



Grandview Orchards Pty Ltd

[REDACTED]
grandview@gvo.net.au

Dear Commission

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Fair Work Commission's ruling to introduce a floor price on piece work rates under the Horticulture Award.

I am a small Citrus grower located on the border of New South Wales and Victoria. Our harvest work force can vary daily from 10 to 20 workers. This all depends on market driven quotas which must be delivered with in time frames. These time frames can be affected by demand, fruit maturity, weather, and availability of workers. Given that our harvest falls mostly in the winter months the actual working hours per day can vary from 4 to 7 hours. With a full work force and perfect weather, we can harvest our quotas in 3-4 days. However, due to lack of workers and weather conditions it may take 7 days to make our quotas.

It is my core belief that every person should be treated with respect, dignity and paid fairly, regardless of their ethnicity or level of skill. And to quote a proverb. "A laborer is worthy of his higher". I am not arguing against the fact that there are unscrupulous people who seek to exploit others mostly for financial gain. This needs to be stopped. Reform needs to take place. This certainly is not it!

Doing just enough!

If anyone works hard then they can make seriously good money. There is incentive to work. A floor price takes away that incentive. The worker can "coast" and make enough to "get by" for themselves but severely underperform from our perspective to harvest with in the restrictions I have out lined.

Our experience has been that there are two types of workers, one group are here to holiday, and they do "just enough" to earn enough money to do what they want to do. Then there are the ones that have a "need" they want to work to build a better life for themselves and often for their family back home in their country of origin. We want the workers who have a need!

This floor price will very quickly flood the market with holiday types.

Under performing workers!

We will need to replace them. This is not as easy as it sounds. There are costs that are incurred in doing this. Not to mention the costs that we have already incurred in training these workers and paying "cold hard cash" to them for our loss of production until we are permitted to move them on.

I am not sure if anyone has realized that this will make for a high turnover of workers until we can find enough workers that have a need! This then incurs more administration costs and wasted time for us.

If we were to employ someone under the PALM scheme that is underperforming, where does that leave us? We are bound to provide work under this scheme to someone that is underperforming. This is therefore unworkable to us.

How does this work in the orchard?

Now we're going to need to "time" worker on how long it takes them to pick every bin of fruit. This will require a person to be keeping records for up to 20 workers in the orchard and reporting at the end of the day as to each workers performance. So not only do we have a person accurately keeping those records, but this will also force us to needlessly invest in technologies to ensure this irrelevant information recorded. What if a worker drifts in and out of being paid a bin rate (where they earn more money) and hourly rate over their employment? Where does that leave us?

How can we afford to do this?

I have used the word underperform throughout the text. This ruling will now make the Horticultural industry a target for the government to move Australians off welfare and will open the flood gates for "eligible workers" and we will be made to employ underperforming Australian's who will be forced off the social security as well as the "doing just enough" workers. This won't make for a harmonious working relationship. We CAN NOT carry underperforming workers. At every angle of this ruling there are costs that the grower will incur and will have to absorb.

These types rulings only foster a mentality of entitlement which ultimately brings down the standard of workmanship and profitability.

Please find a better solution

Without prejudice

Brett Hullah