be found in the relevant state to meet this requirement.

AEs must work with the relevant state governments to coordinate a flight schedule that meets operational requirements. For Victoria, flights must include transit via an Australian mainland international airport to complete Australian Government border and customs processes before arriving in Hobart for quarantine and being transported to Victoria afterwards. Flights can also drop some workers off in other state capital cities before landing in Hobart if workers are being utilised in that state.

### ***Commercial flights***

DFAT is now supporting a limited amount of commercial flights via the 'Pacific Flights Program' between Australia and the Pacific, to repatriate SWP workers, and bring over new workers. As of August 2021, countries include Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

DFAT encourages AEs to utilise these flights to ensure their continuation, particularly for smaller growers. Cost savings can be up to 60% over the cost of a charter flight.

Bookings are available through the airline operating the route.

You can see the [full flight matrix with costs here](#), as of 27 April 2021.



## Cost of flights

AEs are required to cover the cost of return airfares to Australia from the workers' home country, and to cover any domestic transport to and from the airport to the workers' accommodation/work location.

AEs can recoup a capped amount of \$300 from the worker; this cost must be deducted from the workers' wages over a minimum period of 12 weeks.

Details of DFAT COVID-19 facilitated commercial flights can be seen [here](#). Tickets on these flights are approximately one-third of the cost of a seat on a charter flight and utilising them will ensure the viability of these flights going forward.

## Quarantine

In line with COVID-19 requirements, all seasonal workers that enter Australia must undertake 14 days mandatory quarantine.

AEs are responsible for following relevant state requirements regarding quarantine. The following details are specific to Victoria. For other states refer to relevant state government requirements.

Seasonal workers that are flying to Australia to work on Victorian farms are required to undertake quarantine in Tasmania.

Once the quarantine period is complete, the Tasmanian Government will work with AEs to arrange transport to Hobart airport. AEs must ensure workers have immediate practical assistance when they are discharged from quarantine, including flights to Victoria and transport to their further accommodation and workplace. AEs must ensure that the workers have the appropriate permits under the Victorian Travel Permit System, information can be found [here](#).

Note: AEs are responsible for all costs in connection with further quarantine if any worker tests positive to COVID-19 during their time in Australia.

## Cost of quarantine

AEs are responsible for reimbursing a contribution of the quarantine costs to the Victorian Government. This contribution is a set fee of \$2,000 per worker. It is acceptable for workers arriving under SWP and PLS visas to share hotel quarantine accommodation, up to a maximum of two people per room, but this does not reduce the quarantine fee per worker. The cost of quarantine cannot be recouped from the seasonal worker.

## Want to know more?

In case we haven't answered all of your questions, see some helpful links below:

- [Things you should know before you apply](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions for Season Worker Employers](#)
- [Seasonal Worker Programme - Useful links](#)
- [Victorian guidelines for the entry of workers under the Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme](#)

You can also obtain further information through the Seasonal Worker Programme application help line by calling 02 6240 5234 or by sending an email to [SWPApplications@dese.gov.au](mailto:SWPApplications@dese.gov.au).



## **PACIFIC LABOUR SCHEME**

### **Becoming an Approved Employer (AE)**

In September 2021 the Australian Government announced the launch of a single application for new employers when applying to participate in either, or both, the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) or the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS). This is called the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme.

If you are an employer who has the capacity to employ seasonal workers on your property for **up to three years (minimum of 12 months)**, you may be eligible to participate in the [Pacific Labour Scheme](#) (PLS). To participate in the program, you must first apply for approval from the Australian Government to become an Approved Employer (AE) through the [Pacific Australia Labour Mobility \(PALM\)](#) scheme.

The PLS recruits low-skilled and semi-skilled workers from Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste and is managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

### **Eligibility and process to become an AE**

Check out the [Seasonal Workforce Planning Matrix](#) to determine if this is an option for you and if you might be eligible.

You can learn more about the PALM scheme and to check your eligibility [here](#). You should work your way through the step-by-step process for businesses to join the scheme and submit your application [online](#).

Under the PLS eligible AEs enter into an agreement with the Australian Government through DFAT and enter into a sponsorship arrangement with the Department of Home Affairs.

Applications from employers wishing to become AEs for the PLS must first complete the [Prospective employer expression of interest form](#).

Refer to the [application and processing timeline](#) provided earlier in this document.

