



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 5 May 2016

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

Migration Committee recommends establishing a *Future Force* for Australian agriculture

The Australian Government should establish a three year pilot programme for 17-24 year olds to train and work in the agricultural sector, a *Future Force*, according to a new report.

Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration tabled the report for its inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme, which aims to contribute to the economic development of Pacific Island countries and Timor Leste as well as supporting Australian employers in the horticulture industry.

Committee Chair, Mrs Louise Markus MP, said that currently there appears to be a poor perception surrounding the agriculture industry and in particular, that it lacks viable career pathways.

"More needs to be done to change this misconception and to support youth employment pathways and that is why the Committee has recommended the Australian Government allocate funds to establish a three year pilot programme for 17-24 year similar to the Green Army programme model with appropriate adjustments."

Mrs Markus said the Seasonal Worker Programme is extremely important and offers valuable employment opportunities, economic development through remittances and new skills, training for seasonal workers as well as providing much needed support to Australian employers in the horticulture industry.

"While this is a valuable Programme, providing job opportunities for Australians, particularly in areas of labour shortages, is fundamentally important," Mrs Markus said.

The Committee also recommended:

- the Australian Government undertake a comprehensive review of the changes to the seasonal worker and working holiday maker programmes
- standardise the labour market testing requirements across the range of temporary work visas
- undertake a review of current superannuation requirements for Seasonal Worker Programme participants;
- the Australian Government consider expanding the programme to the aged care, child care, and disability care sectors
- provide Australia Pacific Technical College graduates an employment pathway via the programme
- increase gender equality and provide women greater employment opportunities.

The full report can be found at the Committee's website: <http://www.aph.gov.au/mig>

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

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