

Submission to Working Holiday Maker Visa Review.

I am particularly concerned that Australia has far too many unemployed people, particularly young people who may never have worked. I believe that Working Holiday Makers should pay the 32.5% tax to help redress this situation.

This high unemployment rate in Australia is a social and financial problem for the nation. Locally the Australian people are referred to as being "too lazy" to work or as people who "only want to work in areas they are trained for".

People must be encouraged to work; the health and welfare issues which are associated with long term unemployment are far reaching and we ignore them at our peril.

The claims that people "won't work" must not be accepted at face value. The reasons *why* the people receiving unemployment benefits "won't" work must be investigated.

For example, in the past, seasonal work was done by transient people, people following the work as back packers do today; perhaps the subsidies that are paid to unemployed people could be restructured and incentives offered to make it more attractive for local people to follow the seasonal work as do our overseas workers.

I think part of the problem of "undersupply" of Australian agricultural workers is that the agricultural sector, as with other sectors has become broad scale and machine oriented. It does not require a permanent labour force as it did in the past and moreover, growers have become very demanding of the itinerant workforce.

Many of the growers want someone today and or tomorrow, for the hours they need, be it 2, 4 or 10 hours and then they do not want any responsibility to that worker. Some in the agricultural sector appear to treat workers as a commodity and not a valued commodity either. It seems to me that this is one of the reasons they prefer foreign workers - they do not feel any obligation towards workers that are ever changing.

A permanent job is more attractive to everyone. The agricultural sector, unlike the mining industry, does not pay a bonus for living away from home.

I meet backpackers and unemployed Australians in the small business I run in Manjimup; apart from the clothes I make I sell second hand items and my shop is opposite Vinnies Op Shop. I often ask my customers where they are working. I do this because I believe too often we take for granted that local people on "benefits" want to be unemployed. I am frequently told - "Oh I can't find work, the farmers won't employ locals".

Many of the backpackers I meet say they are very happy to be in Australia because they would be unemployed in their own European country, a fair percentage of them are looking to migrate if they can find a sponsor. Those here on holiday are wanting to see the world before they return home. When I ask them would they continue to work if they pay tax, they generally like the money they are currently receiving however they would still work because they are able to work and travel.

The agricultural sector claims that the backpackers bring money to Australia; the back packers I meet live very frugally; they do not spend money in the local community apart from their accommodation, they buy food, occasionally from take away outlets as well as alcohol and cigarettes. Mostly they buy from Coles and Woolworths. Many of them save their earnings to send home or so that they can holiday overseas in Asia and then return for their second year.

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If the agricultural sector employed locals those people would be contributing to the local community.

It would not be impossible to get teams of locals to move from farm to farm; what it would take is shift in focus from short term self interest on the part of the agriculture sector to one that has the long term community and national interest in mind.

I find it very strange that Australia does not tax holiday visa workers. What other country allows for visitors to work without paying tax? Are we subsidising their travel as a favour to the tourism and agricultural sectors, whilst penalising taxpayers and short changing our own young people?