### **AE responsibilities**

As an AE you are responsible for:

- testing the labour market, and trying to recruit local workers before seeking access to seasonal workers
- employing seasonal workers in accordance with Australian workplace legislation
- providing briefings to seasonal workers on arrival into Australia and before departing back home
- providing seasonal workers with a minimum average of 30 hours per week for up to nine months
- paying for the full cost of each seasonal worker's one-way international airfare to Australia and domestic transfers up front; a capped amount can be recouped from the worker over a minimum period of 12 weeks
- organising and providing access to accommodation for the first three months of placement (at the seasonal workers' expense) and complying with the minimum standards as provided in the PLS Accommodation Form, workers can seek accommodation on the open market if they choose



- reporting to the Australian Government

## **Accommodation**

Accommodation must be provided by the AE for the first three months of placement and must comply with the minimum standards provided in the [PLS Accommodation Form](#).

In summary, accommodation for seasonal workers must meet the following standards:

### **Minimum accommodation standards**

- provides 24-hour access
- complies with any regulations required by the state, territory or local government/council (for example fire safety, maximum occupancy) and is fit for occupation and use
- provides self-catering kitchen facilities adequate for the number of occupants
- provides power for lighting, cooking and refrigeration
- has a communal lounge/living area
- has adequate bathroom facilities for the number of workers
- where the dwelling will accommodate both male and female workers, provides separate sleeping areas and bathroom facilities for men and women
- provides uncrowded sleeping areas for all workers
- provides a bed for each worker (i.e. no mattresses on the floor)
- has adequate heating and/or cooling as required by the climate
- has access to adequate laundry facilities
- provides separate lockable storage for each worker's valuables
- has suitable cleaning equipment (such as a vacuum or mops) where workers are required to clean the property
- provides sufficient minimum household essentials (such as cooking utensils, crockery, towels, bed linen) or these items must be readily accessible by workers to source cost effectively (note: items may be sourced second hand or donated, in safe, clean and working condition)
- will be clean at the time of arrival; and
- any required maintenance of the property will be addressed during the workers' stay

### **PLS workers may elect to arrange their own accommodation at their own cost.**

If a PLS worker chooses to arrange their own accommodation the following applies:

- AEs cannot make deductions from their wages.
- PLS workers may choose to arrange their own accommodation for a variety of reasons including costs, condition of accommodation, privacy and links to the community.
- If a PLS worker chooses to arrange their own accommodation, the AE is not responsible for the quality of that accommodation, however it does retain the responsibility of providing welfare assistance to the worker.



- AEs may require PLS workers to provide a reasonable minimum notice of their intention to move to their own accommodation to ensure they are able to meet their obligations under the rental agreement. This notice period should be documented and agreed in writing with the worker.
- AEs cannot impose rules relating to accommodation if PLS workers have arranged their own accommodation independent of the AE.

For detailed information refer to page 54 – [Pacific Labour Scheme Approved Employer guidelines](#).

### **Worker welfare and wellbeing**

As the PLS is an Australian aid program, growers must ensure that workers are cared for whilst employed by them. Worker welfare is led by the AE and supported by the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) through a case management approach to worker cohorts from the arrival of the workers into Australia, until their departure home. Workers receive an induction and are provided with information on a range of topics, including:

- finding affordable accommodation and appropriate living arrangements
- accessing personal finance, superannuation, insurance and banking services
- completing tax returns
- sending money home
- what they will need to buy (SIM cards, phones, clothing, etc.)
- getting an Australian driver's licence
- the Fair Work Ombudsman
- workplace rights and entitlements
- health and medical contacts
- education and training opportunities
- contacts for any diaspora in the community where they will live and work

For detailed information refer to Refer to page 43 – [Pacific Labour Scheme Approved Employer guidelines](#).

### **Flights**

Normally, flights are booked commercially for seasonal workers, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the closing and opening of state and international borders, and changing risks due to outbreaks, the flight situation for the SWP and PLS is quite fluid and changes depending on what Australian state the workers will be located.

In 2021, there are two ways to bring workers into Australia from the Pacific – via a charter flight, or via a DFAT supported commercial flight (if available). See regularly updated flight information on our website [here](#).

It is recommended that AEs work with travel agents who are experienced in coordinating flights from Pacific countries.



### ***Charter flights***

Flights can be chartered solely by AEs into Australia. Alternatively, AEs can work together (growers or labour hire contractors) to share the cost of a flight from the same country. Each AE must complete an application form with DFAT, and if sharing the cost, one AE must be nominated as the coordinator.

Charter flights generally have 162 seats and quarantine facilities must be found in the relevant state to meet this requirement.

