

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2008-09**

Outcome/Agency **8**

DEEWR Question No. EW1038_09

Senator Fierravanti-Wells provided in writing.

Question

Pacific Guest Worker Scheme

Given that the current rise in unemployment can the Department guarantee that no Australians will lose their jobs as a consequence of this scheme?

Answer

There are a number of safeguards to ensure that no Australian job seeker or worker will be displaced by the Pilot. If there is no demand for Pacific seasonal workers because of local labour market conditions, then visas will not be issued.

Pacific seasonal workers are only placed with growers who can demonstrate they have taken reasonable steps to recruit Australians first, particularly income support recipients and Indigenous Australians.

Growers must have good workplace practices, must have tested their local labour markets, be willing to employ Australian job seekers before seeking Pacific seasonal workers and be willing to participate in training programs to assist Australian job seekers access these jobs.

Growers seeking access to Pacific seasonal workers must have tested their local labour market by:

- having lodged vacancies with local Australian Government Employment services (Job Network or Harvest Labour Service) for the same number of positions as are proposed to be filled by Pacific seasonal workers for a minimum of two weeks before seeking Pacific seasonal workers; or
- placing advertisements in newspapers, professional journals, the Internet and with Australian Government employment services (eg. Job Network Members, Harvest Labour providers).

Information on why Australian applicants (if any) were considered unsuitable for these positions is required before growers are eligible to participate in the Pilot.