

Senate Select Committee on Job Security – Questions on notice 10 March 2022

Page 16 of the Hansard transcript – Senator Canavan is seeking confirmation of the workers scheduled for the first week of February with particular reference to Talipope.

SR OP CO response

The Company establishes a monthly roster for each MADEC picking team at the start of every month that sets out the rostered days off for the workers. These rosters show the same planned day off every week as a minimum, unless this needed to change due to unforeseen reasons such as personal circumstances or maybe a weather-related event.

At the start of January there was a roster set for the MADEC 2 team that consisted of 22 Samoan workers. Talipope and Aleki were included in this list of 22 workers.

Talipope's rostered day off in January was Sunday and Aleki's rostered day off was Tuesday each week.

In the pay run beginning Wednesday 26 January, Talipope did not present for work on Wednesday 26 January, Thursday 27 January, Friday 28 January and Monday 31 January. He essentially worked one day which was Saturday 29 January and this was validated in the MADEC time sheets as 7.25 hours for the week.

Aleki did not present for work on Sunday 30 January and Monday 31 January, and he left early unauthorised on Thursday 27 January. He essentially worked 22.67 hours for the week leading up to 2 February which is validated in the MADEC timesheets.

On the 31st of January, Sunny Ridge's HR Manager made a request to MADEC via a text message at 9.39am AEST for five Samoan workers to be removed from the farm due to non-attendance and requested to discuss replacement options. This text has been attached as Appendix A in its entirety but the Company respects that the Committee may wish to redact the surnames of the workers for privacy reasons. The reason the handwritten note on the team sheet referred to Aleki having family in Australia is that management believed he may have absconded as no notification or communication had been supplied for his absence.

The Committee will note that Talipope and Aleki formed part of these five workers and the decision to move them on had been made three days prior to the Company becoming aware of the hearing. The decision was based on their non-attendance and the impact it was having on the picking rotations, fruit wastage and reduced yield.

MADEC proceeded to action the request and the feedback from MADEC at that time was that the workers may have absconded from the program given their non-attendance and the fact that the workers were not contactable by phone and were not present at their accommodation.

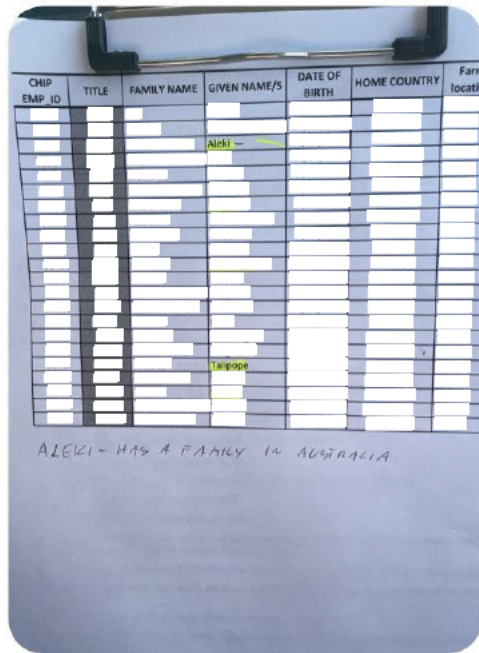
To confirm Senator Canavan's questioning, Talipope was not scheduled to work the first week of February. The Seville Harvest Manager created the February roster without Talipope or Aleki as the decision had been made on the 31st of January to move all five Samoan workers on, which was reflected in the scheduling.

On Friday the 4th of February the Chief Operations Officer of MADEC contacted the HR Manager and me via phone at approximately 6pm to advise that the relocation of the workers was taking a little longer than anticipated and asked if we could assist by allowing them to come back to the farm for another week. We agreed with the request based on the explanation by MADEC.

Appendix A



Mon, 31 Jan, 9:39 am



Hi Sean/David,
The Madec team want these 5 to be removed as does Sunny Ridge. I'll call you shortly to discuss reasons etc and if you could please advise on replacement options