AEs must work with the relevant state governments to coordinate a flight schedule that meets operational requirements. For Victoria, flights must include transit via an Australian mainland international airport to complete Australian Government border and customs processes before arriving in Hobart for quarantine and being transported to Victoria afterwards. Flights can also drop some workers off in other state capital cities before landing in Hobart if workers are being utilised in that state.

### ***Commercial flights***

DFAT is now supporting a limited amount of commercial flights via the 'Pacific Flights Program' between Australia and the Pacific, to repatriate SWP workers, and bring over new workers. As of August 2021, countries include Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

DFAT encourages AEs to utilise these flights to ensure their continuation, particularly for smaller growers. Cost savings can be up to 60% over the cost of a charter flight.

Bookings are available through the airline operating the route.

You can see the [full flight matrix with costs here](#), as of 27 April 2021.

### **Cost of flights**

AEs are required to cover the cost of a one-way airfare to Australia from the workers' home country, and to cover any domestic transport to and from the airport to the workers' accommodation/work location.

AEs can recoup a capped amount from the worker; this cost must be deducted over a minimum period of 12 weeks.

Details of DFAT COVID-19 facilitated commercial flights can be seen [here](#). Tickets on these flights are approximately one-third of the cost of a seat on a charter flight and utilising them will ensure the viability of these flights going forward.

### **Quarantine**

In line with COVID-19 requirements, all seasonal workers that enter Australia must undertake 14 days mandatory quarantine.

AEs are responsible for following relevant state requirements regarding quarantine. The following details are specific to Victoria. For other states refer to relevant state government requirements.

Seasonal workers that are flying to Australia to work on Victorian farms are required to undertake quarantine in Tasmania.

Once the quarantine period is complete, the Tasmanian Government will work with AEs to arrange transport to Hobart airport. AEs must ensure workers have immediate practical assistance when they are discharged from quarantine, including flights to Victoria and transport to their further accommodation and workplace. AEs must ensure that the workers have the appropriate permits under the Victorian Travel Permit System, information can be found [here](#).



Note: AEs are responsible for all costs in connection with further quarantine if any worker tests positive to COVID-19 during their time in Australia.

### **Cost of quarantine**

AEs are responsible for reimbursing a contribution to the quarantine costs to the Victorian Government. This contribution is a set fee of \$2,000 per worker. It is acceptable for workers arriving under SWP and PLS visas to share hotel quarantine accommodation, up to a maximum of two people per room, but this **does not** reduce the quarantine fee per worker. The cost of quarantine cannot be recouped from the seasonal worker.

### **Want to know more?**

In case we haven't answered all of your questions, see some helpful links below:

- [Frequently asked questions about Pacific Australia Labour Mobility](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about the Pacific Labour Scheme](#)
- [Victorian guidelines for the entry of workers under the Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme](#)

To speak to someone about the PLS, contact the Pacific Labour Facility on 07 3557 7750 or email [enquiries@pacificlabourfacility.com.au](mailto:enquiries@pacificlabourfacility.com.au).



## **REGIONAL PILOTS**

The Australian Government has set up Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) Regional Pilots available to growers in the following regions:

- Goulburn/Murray (Victoria)
- Sunraysia (NSW/Victoria)
- Riverina (NSW)
- Wimmera Mallee (Victoria)

### **Seasonal Worker Programme Regional Pilot**

The pilot allows for a number of proven AEs, to move seasonal workers between farm placements during their visa period, without prior approval by the department.

#### **What does this mean for you?**

Smaller growers with short harvest seasons and unpredictable picking periods can access SWP workers by contacting a participating AE to discuss their workforce needs.

To take advantage of the pilot, you should contact a Regional Pilot AE **at least eight to 10 weeks prior** to needing workers so that they can plan their SWP recruitment to include you.

If workforce is an immediate problem for you, you may still be able to access workers through this program, it is worth a call to a participating AE. To find out more and how to contact the Regional Pilot AEs, refer to the [Seasonal Worker Programme Regional Pilot Fact Sheet](#).

#### **Flights and quarantine costs**

The AE will have already paid for the cost of flights and quarantine and may pass a percentage of this cost on to growers. Growers should discuss this with AEs when enquiring about workers.

### **Seasonal Worker Programme – Worker Portability Pilot**

The SWP Worker Portability Pilot allows AEs operating in the regional pilot regions listed above, to share workers with other SWP AEs under a multi-sponsor arrangement.

