

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Seasonal Worker Programme
24 June 2015

Department of Employment Question No. 1

Senator Markus (Chair) asked on 24 June 2015 on proof Hansard page 5

Subject

Labour market testing requirements.

Question

Senator EDWARDS: For how many do you say, 'That's not right. We're not going to let you get anybody from overseas because you haven't complied'?

Ms Smith: I do not have that data with me.

Senator EDWARDS: Anecdotally—just broadly. Is it very little, quite a few or, surprisingly, nothing?

Ms Smith: A few.

Senator EDWARDS: But it is a handful.

CHAIR: Is there data around that?

Ms Smith: We could source that for you.

CHAIR: That would be helpful. (p. 5)

Answer

The Department of Employment would seek further information about an approved employer's labour market testing in a range of circumstances including:

- the Department identifies that the labour market testing section of the recruitment plan has not been fully completed
- the Department identifies that the advertisement has not run for the required 14 days prior to seeking approval to recruit seasonal workers
- the Department identifies that the approved employer has not provided a 'finalised' result or the employer indicates that the local applicant selection is still in process (the department requires a definitive result as to how many applicants were offered or not offered a position)
- the Department identifies that a reason for discounting a local applicant was not in line with programme requirements or workplace relations law, or
- the labour market testing advertisement does not meet programme requirements.

In addition, changes announced on 18 June 2015 strengthen protections for the local labour market by:

- a requirement for the Department of Employment to report back to the Australian Government by mid-2017 on whether Australian job seekers are being disadvantaged by the Seasonal Worker Programme; and
- providing the Minister for Employment with discretion to cap, exclude and review the placement of seasonal workers in geographical locations, including metropolitan areas and areas of with high unemployment and low workforce participation.

The labour market testing requirements in this programme are significantly stronger than those required for working visas.

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Seasonal Worker Programme
24 June 2015**

Department of Employment Question No. 2

Senator Markus (Chair) asked on 24 June 2015 on proof Hansard page 7

Subject

Labour force requirements for industries participating in the Seasonal Worker Programme.

Question

Can the department comment on labour force requirements in the industries, both for the northern Australia plan as well as the current Seasonal Worker Programme, that they are recruiting for more broadly for Australia?

Answer

Information is attached.

Labour market conditions

Limitations of labour market data

The ABS Labour Force Survey (LFS), the official source of employment statistics in Australia, understates the number of people employed in Agriculture and Tourism, particularly in relation to seasonal work. The LFS provides employment estimates for the *usually resident* population of Australia. People who intend to remain in Australia for less than 12 months are excluded from the scope of the survey. Accordingly, estimates from the LFS exclude Working Holiday Visa holders and other short-term visitors to Australia, who contribute substantially to employment in the Agriculture and Tourism industries.

In addition, data from the LFS are based on the industry of employment in a person's *main job*. The industries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing and Accommodation and Food Services each account for around 9 per cent of secondary jobs, which equates to approximately 60,000 additional workers each.¹

Data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing are subject to the same limitations; employment by industry data relate only to Australian usual residents and to the industry of employment in a person's main job.

To illustrate the extent of undercounting, data from the ABS Economic Activity Survey (EAS) show that as many as 499,000 workers were employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing at the end of June 2013, compared with an estimate of only 299,900 from the May 2013 LFS (in original terms).² The higher estimate is influenced by a range of factors, including differences in scope and methodology between the EAS and the LFS. The higher estimate of 499,000 workers likely takes better account of temporary entrants and secondary jobs, as both are conceptually in scope of the EAS.

Unfortunately, the EAS provides only estimates of total employment. No breakdown of employment characteristics is available. Accordingly, the following analysis primarily relies on LFS data, which can be disaggregated by a wide range of characteristics.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Broad industry trends and characteristics

At February 2015, the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry employed an estimated 321,300 people, or 2.8 per cent of the total workforce.³ In employment terms, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ranked 14th amongst the 19 broad industry groups.

Employment in the industry fell to a record low of 291,600 in May 2013 (in trend terms), as the industry faced the challenge of a record high level of the Australian dollar and the impact of severe flooding in 2011. Assisted by a sustained fall in the Australian dollar, however, over the 21 months to February 2015 employment in the industry has increased by 29,700 persons (or 10.2 per cent).

The majority of workers in the industry work full time (72.1 per cent, compared with 69.3 per cent across all industries).

The industry has the oldest age profile of any of the 19 broad industry groups, with a median age of 49 years in 2014, compared with 40 years across all industries. However, the age profile varies by occupation, with Farmers tending to be older and Farm Workers tending to be younger. The median age of Crop Farm Workers (39 years) is a little lower than the

¹ ABS, *Australian Social Trends*, article 'People with more than one job', September 2009, cat. no. 4102.0.

² ABS, *Australian Industry, 2012-13*, cat. no. 8155.0 and ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003.

³ ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, trend data.

median across all industries (40 years), while the median age of Livestock Farm Workers (30 years) and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers (31 years) is well below the median across all industries.

Employment in Agricultural sectors

Agriculture is by far the largest employing sector within the broader Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry, accounting for 87.1 per cent of employment in the industry (or 280,000 workers). Within Agriculture, the largest employing sector is Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming, accounting for 127,900 workers or 59.5 per cent of Agriculture employment at February 2015. Fruit and Tree Nut Growing, the second largest sector, employed a further 22,500 workers (10.5 per cent), followed by Dairy Cattle Farming with 20,300 workers (9.5 per cent).

Within Agriculture, the rate of full time employment varies by sector from 60.5 per cent in Nursery and Floriculture Production to 87.4 per cent in Other Crop Growing.⁴ The median age in all sectors was above the median of 40 years across all industries.

Table 1: Employment characteristics, selected sectors of Agriculture

Sector	Employment level February 2015 (‘000)	Proportion employed full time February 2015 (%)	Median age 2014 (years)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	321.3	72.1	49
Agriculture	280.0	70.7	50
Nursery and Floriculture Production	5.6	60.5	45
Mushroom and Vegetable Growing	11.0	76.8	43
Fruit and Tree Nut Growing	22.5	68.6	48
Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming	127.9	70.8	56
Other Crop Growing	3.3	87.4	48
Dairy Cattle Farming	20.3	70.0	44
Poultry Farming	6.0	63.3	44
Deer Farming	0.1	-	n/a
Other Livestock Farming	18.2	74.0	42

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003.

Employment level is trend data, full time share is a four quarter average of original data, and median age is custom request data.

⁴ Other Crop Growing includes sugar cane growing, cotton growing and other horticultural crops including animal fodder crops, ginger, lavender, mustard, peanuts and tobacco.

