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Committee Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
Department of the Senate
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Inquiry into Pacific Region seasonal contract labour

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Yvonne Fahl -- Executive Secretary -- Carnarvon Growers Association Inc. --
representing the Industry Peak Body for the Gascoyne Horticultural District.

Yvonne J. Fahl

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this Inquiry into Pacific Region seasonal contract labour.

We make the following points:--

- The Horticultural district in the Gascoyne Region, WA, North West Australia is an intense Horticultural growing district with plantations on both sides of the river along the banks of the Gascoyne River, commencing in Carnarvon (town) and running east.
 - The Industry is comprised of Tropical Fruits and Vegetables, supplying at least 70% of the Perth Metropolitan winter requirements.
 - The Industry is comprised of small Growers, growing intensively but is a viable, unsubsidised, with an annual value of between \$50 to \$53 million.
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LABOUR is an enormous problem, and it is almost impossible to secure locals to work in the Industry.

Necessary Labour is sourced by:--

- Friends and Family -- by arrangement
 - Young Backpackers, for a few days or for a much longer period.
 - Backpackers arranged through a business in the City called *The Job Shop*
 - School Holiday time -- young people of the family and friends etc.
 - At odd times, a person from Workbase.
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PRODUCTS

- Mangoes -- seasonal labour for approx. 4-6 weeks
 - Grapes -- seasonal labour for approx. 6 weeks
 - Grapes -- seasonal labour for approx 3-4 weeks pruning, + leaf thinning etc.
 - Vegetables ie tomatoes, capsicum, cucumbers, melons etc over a period from June to December.
 - Banana Packing Shed -- requires labour throughout the year.
 - 2 vegetable packing sheds -- “ “ “ “
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1. We believe that there would be a problem with the distance involved from the Pacific across Australia to Western Australia, considering the cost of travelling.
2. The farms (plantations) are all intensive farming, and there would not be the scope of work available for a contract labourer other than if the person could be coordinated locally to be placed with one farmer and then moved to another etc.
3. We would however, draw to your attention the difficulty local producers have sourcing seasonal labour, it is almost impossible to find any person locally who is prepared to work.