AEs who intend to share seasonal workers (Sponsoring AEs) should contact the SWP Information Line on (02) 6240 5234, by email at [regionalpilot@employment.gov.au](mailto:regionalpilot@employment.gov.au) or through a Regional Coordinator.

For further detailed information refer to the [SWP Worker Portability Pilot information sheet](#).

A list of SWP Regional Coordinators is available [here](#).



## **WORKER INCENTIVES**

There are incentives available to help you to attract Australian workers and visa holders with a general right to work in Australia. These incentives **do not apply** to seasonal workers who are in Australia under the Seasonal Worker Programme or the Pacific Labour Scheme.

Use these incentives to your advantage when talking to prospective workers and in your advertisements.

### **National Assistance – AgMove – Relocation Assistance**

[AgMove](#) is an Australian Government initiative that helps with costs for eligible people who relocate to take up short term agricultural work, including harvest work, in Australia.

If a worker relocates to commence agricultural work, including harvest work, between 5 May and 31 December 2021, they must complete at least 40 hours of work in at least two weeks to be eligible for reimbursement of up to:

- \$2,000 if they are an Australian worker, or
- \$650 if they are a visa holder with a general right to work in Australia.

If they continue to work and complete a total of at least 120 hours of work in at least four weeks, they could be reimbursed up to a total of:

- \$6,000 if they are an Australian worker, or
- \$2,000 if they are a visa holder with a general right to work in Australia.

For eligibility criteria and further information about AgMove read the [AgMove Fact sheet](#).

### **Victoria – Seasonal Harvest Sign-On Bonus**

The [Seasonal Harvest Sign-On Bonus Program](#) is a Victorian State Government initiative which commenced on 17 February 2021 and aims to attract job seekers to work on Victorian horticulture farms during this year's harvest through a 'sign-on bonus' payment for new workers.

Registered workers can receive two instalments totaling \$2,430 per worker.

To be eligible for the first \$810 instalment, workers must:

- have undertaken at least 10 separate days of work within a consecutive 30-day period and started or returned to working in agriculture after a three month break on or after the 17 February 2021

To be eligible for the remainder \$1620 of the bonus workers must:

- be registered with the program and have received the first instalment
- have undertaken a further 30 separate days of work and apply for the remainder of the bonus within 90 days of their first instalment being approved

### **Who is eligible for The Seasonal Harvest Sign On Bonus?**

To be eligible for the program workers must meet all of the following criteria:

- be 18 years or older with the right to work in Australia
- work in eligible Victorian horticulture industries such as fruit, dried fruit, vegetables, olives, nuts, hops and wine grapes



- start work on a farm located in Victoria on or after 17 February 2021
- work on-farm in picking, packing, and harvesting of seasonal produce. Duties may include operating harvest machinery.
- not have worked on-farm in Victoria’s agriculture sectors (dairy, livestock, grains and horticulture) in the three months prior to the day they started the work that is the subject of your bonus application
- not be employed through the Seasonal Worker Programme or Pacific Labour Scheme
- hold one of the following valid personal identification documents:
  - Medicare card
  - Driver’s licence
  - Australian passport
  - a foreign passport with a valid Australian Visa.

For full eligibility criteria and further information refer to the [Seasonal Harvest Sign-On Bonus Program Guidelines](#).

### **Queensland – #pickqld bonus**

For workers in Queensland, [#pickqld bonus](#) provides payments of up to \$1,500 (on top of wages) to assist with costs such as accommodation, travel, training, and workwear. The \$1,500 incentive is paid in two instalments:

- an initial \$500 after 10 days work within a consecutive 28-day period (four weeks)
- a second and final payment of \$1,000 after 30 days of additional work within a consecutive 70-day period (10 weeks).

Download the [Quick guide to the #pickqld bonus](#)



## **LABOUR HIRE COMPANIES AND CONTRACTORS**

Some AEs participating in the SWP provide labour hire services. A full list of current AEs can be found [here](#). This list will tell you who is a Labour Hire Company and how to contact them.

When using Labour Hire Companies, it is important that growers understand their responsibilities; the [Fair Work Ombudsman Horticulture Showcase website](#) has lots of reliable information.

Some contractors may also be AEs participating in the SWP, or they may source their labour from other areas such as visa holders with general working rights, working holiday makers and Australians.

When using Labour Hire Companies and contractors it is still your responsibility to check visas and ensure that you only have legal workers on your property.

To learn more, make yourself familiar with the migrant workers information on the [Fair Work Ombudsman Horticulture Showcase website](#) so that you fully understand your legal obligations and workplace requirements.

