

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into Pacific region seasonal contract labour

Submission no: 49

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Submitter: Mr Frederick Taylor

Organisation: Private capacity

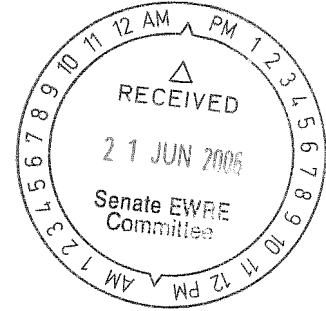
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Dear Mr. Carter.

Please find my submission to the Senate regarding Guest Workers.

The submission is made in my capacity as a private Australian citizen.

I will gain nothing financially if the submitted proposal is accepted – quite the contrary given that if the go ahead is given all I can expect is a career change + a substantial pay cut.

Such is my belief in the success of this project.

Yours Most Sincerely.

F. G. Taylor

To The Honorable Members Of The Senate.

Seasonal Contract Labour – Primary Producers Qld.

Season contract labour as I propose - can – if properly thought through & carefully managed – achieve a win win situation for this country on all fronts.
The undeniable current reality is certain sections of Australian producers – especially Qld - face a continuous crisis in the recruitment of reliable season labour?
Common sense logic dictates that the first priority would be to identify & locate - a reliable & continuous source of available labour – whilst at the same time avoid the pitfalls & social divisiveness of the American model, (current guesstimate Mexican ‘guest’ labour at a staggering 32 mil & rising).
I believe I have identified one such source.

It is crucially important that the following proposal should not be misinterpreted as the bee all & end all to what is a large & complex issue. It is however a positive start in the right direction – & I believe the successful implementation of this submission could form a flexible template for future models.

Fiji.

It goes without saying that members of the Senate are appreciative that other social systems other than ours do exist - & in many cases operate successfully within their own national boundaries.
The indigenous Fijian system is one such case.
The system is bound by the word Mataqali – (matten – galee). Literal translation meaning men twisted together – or Clan.
This proposal is therefore based on the merits - strengths & dignity of this system & its potential benefits to this country.

How can this be done?

It is envisaged that an initial pilot scheme be established – this would comprise units of 6 members from within the selected Mataqali. (this has already been done).
Apart from fulfilling all the necessary criteria regarding security & health checks – financial stability & English language proficiency - each individual participant would be made fully aware of their own personal responsibilities & obligations towards this collective opportunity.
Put simply – if any member intentionally breaks the rules & conditions of the Guest Worker Agreement the Mataqali of which they are members will be disqualified & removed from any future participation in guest worker schemes.

Q & A.

I have already spoken to a local recruitment agency who assures me that they have an endless list of producers in Queensland urgently seeking reliable season workers.
Therefore would any guest workers invited to this country be given free market choice? (rates – freedom of movement). Or would they be at the sole directive of individual 3rd party agencies?

Taxation.

Given that guest workers will automatically pay a 10% GST during their stay – should they be subject to any additional ATO payments?

Will guest workers have access to non emergency Medicare?

My own personal opinion is that individual workers agree to abide by current Australian practice & take out appropriate individual Work & Accident policies covering the duration of their employment.

Length of stay? (visa).

Non negotiable maximum 9 Months – only subject to renewal at original point of issue (home country).

Grassroots benefits.

The nations that comprise the South Pacific have long looked to Australian leadership in confronting & resolving issues that have the potential to become divisive.

Access to seasonal contract labour is a serious & sensitive issue within the country I am most familiar – Fiji.

They cannot fathom that given our obvious shortage of skilled farm labour coupled to their close long standing relationship with this country – why can't a satisfactory solution be achieved – or at least attempted?

Apart from the obvious benefit of engaging a skilled workforce with proven track records (other farm owners), one other important side effect that cannot be denied is that the majority of the money earned by these workers will be act as a direct injection of needy capital at the rural grassroots level. Help alleviate the pressure on major centers.

One other point that should be considered is that the honorable Senators considered approaching this problem from a selfish purely nationalistic perspective?

The primary producers in Queensland are in urgent need of skilled seasonal labour – their skilled counterparts in rural Fiji are in urgent need of season work?

Can't we at least give it a try?

Yours Most Respectfully.

F. C. Taylor