As previously mentioned at section 5.6 Agriculture has faced a series of challenges over the last 15 years. With the onset of the drought, employment in the sector fell by 70,300 (or 18.2 per cent) between November 2001 and November 2002. The level of employment in the sector remained relatively steady over the following decade, until the devastating floods in early 2011 which, combined with a high Australian dollar, saw employment fall by 51,500 (or 17.1 per cent) between November 2010 and May 2013. Since May 2013, however, employment in the sector has recovered somewhat, growing by 29,700 (or 11.9 per cent).⁵

Despite this recent increase, employment in Agriculture remains 28,500 (or 9.2 per cent) lower than five years ago. The largest fall in employment over this period was recorded in Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming (down by 12,500 or 8.9 per cent), followed by Mushroom and Vegetable Growing (11,300 or 50.8 per cent) and Other Crop Growing (10,000 or 75.2 per cent).

Lower skilled Agricultural occupations

The largest lower skilled occupations in Agriculture are Livestock Farm Workers, Crop Farm Workers and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers.

Employment of Crop Farm Workers has declined by 70.1 per cent over the past 15 years to stand at 16,700 in February 2015 (see chart below).

Employment of Livestock Farm Workers fell markedly between 2000 and 2005 but has recovered strongly in recent years to stand at 41,700 in February 2015. The very strong rise in employment of Livestock Farm Workers over the past two years should be viewed with caution due to high volatility in the ABS survey data for occupations of this size.

Employment of Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers has declined by 30.0 per cent over the past 15 years to stand at 4,900 in February 2015.

One reason for the decline in lower skilled Agricultural occupations is due to technological advances in the sector, for example the development of mechanical harvesting of wine grapes allows for broadacre style harvesting, pruning and spraying of vines yielding significant reductions in the cost of harvesting grapes.⁶

Vacancy trends

The Department of Employment's Internet Vacancy Index counts the number of job advertisements newly lodged each month on three major job boards (SEEK, CareerOne and Australian Jobsearch, including Harvest Trail). Relatively few lower skilled seasonal jobs are advertised on the three job boards. This is probably because employers advertising for farm labour tend to use other recruitment methods, such as word of mouth, social media, signs in youth hostels or at bus and train stations, or websites aimed at backpackers.

The data show that the number of job advertisements for Farm Workers (Crop Farm Workers, Livestock Farm Workers and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers combined) has steadily fallen from 1,740 in February 2007 to 400 in May 2015. This suggests a marked fall in demand for seasonal farm labour.

⁵ ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, February 2015

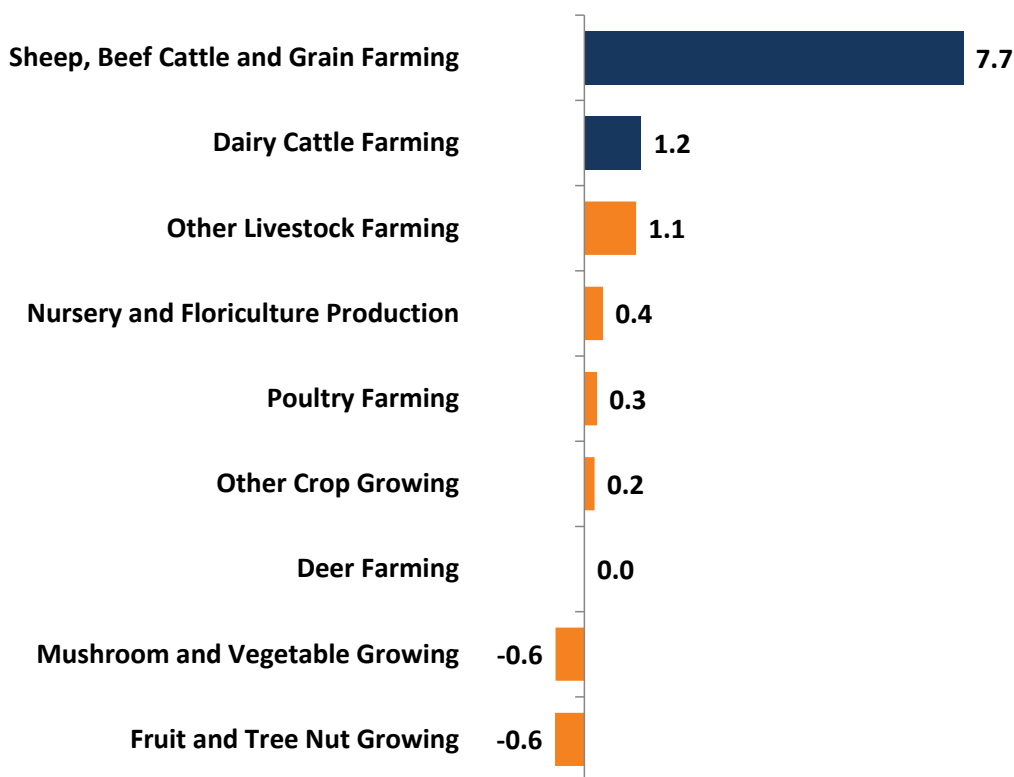
⁶ Productivity Commission, *Research Paper Trends in Australian Agriculture*, June 2005

Employment Projections

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry is projected to record a modest increase in employment over the five years to November 2019 of 12,000 or 3.7 per cent, notwithstanding continuation of the industry's long term trend of a declining employment share reflecting ongoing investment in labour-saving plant and equipment.⁷ By comparison, the projected rate of employment growth across all industries is 10.0 per cent over the same period.

Employment in Agriculture is projected to increase by 11,700 or 4.1 per cent, with seven of the nine sectors within Agriculture expected to grow, albeit at slower rates of growth than the projected rate of employment growth across all industries.

Figure 1: Projected employment growth ('000) by Agriculture sector - five years to November 2019



Source: Department of Employment, *Employment Projections to November 2019*

Amongst the three larger lower skilled occupations within Agriculture, employment of Livestock Farm Workers (projected to increase by 1,900 or 4.9 per cent) and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers (up by 500 or 7.5 per cent) is expected to increase while employment of Crop Farm Workers is projected to decline (by 3,900 or 19.2 per cent) over the five years to November 2019.

⁷ Department of Employment, *Employment projections to November 2019*

Cane and Cotton Growing

Sugar Cane Growing and Cotton Growing form part of the Other Crop Growing sector. Employment data from the LFS are unavailable for such small employing segments. 2011 Census data however, indicate that Sugar Cane Growing employed 476 Crop Farm Workers, 26 Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers and 5 Livestock Farm Workers, while Cotton Growing employed 301 Crop Farm Workers, 34 Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers and 14 Livestock Farm Workers.