The Department of Home Affairs provide [important information for employers of foreign nationals](#), including a list of “do’s and don’ts” to help you.

If you are not confident navigating the system, MADEC provide a complimentary service to all seasonal workers that are in Australia on an eligible working visa. Workers can visit a MADEC office with their working entitlement documentation and the MADEC staff will perform the VEVO checks and provide the worker with a [Harvest Labour Work Entitlement Card](#).



### **Is your labour hire provider/contractor licensed?**

Any business in Queensland, Victoria or South Australia that provides labour hire services must now be licensed. It is the responsibility of the host employer to ensure they only use licensed labour hire providers. The Labour Hire Authority advise that you are a host if you both:

- run a business or undertaking, and
- use labour hire workers to perform work in your business.

Basically, if you run a business, including a farm, and you use labour hire services to perform work in that business, you are a host. As a host you have a legal responsibility to ensure the labour hire provider/contractor is licensed, if they are not, you can face fines and/or prison.

### **Worker incentives**

Read the section on [worker incentives](#) and use these to your advantage when talking to prospective workers.



## **HARVEST TRAIL**

[Harvest Trail Services](#) (HTS) are managed by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), are government funded and provide a free service to growers and workers. All Australians and visa holders with general working rights, i.e., not restricted to an employer or type of work, are eligible to access HTS.

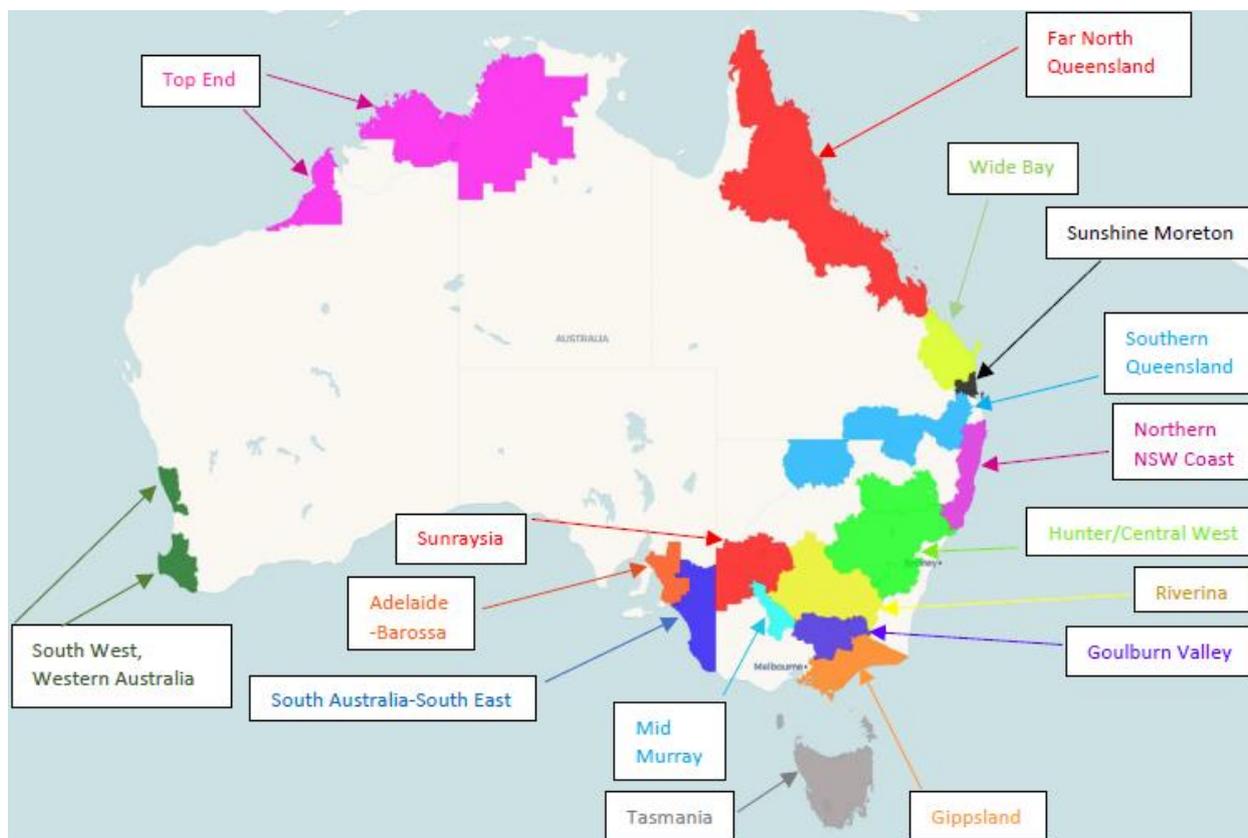
### **How to use Harvest Trail Services**

HTS providers cover most harvest areas across Australia, and they may be able to connect you with job seekers who are available for an immediate start. They can also help you:

- advertise your job vacancies on the [Harvest Trail Jobs Board](#)
- connect you with eligible harvest workers
- with the recruitment process, and
- screen job seekers suitable for the advertised role.

