

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into Pacific region seasonal contract labour

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I.W. & M. A. GENT**FRESH FRUIT GROWERS**

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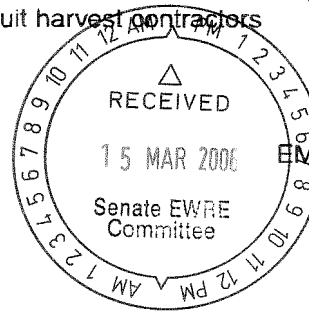
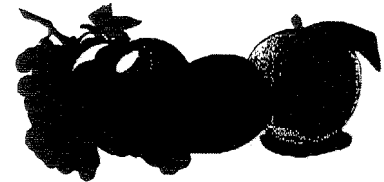
Dried Fruit - Vineyard and Orchard Contractors - all fruit harvest contractors

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15th March 2006**SENATE COMMITTEE****Re: INQUIRING INTO OVERSEAS WORKERS**

- The Government needs to assist Australian horticulture in their endeavors to expand exports as the allow goods into Australia from unlevel playing fields
- Federal Government push towards a clever nation, therefore minimizing the availability of the itinerate worker
- The Government shares the burden and stand shoulder to shoulder with this industry
- Working holiday Visas are limited to visitors from more affluent countries who treat their visit as a holiday and do not commit to one employer from any length of time. Therefore time and resources spent on induction and training is wasted causing an added burden to the employer.
- What we need is a system that allows workers from poor countries who have the burning desire to work to support their families
- The remoteness of horticultural enterprises often is discriminated against. Work programs do not always move to remotes areas as in factory work in cities.
- Often a shortage of real estate (affordable housing) in small country towns and the lack of reserves to build same results in the inability to acquire itinerate workers
- The non-retention of advanced school goers doesn't necessary equate to the availability of a non-skilled work force. Example: Work for the Dole has not worked
- Remain at school programme, as a consequence less labour available
- No staff means no growth in the horticulture industry, which will impact on exports, taxes and future employment opportunities

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- During peak times a huge shortage of workers is experienced which places a strain on the individual employers and the industry as a whole
- During this time, I personally could employ an additional 200 workers
- I believe the Canadian system that overseas workers can enter the country, work on a property and two thirds of their income is sent home and a pass port or similar is required to release those funds. This stops the potential for workers over staying their Visa.
- GDP for Horticulture is second to grains and as a consequence it may well be an assistance package put forward to encourage this growth.

Yours truly,



Ivor Gent
I.W. & M.A. Gent