Both Sugar Cane and Cotton Growing have experienced substantial falls in total employment over the 10 years between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. Employment in Sugar Cane Growing fell by 47.5 per cent, dropping in number from 9,900 in 2001 to 5,200 in 2011, while Cotton Growing halved over the same period, falling from 3,600 to 1,800.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture is a very small sector, employing an estimated 6,800 people in February 2015. Its largest occupation by far is Aquaculture Farmers, employing 1,300 people at the 2011 Census, followed by Aquaculture Workers (350) and Seafood Process Workers (230).

Employment in the sector is predominantly full time (80.4 per cent) and the median age is 39 years (compared with 40 years across all industries).

ABS Labour Force Survey estimates are highly volatile for the sector, due to its small size. Over the past 15 years, employment estimates for the sector have ranged from a low of 2,200 in August 2012 to a high of 8,400 in August 2014.

Estimates from the ABS Economic Activity Survey show that Aquaculture employed 8,000 people in June 2008, falling to 6,000 people in June 2013.

Employment in Aquaculture is projected to grow slightly (up by 600 or 6.5 per cent) over the five years to November 2019.

Tourism

Broad industry trends and characteristics

The ABS Tourism Satellite Account provides estimates of Tourism employment based on the proportion of total value added of each industry which is related to Tourism. According to these estimates, Tourism employed 534,000 people in 2013-14, accounting for 4.6 per cent of total employment.⁸ Over the 10 years to 2013-14, employment in the industry grew by 17.0 per cent, a slightly slower rate of growth than the 21.7 per cent recorded for employment as a whole.

A large proportion of employment in the industry is part time (45.6 per cent, compared with 30.0 per cent across all industries) and a higher proportion of employment in the industry is female (53.6 per cent, compared with 45.8 per cent across all industries).

⁸ ABS, *Australian National Accounts: Tourism Satellite Account*, 2013-14, cat. no. 5249.0

Tourism sectors

The largest sectors within Tourism are Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services (employing 144,300 people), Retail Trade (101,500) and Accommodation (69,700).

Part time employment accounts for the majority of employment in Tourism sectors such as Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services, Other Sports and Recreation Services⁹, and Clubs, Pubs, Taverns and Bars. By contrast, full time employment predominates in the transport sectors.

Table 2: Employment level and full time share, Tourism sectors

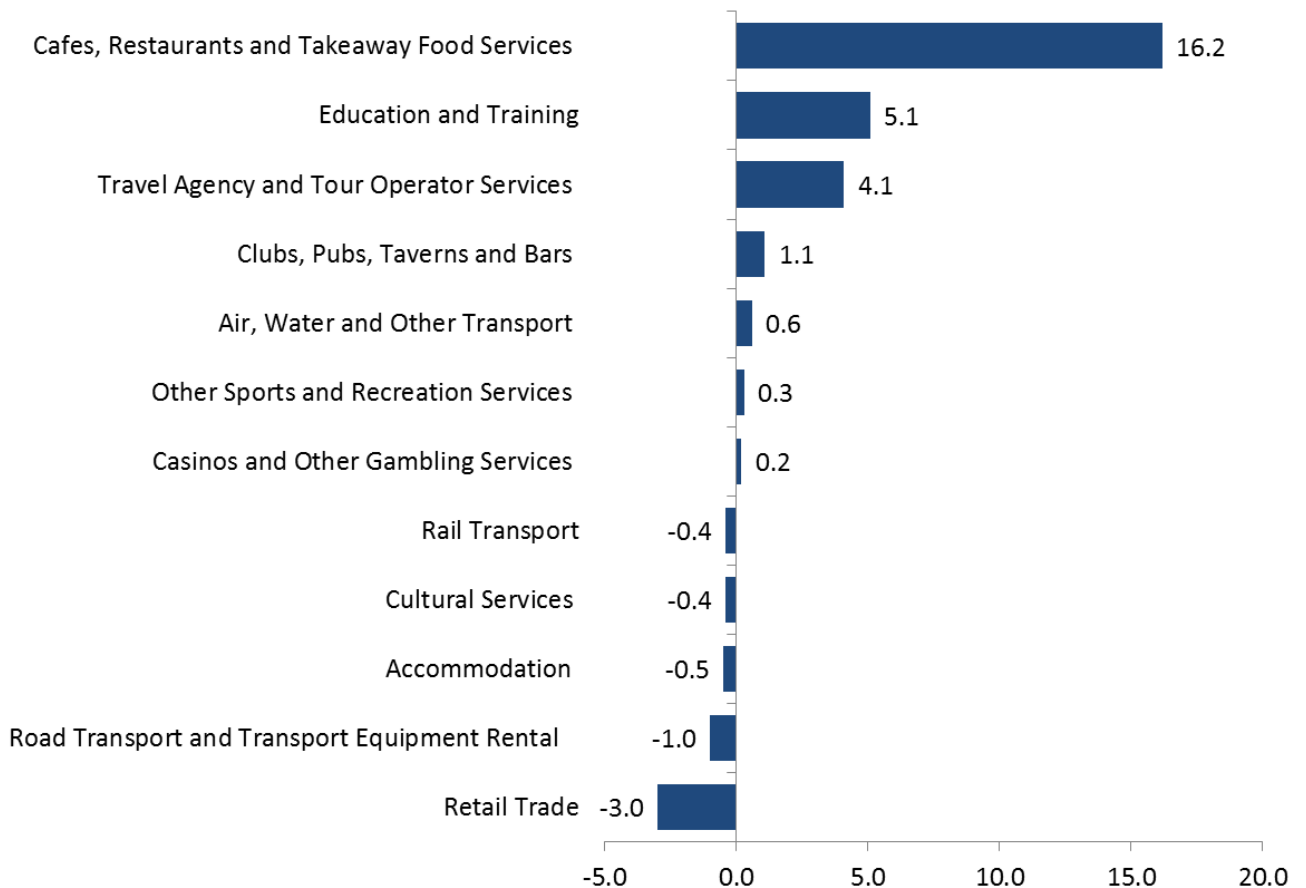
Sector	Employment level 2013-14 ('000)	Proportion employed full time (%)
Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services	144.3	38.2
Retail Trade	101.5	51.0
Accommodation	69.7	56.5
Education and Training	37.8	61.6
Air, Water and Other Transport	36.2	75.1
Travel Agency and Tour Operator Services	32.2	75.8
Clubs, Pubs, Taverns and Bars	31.2	46.5
Other Sports and Recreation Services	20.7	43.5
Road Transport and Transport Equipment Rental	19.4	80.4
Cultural Services	10.0	61.0
Casinos and Other Gambling Services	4.0	72.5
Rail Transport	3.2	96.8
All Other Industries	23.8	76.2
TOTAL TOURISM EMPLOYED PERSONS	534.0	54.4

Source: ABS, *Australian National Accounts: Tourism Satellite Account, 2013-14, cat. no. 5249.0*

Over the five years to 2013-14, employment growth in Tourism has been concentrated in Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services, which has increased by 16,200 (or 12.6 per cent). Education and Training (5,100 or 15.6 per cent) and Travel Agency and Tour Operator services (4,100 or 14.6 per cent) have also recorded strong employment growth. By contrast, Retail Trade (down by 3,000 or 2.9 per cent) and Road Transport and Transport Equipment Rental (down by 1,000 or 4.9 per cent) have recorded notable declines in employment.