You can learn more about the role of the HTS provider [here](#). You can also list a job on the Harvest Trail Jobs Board yourself. Find out more [here](#).

As shown on the map below, there are 16 harvest areas. You can find your closest HTS provider [here](#).



### **Worker incentives**

Read the section on [worker incentives](#) and use these to your advantage when talking to prospective workers and in your job posts.



## **FACEBOOK**

Farm workers tend to be transient and travel around following work, making Facebook an accessible tool for finding their next job. In the current market, more than ever, it is important to project an authentic image and provide all the information needed to attract the right people. Your Facebook page will create their first impression and help them to decide if they want to work for you.

### **Setting up your page**

Make sure that your Facebook page looks professional and legitimate. It is advisable to keep your personal Facebook page separate and to set up a separate page for your farm.

- Use your business name as the Facebook name.
- Consider your profile picture and cover photo:
  - Do they look professional?
  - Do they reflect your industry?
  - Use relevant photos such as:
    - your crop showing how great it is
    - a landmark in your town, such as the river or some local scenery

### **Writing your 'about' section.**

Tell your property's story, its point of difference:

- Where are you situated?
- How far are you from shops, public transport, recreation activities etc.?
- Are you a family farm?
- How big is your property?
- What varieties do you grow?
- When is your season?
- Do you have accommodation?
- Can you provide transport?

### **Your newsfeed**

Keep your newsfeed professional and relevant:

- Create posts that show your farm at its best, use pictures and short videos.
- Create posts that show your workers having a social get together (make sure you have their consent though).
- If you offer accommodation and/or transport, share some pictures so workers know how great it is.
- Share good news industry specific content such as posts from the following Facebook pages, [Citrus Australia](#), [We Heart Citrus](#), [Aussie Oranges](#), [Aussie Mandarins](#). You could also share stories posted by your local packer or juicer.



- Share short videos of anything relevant to your property (always gain permission from your workers if they are going to be in it).
- Share posts from Facebook pages that highlight what a great town you live in and what there is to do and see in your area. These could include community pages such as your local:
  - council
  - radio/newspaper
  - community noticeboards/billboards
  - tourism provider pages
  - tourism industry group
  - sporting and community groups

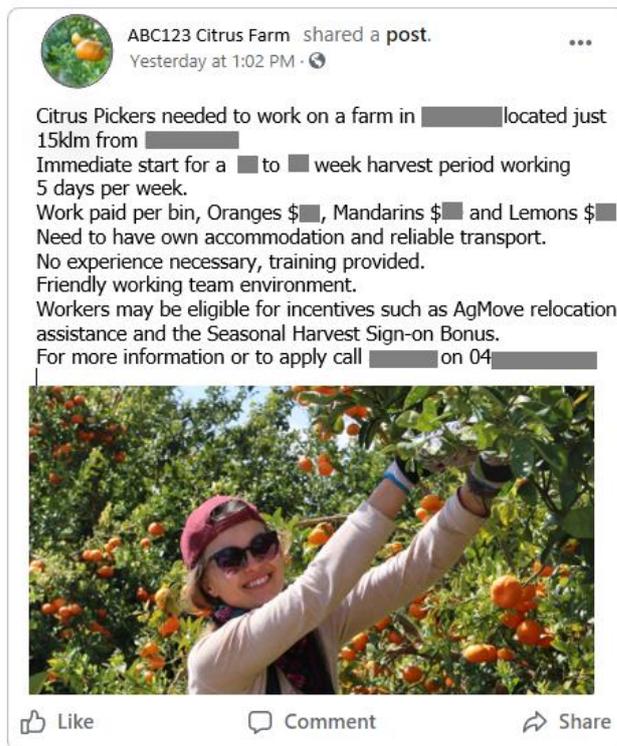
### Writing your Facebook job opportunity post

To help your post stand out and look polished, use a picture that shows how great your crop and property looks. If you use a picture with a worker in it make sure you have their 'ok' first.

