

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2011–2012**

**Outcome 4 – Employment**

**DEEWR Question No.EW1003\_12**

**Senator McKenzie provided in writing.**

**Question**

**Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme**

'What feedback has the department received on removing the burden on employers to pay for their guest workers' travel up front? Has the government considered this measure? What other options have been considered by the government to improve uptake of the program?'

**Answer**

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has received feedback from Approved Employers on the requirement to pay the upfront cost of a seasonal worker's return airfare, under both the current Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (the Pilot) and the Seasonal Worker Program (the Program), which will commence on 1 July 2012. Only one Approved Employer raised this measure as a concern.

The requirement to pay for guest workers' travel up front will continue to be an ongoing requirement under both the Pilot and the Program. By way of background, this, or similar arrangements, are a feature in seasonal worker programs around the world, including New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer program. Further, most growers and Approved Employers report productivity gains at the end of the season from participating in the Pilot, even after paying for the upfront cost of seasonal worker airfares and recouping a percentage from the seasonal worker.

The governance arrangements and obligations for Approved Employers under the Program commencing 1 July 2012 are expected to be attractive to growers and employers.