⁹ Includes sports and physical recreation activities, horse and dog racing activities, amusement parks and centres.

Figure 2: Employment change over the five years to 2013-14, by Tourism sector ('000)



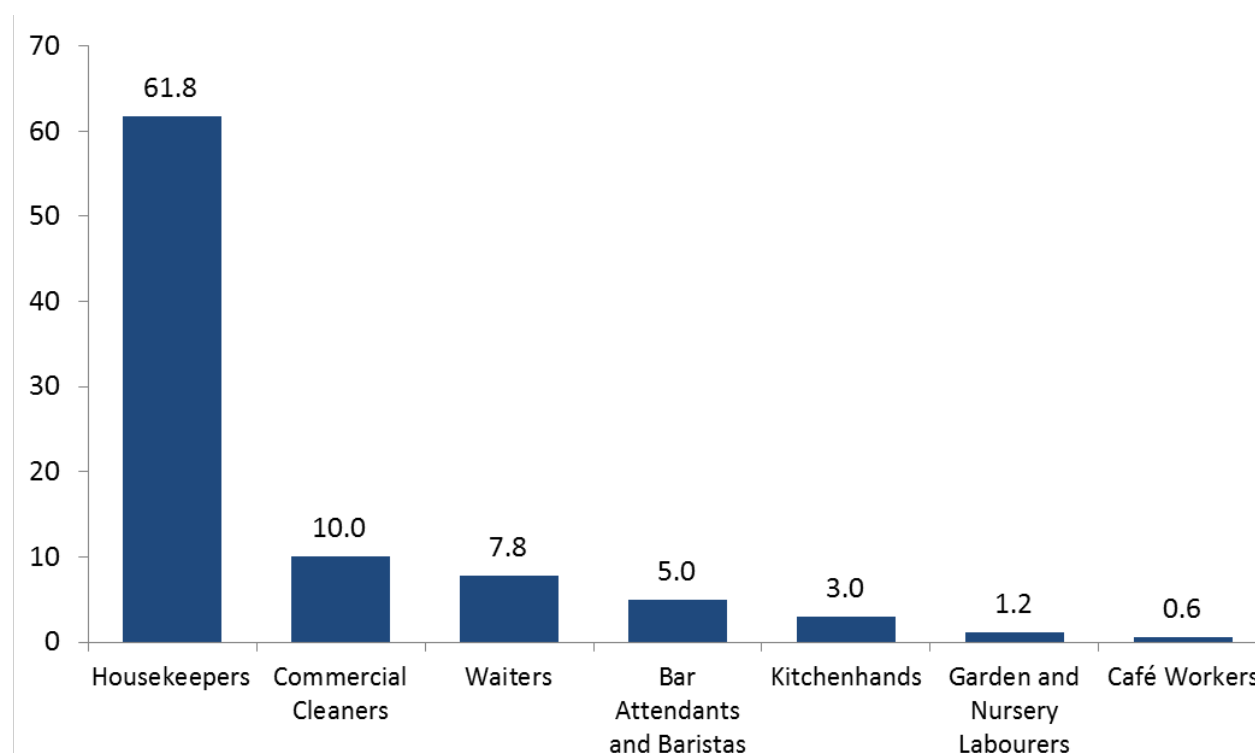
Source: ABS, *Australian National Accounts: Tourism Satellite Account, 2013-14, cat. no.5249.0*

Tourism occupations

Low skilled occupations in the Accommodation sector which experience seasonal demand fluctuations and are thus the focus of the Seasonal Worker Programme include Bar Attendants and Baristas, Café Workers, Commercial Cleaners, Garden and Nursery Labourers, Housekeepers, Kitchenhands and Waiters.

Census data indicate that these occupations are often prevalent in industries and sectors other than Accommodation. Using data from the 2011 Census, the chart below shows the proportion of each occupation found in the Accommodation sector. Of the seven occupations, only Housekeepers are significantly represented in the Accommodation sector (61.8 per cent).

Figure 3: Employment share (%) within Accommodation – selected occupations, Census 2011



Source: ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Other key employing sectors for these occupations included Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services (Café Workers and Waiters), Building Cleaning, Pest Control and Gardening Services (Commercial Cleaners and Garden and Nursery Labourers) and Pubs, Taverns and Bars (Bar Attendants and Baristas). The table below shows the top five employing sectors for each occupation.

Table 3: Top five employing industries – selected occupations, Census 2011

	No. of people employed
Bar Attendants and Baristas	
Pubs, Taverns and Bars	23,100
Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services	21,200
Clubs (Hospitality)	11,800
Accommodation	3,400
Sports and Physical Recreation Activities	1,700
Café Workers	No.
Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services	18,400
School Education	1,500
Specialised Food Retailing	1,000
Bakery Product Manufacturing	700
Food and Beverage Services, nfd	500
Waiters	No.
Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services	64,800
Accommodation	7,300
Pubs, Taverns and Bars	5,900
Clubs (Hospitality)	4,700
Gambling Activities	1,400
Commercial Cleaners	No.
Building Cleaning, Pest Control and Gardening Services	44,300
Accommodation	11,400
School Education	9,300
Hospitals	7,300
Residential Care Services	4,400
Housekeepers	No.
Accommodation	14,200
Building Cleaning, Pest Control and Gardening Services	3,400
Hospitals	1,100
Residential Care Services	1,000
Gambling Activities	300
Garden and Nursery Labourers	No.
Building Cleaning, Pest Control and Gardening Services	9,800
Local Government Administration	2,800
Agricultural Product Wholesaling	2,500
Other Construction Services	1,600
Nursery and Floriculture Production	1,500
Kitchenhands	No.
Cafés, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services	54,600
Residential Care Services	9,000
Hospitals	8,300
Accommodation	2,800
Pubs, Taverns and Bars	2,700

Source: ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing

More recent data from the ABS Labour Force Survey (LFS) are for occupations across all sectors, and not only within the Accommodation sector. The LFS also excludes Working Holiday Visa holders and other temporary entrants with work rights.

The table below shows key employment characteristics for the selected occupations (across all industry sectors). Notable amongst these are the relatively low proportions in full time employment (compared with the proportion across all occupations of 69.3 per cent) and the generally low median age for some of the occupations (compared to the median age for all occupations of 40 years). A very high proportion of female workers is evident in some occupations (Housekeepers, Café Workers and Waiters).