When you write a job advert, no matter where you are going to publish it, it is important that your advert is concise and contains all the essential information to attract the right people to apply. It should be well-designed and look authentic.

Make sure you clearly define the following:

- **What** do you want the workers to do?
- What **skills** do they need?
- Do you need workers with **experience**, is training provided?
- **Dates** of contract.
- Rate of **pay**, noting if its hourly or piece rate.
- **Hours** of work per week.
- Provide some information **about** the work environment, property etc.
- **Location** of farm.
- Is there **accommodation** available?
- Is there **transport** available?
- **How to apply** – provide phone and/or email details for applications and enquiries.
- Include any **worker incentives** that are available such as AgMove relocation assistance and any state funded bonuses. Refer to the section on Worker Incentives [here](#).
- Have someone check your spelling and grammar before you post to keep your ad looking professional.





## Share your Facebook post

To get the best results, you need people outside your contacts to see your post. To gain a wider audience share your Facebook post in Facebook groups. If you are not sure what groups are in your area, use the *Search Facebook*  function and try some search combinations for example:

- Jobs + your town or region name e.g. *Jobs Mildura*
- Work + your town or region name e.g. *Work Mildura*

If nothing comes up for your town/region, check out the local community billboard/noticeboard pages to see if that is where other businesses are posting vacancies. Try this combination:

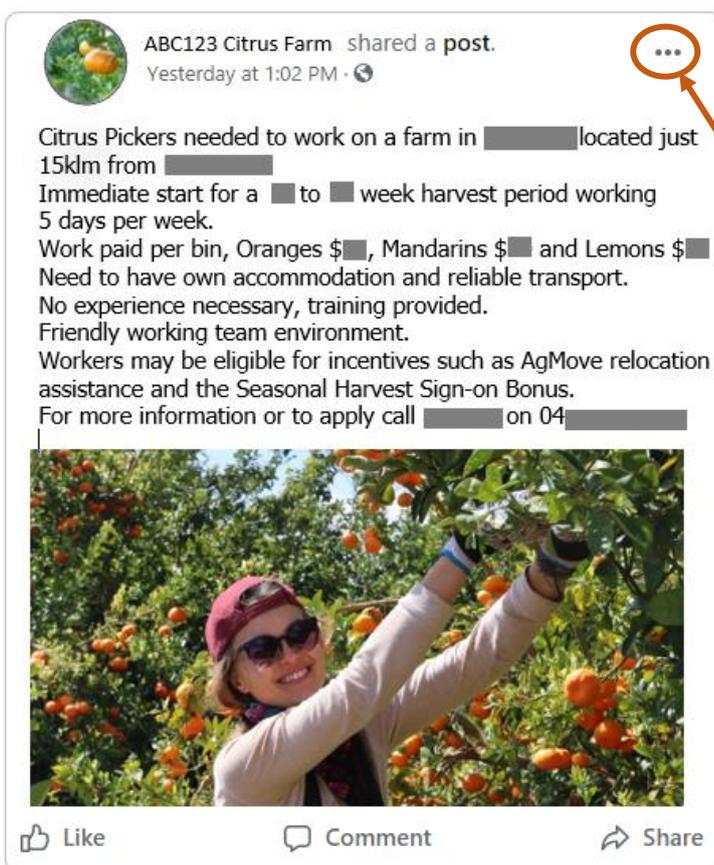
- Your town name + community e.g. *Robinvale Community*

You could also share your post with [Backpacker Jobs in Australia](#) and Facebook groups in towns outside your area where you know that workers will be finishing soon and looking to move on to citrus.

You may need to request to join these groups, once you are approved you will be able to post your vacancies on them.

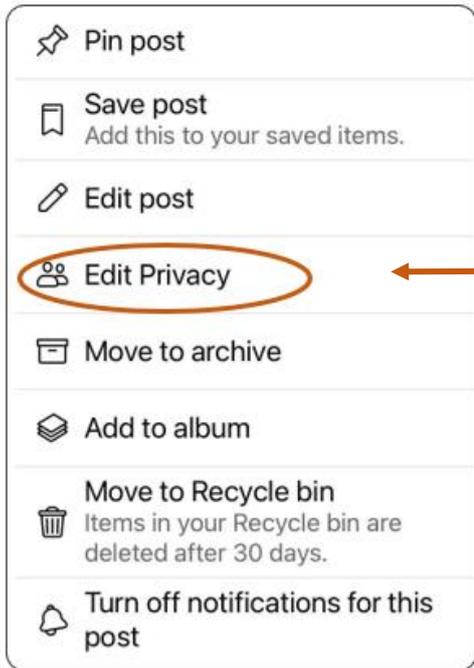
It is also a good idea to 'follow' these pages as often workers that are heading to your town will post on them asking for work.

