$4.45m boost to seasonal and regional workforce

04/12/2020 | David Basham MP

The Marshall Liberal Government is investing $4.45 million to assist the urgent mobilisation of a seasonal and regional workforce in South Australia in response to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

The funding will help create a multi-pronged approach to fill vacancies and boost employment in key areas in regional South Australia over the next six to 12 months including this crucial time leading up to Christmas.

The program will include incentives of up to $2,000 for students moving to regions to take up regional jobs. Additional support will also be available for businesses bringing workers into South Australia as part of the Seasonal Worker Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme to fill critical roles.

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development David Basham said COVID-19 restrictions such as border closures had significantly impacted agriculture, tourism and hospitality in regional South Australia.

"Seasonal workers play a crucial role in South Australia's economy and just like many other sectors our agriculture industry has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic with border restrictions reducing the amount of international and interstate travellers," Minister Basham said.

"With South Australia's peak picking season starting this month, and requiring almost 9,000 seasonal workers by January, we need to urgently mobilise a seasonal and regional workforce.

"Our agricultural sector has already shown much resilience during 2020, but now we need to provide them with additional support to make sure workers are available to help harvest crops and put food on Australian family tables especially in the lead up to Christmas.

"This is why the Marshall Liberal Government has committed $4.45 million to help fill seasonal jobs across the state by using incentives to encourage students to move to our regions.

"This extra support follows on from our successful Seasonal Jobs SA website which has advertised more than 3,500 jobs and had more than 100,000 page views since its launch in May."

Minister for Skills and Innovation David Pisoni said the seasonal workers support package is not just aimed at the agriculture sector with other industries struggling to fill positions.

"In addition to agriculture, we recognise there are shortfalls in employees in the tourism and hospitality sectors, with all of these areas significant contributors to the South Australian economy," Minister Pisoni said.

"Our $4.45 million support package will help to address workforce issues right across regional South Australia and link those seeking work with positions available.

"Work on the land has not stopped as a result of COVID-19, rather this pandemic has just created additional challenges for those in the regions.

"Traditionally this workforce comes from a range of sources including from domestic workers both intrastate and interstate on working holidays, and international workers on visas including Pacific Labour Scheme/Seasonal Worker Programme and Working Holiday Makers.

"With the closure of state and international borders and introduction of Commonwealth job retention programs, such as JobKeeper and JobSeeker, the pool of available workers to undertake seasonal agricultural work and regional jobs has diminished.

"Our support package will help the attraction, retention and development of our regional workforce.

"This is all part of the Marshall Liberal Government's plan to keep South Australia safe and strong, back businesses and create jobs."

For more information on the program visit: www.seasonaljobs.sa.gov.au 🗗.

For more information on the Regional Jobs and Incentive Program visit: https://business.sa.gov.au/regional-jobs

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