Table 4: Employment trends and characteristics – selected occupations

Occupation	Trend Data - Feb 2015 (‘000)	5 Year Change (‘000)	5 Year Change (%)	Projection to Nov 2019 (‘000)	Projection to Nov 2019 (%)	Projected employment level at Nov 2019 (‘000)	FT Share, year to Feb 2015 (%)	Median Age 2014	Female Share year to Feb 2015 (%)
Bar Attendants and Baristas	88.6	10.2	12.9	11.0	13.4	93.0	38.5	25	55.1
Café Workers	23.7	0.8	3.4	2.9	12.0	27.0	23.9	28	83.4
Commercial Cleaners	148.4	-17.6	-10.6	-2.4	-1.6	144.7	34.8	46	59.7
Garden and Nursery Labourers	33.6	1.3	4.0	0.9	2.7	32.8	58.9	43	11.1
Housekeepers	28.6	5.5	23.8	1.3	4.7	29.3	32.8	44	88.8
Kitchenhands	135.1	19.8	17.1	14.3	11.2	142.3	19.4	24	55.7
Waiters	127.0	16.4	14.8	18.6	15.3	139.9	22.8	22	77.0

Sources: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003; Department of Employment, Employment Projections, five years to November 2019. Employment level and growth is Department of Employment trend data, full time and female shares are four quarter averages of original data, and median age is custom request data.

Nationally, one of the seven lower skilled occupations experienced a decline in employment over the five years to February 2015, with Commercial Cleaners falling by 17,600 (or 10.6 per cent). The largest increases were for Kitchenhands (19,800 or 17.1 per cent), Waiters (16,400 or 14.8 per cent) and Bar Attendants and Baristas (10,200 or 12.9 per cent).

Looking forward, employment of Waiters is projected to continue to experience robust growth over the five years to November 2019, increasing by 18,600 or 15.3 per cent – around the recent five year trend and significantly above the projected growth rate across all occupations of 10.0 per cent. Other occupations projected to record strong growth include Bar Attendants and Baristas (up by 11,000 or 13.4 per cent), Café Workers (up by 2,900 or 12.0 per cent) and Kitchenhands (up by 14,300 or 11.2 per cent).

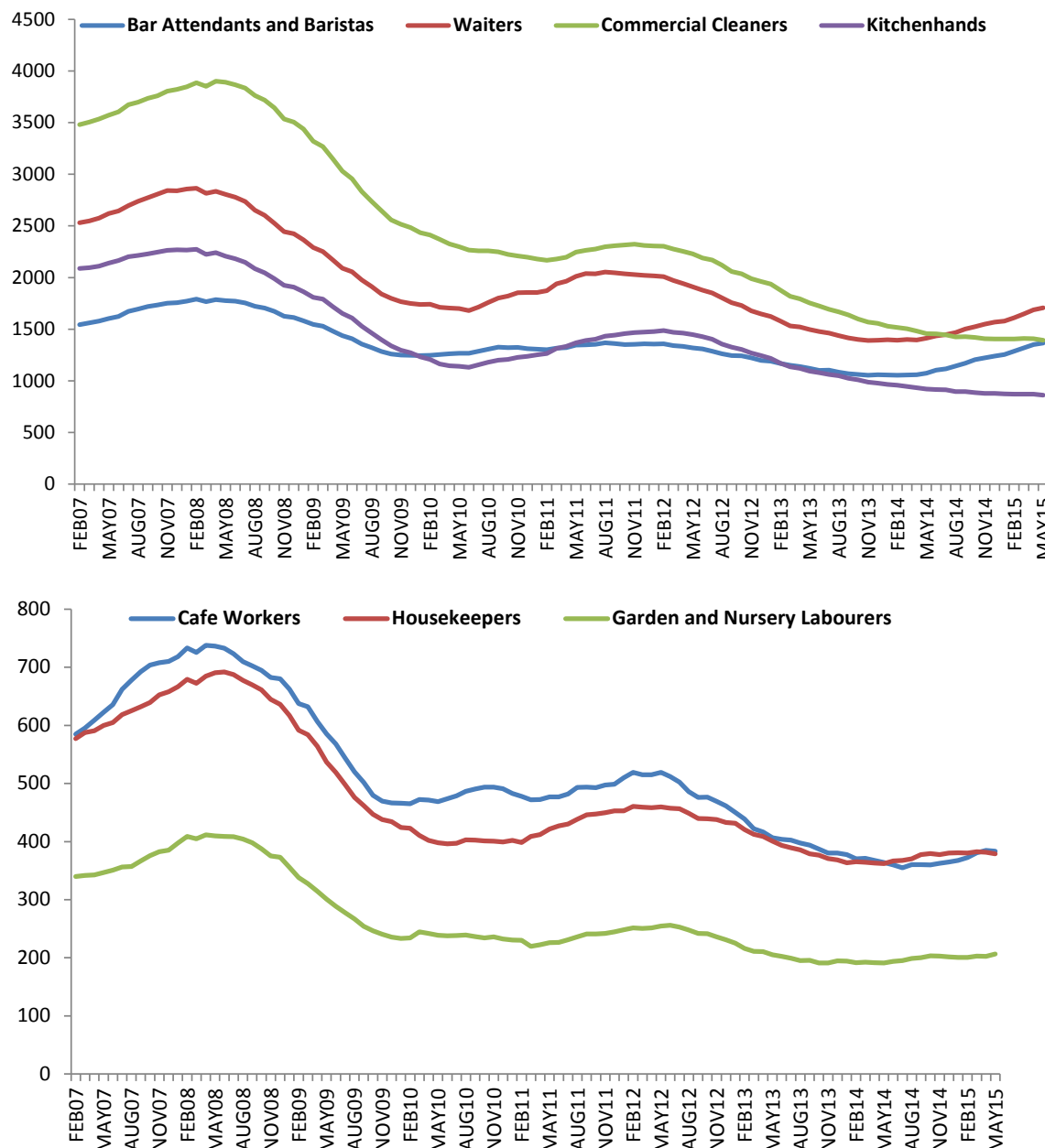
Commercial Cleaners (the largest of the seven occupations at 148,400) is projected to record a small decline of 2,400 (or 1.6 per cent) which nonetheless reflects a levelling out from the 10.6 per cent fall over the five years to February 2015.

Vacancy trends

Internet Vacancy Index data suggest that demand for the selected occupations is relatively low (see charts below). This is in line with the fall in vacancies generally since early 2008.

However, there are signs that labour demand for some of these occupations may be increasing. A strong increase in vacancies over the year to May 2015 was recorded for Bar Attendants and Baristas (up by 27.2 per cent) and Waiters (up by 20.8 per cent). Smaller increases were recorded in vacancies for Garden and Nursery Labourers (8.2 per cent), Café Workers (5.5 per cent), and Housekeepers (4.6 per cent). Vacancies fell over the year for Kitchenhands (down by 6.4 per cent) and Commercial Cleaners (4.5 per cent)

Figure 4: Job advertisements for selected Tourism occupations (no.)