## Adjusting your privacy settings to allow your post to be shared



When you create your post, follow the steps below to make it so that other people can share it.

1. Click on the three dots at the top right of the post to reveal the setting options.



2. Select Edit Privacy

3. Select 'Public'

4. Select 'Done'



Now other Facebook users can share your post and tag friends etc.



## **GUMTREE**

[Gumtree](#) is an online marketplace and is another platform that is used widely by jobseekers looking for farm work. Before using Gumtree make sure you understand their [Jobs Policy](#).

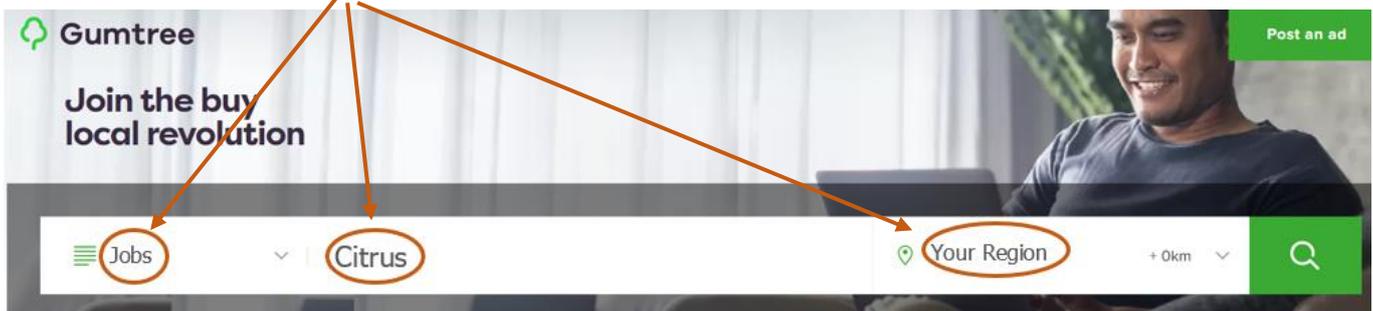
Gumtree provide detailed information on how to use the program. These links will help you get started:

- [How to register](#)
- [Which categories have a listing fee?](#)
- [What are the benefits of paid features?](#)
- [How do I post an Ad?](#)
- [How do I post a photo?](#)
- [Gumtree Basics](#)

### **Writing your Gumtree job opportunity post**

If you are unfamiliar with Gumtree, it is advisable to [search Gumtree](#) to see what other citrus work is being advertised in your area, this will give you a feel for how the platform works and looks.

Try these search options.



Draft your ad including the following information:

- **What** do you want the workers to do?
- What **skills** do they need?
- Do you need workers with **experience**, is training provided?
- **Dates** of contract.
- Rate of **pay**, noting if its hourly or piece rate.
- **Hours** of work per week.
- Provide some information **about** the work environment, property etc.
- **Location** of farm.
- Is there **accommodation** available?
- Is there **transport** available?
- **How to apply** – provide phone and or email details for applications and enquiries.
- Include any **worker incentives** that are available such as AgMove relocation assistance and any state funded bonuses. Refer to the section on Worker Incentives [here](#).
- Have someone check your spelling and grammar before you post to keep your ad looking professional.



## **Backpicker**

[Backpicker](#) is a web-based platform for growers in Australia to source workers.

### **Writing your backpicker job opportunity post**

If you are unfamiliar with backpicker it is advisable to check out the platform to see what other citrus work is being advertised in your area; this will give you a feel for how the platform works and looks.

Try these search options.



### **How to register to post a job**

[Click on this link](#) to view a short 4-minute video on how to register. And see [here](#) for a short video on changes made to the website so far, thanks to grower feedback.

Draft your ad including the following information:

- **What** do you want the workers to do?
- What **skills** do they need?
- Do you need workers with **experience**, is training provided?
- **Dates** of contract.
- Rate of **pay**, noting if its hourly or piece rate.
- **Hours** of work per week.
- Provide some information **about** the work environment, property etc.
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- **How to apply** – provide phone and or email details for applications and enquiries.
- Include any **worker incentives** that are available such as AgMove relocation assistance and any state funded bonuses. Refer to the section on Worker Incentives [here](#).
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[Follow Backpicker on Facebook](#) to stay up to date.