

From: Sandy mcLay [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 25 November 2021 6:08 PM
To: AMOD <AMOD@fwc.gov.au>
Subject: AM2020/104

Dear FWC,

I would like to put forward to you our existing labour arrangements and the changes that will affect our industry due to the current decision made by FWC.

We require 70 pickers to start the season. These are usually backpackers that are unskilled in manual labour. These people come with no other skill than they are keen to work. Our company puts these people through three days of training where they are paid hourly wages. They are well aware that at the end of three days they are to be professional enough to need less supervision and move to piece rates (15 % above hourly rate). If they don't meet the piece rate they are then given two options. They can have further training or they must leave the farm. Their philosophy is that they want to earn as much money in the shortest amount of time so as to travel Australia. They live in their vans with tents and want to work 6 days a week and as many hours per day as possible. Piece rates allow them this wish. Quite often they are couples that work together with the male partner doing the heavy lifting picking the top of the tree and the female partner doing the tree bottom.

The outcome of this decision on my business is as follows.

- The decision is gender bias. Women do not have the same strength to compete on a level playing field in this physical industry. Women , couples and Gray-nomads will be excluded from the opportunity to participate in this work environment under the new legislation.
- The industry will become male dominated excluding people like backpacker couples, Gray-nomads and females.
- If everyone is paid the same rate how do we get the tops of our trees harvested. Traditionally males pick the tops.
- Our company will be left with no other option than to import male professional pickers from overseas leaving no employment opportunities for Gray-nomads, females, backpacker couples and unemployed Australians.
- Mandarins are a perishable item becoming riper per day. For some reason the wage system seems to think that mandarins stop growing Friday afternoon and start growing again on Monday . We need incentives in the industry to reward our working partners the bonus's they deserve. Piece rate is the fairest option.
- Our season lasts for six months and cannot be extended without having fruit go rotten on the tree. We are desperate that there are incentives are available to keep pace with the ripening fruit.
- As with the Seasonal Worker Programme the Islands are left with a shortage of young males 25 to 35 years as they are the preferred worker. The change to our award is going to create a massive imbalance not only on these islands but also in our rural towns.
- Our small rural towns will experience the same issue with males dominating which will cause social issues that the authorities won't have the resources to sustain and control.

Please consider the social ramifications of this action. There should be a time limit on the worker improving their skill level and moving to piece rates otherwise they will be retrenched. Thank you for this opportunity.

Regards

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