Source: Department of Employment, Internet Vacancy Index, May 2015, 12 month average of original data

Skill shortage research

While the focus of the Department of Employment's skill shortage research is on higher skilled occupations, the Department conducted research into a small number of lower skilled occupations, including Waiters and Bar Attendants, in 2011. This showed that there was no shortage of workers looking for opportunities to enter these occupations, but employers had a clear preference for experienced workers who already held the necessary licences (such as Responsible Service of Alcohol) and few were prepared to employ inexperienced workers.

The Department is undertaking further research, which includes waiters and bar attendants. Although the study is incomplete, preliminary results support the earlier findings and indicate that there are generally relatively large numbers of applicants for vacancies in these occupations, but few surveyed employers are willing to provide training for inexperienced workers outside of on the job training.

**Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Seasonal Worker Programme
24 June 2015**

Department of Employment Questions No. 3 and 4

Senator Markus (Chair) asked on 24 June 2015 on proof Hansard page 9

Subject

Age of seasonal workers participating in the programme.

Question

CHAIR: That is right. Can you give us a breakdown of age as well?

Mr Roddam: Do we have age?

Ms Smith: No. We would have to speak to Immigration.

Mr Roddam: We are not sure about age.

CHAIR: Just because we are looking at this in terms of youth, young people. (p. 9)

Mr Roddam: No. The 21 we keep to be in line with what the adult wages system is here. We can certainly give you the returning workers and the number of workers per country if they are of use.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. (p. 9)

Answer

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has provided information on the age breakdown of seasonal workers at the time of their visa application.

Subclass 416 Seasonal Worker Programme visas granted between 2012–13 to 2014–15 to 31 May 2015 by citizenship country and age group is attached.

Financial Year	Citizenship Country	18-20 years	21-30 years	31-45 years	46+ years	Unknown	Total
2012-13	Kiribati	0	23	11	0	0	34
	Nauru	0	<4	6	0	0	10
	Papua New Guinea	0	11	15	0	0	26
	Samoa	0	11	11	0	0	22
	Solomon Islands	0	20	22	0	0	42
	Timor-Leste	0	20	<4	0	0	21
	Tonga	6	608	585	0	0	1 199
	Vanuatu	0	62	57	0	0	119
2012-13 Total		6	759	708	0	0	1 473
2013-14	Kiribati	0	9	5	0	0	14
	Papua New Guinea	0	8	15	0	<4	26
	Samoa	<4	89	70	<4	0	162
	Solomon Islands	0	<4	5	0	0	9
	Timor-Leste	0	53	21	0	0	74
	Tonga	<4	736	726	24	10	1 497
	Tuvalu	<4	13	5	<4	0	20
	Vanuatu	0	113	98	<4	0	212
2013-14 Total		<4	1 025	945	28	13	2 014
2014-15 to 31/5/15	Fiji	0	<4	<4	0	0	<4
	Kiribati	0	6	5	0	0	11
	Papua New Guinea	0	20	14	<4	0	35
	Samoa	0	98	73	<4	<4	175
	Solomon Islands	<4	8	10	0	<4	21
	Timor-Leste	0	105	61	<4	<4	168
	Tonga	0	901	888	69	25	1 883
	Tuvalu	0	<4	<4	<4	0	7
	Vanuatu	0	220	254	19	<4	497
2014-15 to 31/5/15 Total		<4	1 365	1 308	92	35	2 801

Questions provided in writing to the Department of Employment

Joint Standing Committee on Migration, Seasonal Worker Programme

Question No. 1

In their submission, Owen Pacific Workforce has suggested removing the requirement for approved employers to pay for all internal travel over \$100. Does the Department have a view on this suggestion?

Answer

The Australian Government has recently removed the requirement for approved employers to pay the costs of seasonal workers' domestic transfer costs over \$100.

Question No. 2

Owen Pacific Workforce has also suggested removing the requirement for approved employers to do market testing.

- Can the Department elaborate the requirement to do market testing?
- Is the Department aware of any limitations or benefits in having the approved employer conduct market testing?

Answer

The Australian Government's first priority is to support Australian job seekers. Where there is a local labour shortage, the Government recognises the need to source labour from elsewhere.

A design principle of the Seasonal Worker Programme is that employers first approach Australian job seekers. Approved employers are required to test the local labour market and offer vacant positions to any suitable local job seekers before seeking seasonal workers under the Seasonal Worker Programme. Employers must advertise vacant positions for a minimum of two weeks. The job advertisement can be lodged for up to three months before the position's commencement date.

During 2014-15, approved employers reported 329 Australian job seekers were found suitable to undertake seasonal work through the labour market testing undertaken by approved employers.

Question No. 3

What are the workers' compensation requirements for approved employers? Are the rates applied to calculate the premiums appropriate for seasonal workers?

Answer

All employees engaged under the Seasonal Worker Programme must be employed in accordance with Australian workplace laws including the Fair Work Act and relevant work health and safety and workers' compensation laws.

Workers' Compensation arrangements are, for the most part, the responsibility of state and territory governments. Workers' compensation schemes in each Australian jurisdiction are underpinned by legislation that places obligations on employers to ensure the health and

safety of workers and to provide rehabilitation and workers' compensation for injured workers.

Question No. 4

What are the current and projected labour workforce requirements for the horticulture industry?

Answer

The Department of Employment has provided information on labour force requirements for the horticulture industry in sections 2.3, 2.7 and in the attachment to the joint submission to the Joint Standing Committee for Migration's inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme which can also be found at the answer to Question 2 of the questions taken when the Department of Employment appeared before the Committee on 24 June 2015.

Question No. 5

How many individuals have participated in the SWP since its establishment in 2012? Has there been an increase or decrease in demand?

Answer

The Department of Employment has provided information on participants in the Seasonal Worker Programme in table 1 on page 5 of the joint submission to the Joint Standing Committee for Migration's inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme. A copy of this table is below. Demand for the Programme has increased.

Seasonal Worker Programme take up of places by year under the capped programme

	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15*(as at 31 May 2015)
Horticulture	1452 of 1600 capped places	1979 of 2000 capped places	2755 of 2600 capped places (noting places from the trial sector have been used)
Trial sectors of aquaculture, cane, cotton and accommodation	21 of 400 capped places	35 of 500 capped places	46 of 650 capped places
Totals	1473	2014	2801 as at 31 May (as at 31 May 2015)

* Minister for Employment announcement on 20 February 2015 to merge horticulture and trial sector caps for the remainder of 2015–16.

Question No. 6

Can the Department please provide an overview of the SWP including its role in the programme?

Answer

The Department of Employment has provided an overview of the Seasonal Worker Programme, including the role of Government agencies, in the joint submission to the Joint Standing Committee for Migration's inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme.

