

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

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

Outcome/Agency 8

DEEWR Question No. EW1053_09

Senator Fierravanti-Wells provided in writing.

Question

Pacific Guest Worker Scheme

Workers in the horticultural industry often have less than ideal living conditions - Is there a minimum standard of accommodation required for the workers and if so what is that?

Answer

Yes. As the employer, the labour hire company will be required to arrange for suitable accommodation for Pacific seasonal workers at a reasonable price.

The Australian Government will not accept any accommodation standards below those that would be considered acceptable for Australian workers.

Discussions with local advisory bodies have indicated that suitable accommodation means accommodation that:

- meets all State and local government regulations regarding fire, health and safety;
- offers 24 hour access;
- provides a self-catering kitchen;
- is clean and well-maintained;
- has a communal lounge area;
- has adequate laundry facilities;
- provides power for lighting, cooking, and refrigeration;
- has separate bathrooms for men and women and has an adequate ratio of guests to bathroom facilities;
- has separate uncrowded sleeping areas for men and women;
- provides a separate lockable cupboard or locker for each individual; and
- access to transport to and from the worksite and transport to and from local recreation/shopping/cultural activities.

Some growers may also offer accommodation or board for their workers and they should advise the local advisory body and the labour hire company(s) of this.

- On-farm accommodation will still need to be assessed as suitable and provided at a reasonable cost to the Pacific seasonal worker.