Question No. 7

How many employers are involved in the SWP? Where are they located?

Answer

In 2014–15 there were 58 approved employers under the programme. These 58 are located in every state and territory of Australia apart from the Australian Capital Territory, with many of the employers having the capacity to place seasonal workers in multiple locations across Australia. A list of locations for approved employers is below.

List of locations for currently approved employers under the Seasonal Worker Programme

Number	Industry/Sector	State/Territory
1.	Accommodation	Perth, Western Australia
2.	Horticulture	Renmark, South Australia
3.	Horticulture	Bundaberg, Queensland
4.	Labour Hire Company	Coonawarram, South Australia
5.	Labour Hire Company	Victoria
6.	Horticulture	Mundubbera, Queensland
7.	Labour Hire Company	Childers, Queensland
8.	Horticulture	Koo Wee Rup, Victoria
9.	Horticulture	Innisfail, Queensland
10.	Horticulture	Glossodia, New South Wales
11.	Horticulture	Glossodia, New South Wales
12.	Horticulture	Mundubbera, Queensland
13.	Horticulture	Nobby, Queensland
14.	Accommodation	Hamilton Island, Queensland
15.	Horticulture	Harvey, Western Australia
16.	Horticulture	Harvey, Western Australia
17.	Accommodation	Broome, Western Australia
18.	Horticulture	Mooroopna, Victoria
19.	Horticulture	Mundubbera, Queensland
20.	Labour Hire Company	Griffith, New South Wales
21.	Accommodation	Broome, Western Australia
22.	Labour Hire Company	Mildura, Victoria
23.	Labour Hire Company	Coffs Harbour, New South Wales
24.	Horticulture	Emerald, Queensland
25.	Horticulture	Craigieburn, Victoria
26.	Horticulture	Mundubbera, Queensland
27.	Horticulture	Gaynder, Queensland
28.	Horticulture	North Adelaide, South Australia
29.	Labour Hire Company	Adelaide, South Australia
30.	Horticulture	Cairns, Queensland
31.	Horticulture	Carnarvon, Western Australia
32.	Horticulture	Emerald, Queensland
33.	Horticulture	Bowen, Queensland
34.	Labour Hire Company	Margaret River, Western Australia
35.	Labour Hire Company	Armidale, New South Wales

36.	Horticulture	Carnarvon, Western Australia
37.	Horticulture	Hoddles Creek, Victoria
38.	Labour Hire Company	Runcorn, Queensland
39.	Horticulture	Launching Place, Victoria
40.	Accommodation	Sydney, New South Wales
41.	Accommodation	Broome, Western Australia
42.	Horticulture	Kalbar, Queensland
43.	Horticulture	Canowindra, New South Wales
44.	Horticulture	Merbein, Victoria
45.	Horticulture	Mundubbera, Queensland
46.	Labour Hire Company	Box Hill North, Victoria
47.	Horticulture	Mareeba, Queensland
48.	Accommodation	Mount Surprise, Queensland
49.	Horticulture	Freemans Reach, New South Wales
50.	Horticulture	Katherine, Northern Territory
51.	Horticulture	North Balgowlah, New South Wales
52.	Horticulture	South West Rocks, New South Wales
53.	Horticulture	Koo Wee Rup, Victoria
54.	Horticulture	Wallaville, Queensland
55.	Labour Hire Company	Tully, Queensland
56.	Labour Hire Company	Margaret River, Western Australia
57.	Horticulture	North Freemantle, Western Australia
58.	Labour Hire	Windsor, Queensland

Question No. 8

How do employers become an approved SWP employer? What are their responsibilities? Is an audit of the approved SWP employer conducted regularly?

Answer

An approved employer is an Australian Entity that has:

- submitted an application to become an employer of seasonal workers
- had their application assessed and found acceptable by assessing Government agencies (the Department of Employment and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection), and
- has a Deed of Agreement with the Department of Employment and is a party to a Special Programme Agreement and a Special Programme Sponsor with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

An employer cannot recruit or commence recruitment under the Seasonal Worker Programme until they have met all of the above conditions.

Approved employers responsibilities under the Programme include:

- 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 a minimum average of 30 hours per week for up to six months or up to nine months for seasonal workers from Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu
- paying for the full cost of each seasonal workers' return international airfare and domestic transfer arrangements up front, and recouping from the combined cost any amount over \$500 from seasonal workers' pay over time

- organising accommodation and transport to and from work for each seasonal worker (at the seasonal workers' expense)
- reporting to Government (providing on-arrival and departure reports)
- providing or arranging pastoral care for workers; and
- assisting workers to engage with the local community.

Ongoing monitoring of approved employers compliance with the programme requirements is conducted. Monitoring of individual employers is undertaken through a range of activities and may include site visits.

Question No. 9

Can the Committee obtain a breakdown of participants from each year since 2012 including:

- How many of the participants reapply for the SWP?

Answer

The Department of Employment has provided information on participants, including the number of seasonal workers who return for further seasonal work, at Table 6 page 20 of the joint submission to Joint Standing Committee for Migration's inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme. A copy of this table is below.

Returning seasonal workers

Financial Year of Visa Grant	2nd visa granted	3rd visa granted	4th visa granted	5th visa granted	6th visa granted	7th visa granted	Total
2009-10	21						21
2010-11	34	16					50
2011-12	225	27	11				263
2012-13	414	142	19	7			582
2013-14	536	321	115	18	< 5		993
2014-15 to 31/05/15	582	392	233	80	19	< 5	1 089
Total	1 812	898	378	105	22	< 5	2 998

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2015 (BE8421.04)

Note 2: Includes visas granted under the subclass 416 Pacific Seasonal Workers pilot

Question No. 10

Can the Committee obtain a breakdown of participants for the SWP three year trials with accommodation providers, aquaculture ventures and cotton and cane growers, including:

- The source countries for the participants?
- The number and age of the participants?
- How many of the participants reapply for the SWP trials?
- How many participants are males compared to females?

Answer

The number and gender of seasonal workers that participated in the trial by sector is outlined in the table below. The Department of Employment does not track the age of seasonal workers according to sector.

Participation in the trial sectors

Year	Trial Sectors
2012-13 (Year 1)	21 places filled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 placed in accommodation sector (10 male and 9 female seasonal workers from Timor-Leste) • 2 placed in cotton sector (2 male seasonal workers from Tonga)
2013-14 (Year 2)	35 places filled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 placed in accommodation sector (18 male seasonal workers from Timor-Leste, 14 female seasonal workers from Timor-Leste and one female seasonal worker from Papua New Guinea) • 2 placed in cotton sector (2 male seasonal workers from Tonga)
2014-15 (Year 3)	46 places filled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 placed in accommodation sector (24 male seasonal workers from Timor-Leste, 17 female seasonal workers from Timor-Leste, four female seasonal workers from Vanuatu and one female seasonal worker from Papua New Guinea)

In the 2014-15 financial year, of the 46 places filled with seasonal workers in the trial sectors, 23 placed were filled with returning seasonal workers.

Question No. 11

Can the Department provide some information on the add-on skills training provided to SWP participants? How many SWP participants have undertaken additional training? How are they made aware of the add-on skills training provided?

Answer

During the 2014–15 financial year 1 236 seasonal workers accessed add-on skills training. Seasonal workers are made aware of the availability of training in a number of ways, including:

- receiving information about add-on skills training in pre-departure materials and briefings before departing their home country
- the offer of employment letter provides information to workers about the opportunity for training, and the type of training that can be conducted; and
- on arrival, the approved employer must remind workers that they have an opportunity to access training, and then work with the department to facilitate the delivery of training.

Question No. 12

Can the Department provide an overview of the SWP trials with accommodation providers, aquaculture ventures and cotton and cane growers? What is the role of the Department with the trials?

Answer

The Department of Employment led implementation in the trial sectors of accommodation providers, aquaculture, cotton and cane, noting that the programme is demand driven. The Department's role was to provide information to the trial sectors to ensure participating sectors were aware of the programme as an option where they were unable to source local job seekers to undertake seasonal work.

Question No. 13

How many employers are involved in the SWP trials? Where are they located?

Answer

Information on the trial sectors is provided in the answer to Question 10. Under the trials which concluded on 30 June 2015, the programme has seven accommodation providers participating, and has had one other approved employer place seasonal workers in the cotton sector (two workers). The table in question 10 provides information on seasonal workers in the trial sector.

The approved employers in the accommodation sector are located in Broome, Western Australia, Mount Surprise, Queensland and Hamilton Island, Queensland.

One approved employer located in Queensland participated in the cotton trial and placed two workers in Condobolin, New South Wales.

Question No. 14

Does the Department have a view on whether the SWP could be expanded to other countries or sectors?

Answer

As noted in the joint submission, the Government has announced changes to the Seasonal Worker Programme from 1 July 2015 as part of the Northern Australia White Paper *Our North, Our Future: A Vision for Developing Northern Australia* package of reforms. The changes to the programme include:

- an expansion to the broader agriculture sector across Australia as well as the accommodation sector in eligible locations
- an invitation to the Northern Australia tourism industry to put forward proposals for trial arrangements in the tourism sectors
- an expansion to other Pacific island countries which are members of the Pacific Island Forum; and
- provision for citizens of Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu to be granted a longer-term visa enabling them to undertake seasonal work in Australia for up to nine months.

In order to maintain the programme's objectives, the Government is not supportive of a further expansion at this time.

Question No. 15

Has there been an increase in industry demand for seasonal workers?

Answer

The Department of Employment has provided information on industry demand for seasonal workers in its joint submission.

Question No. 16

Does the Department have a view on whether the demand for SWP workers will outstrip visa supply?

Answer

The Government has removed the programme caps and visas are assured for all workers who meet programme eligibility requirements.

Question No. 17

How is this programme promoted internationally?

- What is the cost?

Answer

The Australian Government does not promote the programme internationally. The Australian Government encourages the governments of participating countries to raise awareness amongst their citizens of the allowable avenues for participation in the programme.

Question No. 18

Does the Department have a view on how to facilitate marketing within the participating countries?

Answer

The governments of participating countries take the lead on marketing the Seasonal Worker Programme in their countries. It is important that the governments of participating countries raise awareness amongst their citizens about the permissible avenues for participation in the programme. The Australian Government contributes key messaging to participating countries about the programme to assist participating countries to relay an accurate and realistic perspective of opportunities for seasonal work under the programme.

Question No. 19

Does the Department undertake any data collection or mapping of sending communities?

Answer

No.

Question No. 20

What steps does the Department take to assess the development impacts and equity of opportunity in the sending communities?

Answer

The Department of Employment does not assess the development impacts and equity of opportunity in the sending communities. This is the role of the participating countries. However, a longer term evaluation of the development impacts of the Seasonal Worker Programme by the World Bank is underway and is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (*Seasonal Worker Programme Development Impact Evaluation 2015–16*).

Question No. 21

Does the Department have any suggestions on how to improve numbers in countries with low participation?

Answer

Some Pacific island countries have more experience with sending seasonal labour than others, and these have been quicker to access the Seasonal Worker Programme. Assistance provided through a new Labour Mobility Assistance Program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will work with participating countries to continue to build their capacity. The Program will improve countries' ability to send labour that meets the expectations of Australian employers.

Questions No. 22, 23 and 24 have been referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Question No. 25

Which Department administers the management of worker screening and selection?

Answer

The screening of seasonal worker candidates to ensure they meet programme eligibility is undertaken by the participating country. The selection of seasonal workers is undertaken by approved employers.

Health and character checks for the appropriate visa are undertaken by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Question No. 26

Are seasonal workers provided with pre-departure and on-return briefings?

Answer

Yes. All participating countries have committed to provide all seasonal workers with a pre-departure and on-return briefing. The Department of Employment contributes materials to assist participating countries to deliver pre-departure briefings.

Question No. 27

How many backpackers are engaged in seasonal work in these sectors?

Answer

Information on the Working Holiday Maker programmes is contained at section 2.20 to 2.24 of the joint submission to Joint Standing Committee for Migration's inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme.

Question No. 28

Does the Department have any information on how many illegal workers are currently employed within these sectors?

Answer

The Department of Employment does not have information on how many illegal workers may be employed within these sectors.

Question No. 29

How does the Department liaise with other relevant departments on the SWP?

Answer

The Department of Employment liaises regularly with other relevant Government agencies on the Seasonal Worker Programme, including holding a quarterly Policy Committee meeting chaired by the Department of Employment.

Question No. 30

Which Department collects and analyses the data on the SWP?

Answer

Data is collected and analysed by the Departments of Employment, Immigration and Border Protection and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Question No. 31

Which Department monitors the SWP?

Answer

The respective roles by Government agencies in monitoring the Seasonal Worker Programme was provided to the Committee in the Opening Statement tabled by the Department of Employment.

Question No. 32

Do you have information on whether there are productivity gains from farms that engage SWP workers?

Answer

While the Department of Employment has no data on productivity gains by farms that employ seasonal workers, a 2013 study by Leith and Davidson on the relative efficiency of Working Holiday Makers and workers hired under the Seasonal Worker Programme found that seasonal workers were, on average, significantly more efficient than Working Holiday Makers. The Department of Employment has provided information on the findings from the Leith and Davidson study in the joint submission to Joint Standing Committee for Migration's inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme.

The Department of Employment is working with the Department of Foreign Affairs to support a study into the relative productivity of seasonal workers and the costs and benefits for employers participating in the programme.